

## FROM KATHERINE B. MCGUIRE, APA CHIEF ADVOCACY OFFICER

For the Week of September 23–27, 2019

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### Supporting Legislation to Expand Loan Repayment

On Sept. 18, APA [applauded](#) the bipartisan introduction of the Mental Health Professionals Workforce Shortage Loan Repayment Act of 2019 (S. 2500), introduced by Sens. Kamala Harris (D-Calif.) and Cory Gardner (R-Colo.). Prior to the bill's introduction, APA [collaborated](#) with the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and other members of the Mental Health Liaison Group to find a Republican co-sponsor for the legislation to ensure bipartisan support. If enacted, this legislation would reduce the workforce shortage of health-service psychologists and other mental and behavioral health professionals by providing up to \$250,000 in loan repayment in exchange for service in a federally designated mental health professional shortage area.

*For more information, contact Alix Ginsberg, MPH, at [aginsberg@apa.org](mailto:aginsberg@apa.org).*

### Advocating for the Aging Community

On Sept. 16, the House Committee on Education and Labor introduced the Dignity in Aging Act (H.R. 4334), which would reauthorize the Older Americans Act until 2024. The bill calls for modernizing and improving services for the aging population and highlights many APA priorities, including more attention to social isolation among older Americans, caregiver support, suicide prevention, elder justice, and services for Native Americans and other underserved populations. APA has been working on this legislation with congressional staff in both the House and Senate and sent a [letter](#) with recommended improvements. The Senate introduced its version, the Aging Together Act (S. 1671), on May 23.

*For more information, contact Serena Dávila, JD, at [sdavila@apa.org](mailto:sdavila@apa.org).*

### Supporting Services for At-Risk Youth

APA member Dr. Jennifer Woolard participated in a congressional briefing on the Eliminating Debtor's Prisons for Kids Act (H.R. 2300), sponsored by Rep. Tony Cárdenas (D-Calif.). The legislation would incentivize states to end fines and fees in juvenile justice systems and fund mental and behavioral health services for at-risk youth. In many states, fines and fees are assessed for indigent defense and other expenses associated with incarceration. Dr. Woolard focused on key intervention points for at-risk youth and the need to provide services where kids live, play and learn.

*For more information, contact Amalia Corby at [acorby-edwards@apa.org](mailto:acorby-edwards@apa.org).*

### Exploring Partnerships with SAMHSA

APA met with Dr. Arlin Hatch, senior psychologist at SAMHSA's Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, and Dr. Neeraj "Jim" Gandotra, SAMHSA's chief medical officer, to discuss areas where APA and SAMHSA can work together to improve lives. Specifically, APA staff shared its work related to building the psychology workforce, addressing societal issues, addressing substance use disorders and managing pain. The leaders discussed sharing APA resources through SAMHSA's [Technology Transfer Centers](#) and collaborating on APA-hosted events.

*For more information, contact Aaron Bishop at [abishop@apa.org](mailto:abishop@apa.org).*

## **Endorsing Legislation to Improve Healthy Food in Day Care**

APA joined 27 organizations in [endorsing](#) the Access to Healthy Food for Young Children Act of 2019 (S. 2501), introduced on Sept. 18 by Sen. Bob Casey (R-Pa.). The bill would strengthen the Federal Nutrition Service's Child and Adult Care Food Program, which provides more than 4.2 million eligible children and 130,000 adults with healthy meals and snacks every day. Among other provisions, the bill allows children and adults in full-day care an additional meal and snack to improve their nutrition. The bill would also increase the reimbursement that centers receive for food costs, lower the threshold for community eligibility and reduce the paperwork burden for centers in high-poverty areas.

*For more information about child nutrition, contact Cynthia Whitney, MPA, at [atcmalley@apa.org](mailto:atcmalley@apa.org).*

## **Promoting Psychological Pain Management to Federal Departments and Agencies**

On Sept. 26, APA sent letters to several agencies within the U.S. Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Agriculture, urging them to consider increasing federal investments in psychological and behavioral pain management as a first-line treatment for preventing opioid and other substance use disorders. APA highlighted that while inappropriate prescribing has been reduced, there are still many obstacles that agencies could address to reduce stigma, expand access to psychological services and educate providers on better ways to prevent and treat pain. APA's letter to the U.S. Department of Agriculture can be read [here](#).

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