

FROM KATHERINE B. MCGUIRE, APA CHIEF ADVOCACY OFFICER

For the Week of September 30, 2019

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Hosting the First “Technology, Mind and Society” Advocacy and Lobby Day

Eleven scientists visiting Washington, D.C., for APA’s Technology, Mind and Society conference met with congressional and administration staff to discuss what psychological science can contribute to policies and legislation on artificial intelligence (AI). In particular, the APA scientists met with staff from the House Science Committee, which is developing a bill to provide an oversight infrastructure for AI, and with staff from the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee, which is advancing the Algorithmic Accountability Act, which seeks to minimize bias in AI applications. In addition, part of the group met with staff from the Senate Special Committee on Aging to discuss aging and assistive technology. The group also discussed the National AI Strategy with Dr. Lynne Parker, the assistant director for AI at the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy. Before their visits, the scientists were trained by APA’s advocacy staff on effective ways to discuss psychological science with policymakers. Check out the [briefing sheet](#) on psychology and AI that the group used on the Hill.

For more information, contact Pat Kobor at pkobor@apa.org.

Bringing the Science on Veteran Suicide to Capitol Hill

In conjunction with the Friends of VA Medical Care and Health Research coalition, APA staff moderated a standing room-only briefing on veteran suicide for congressional and federal agency staff. Kicking off the event was psychologist Dr. Barbara Van Dahlen, executive director of the new cabinet-level PREVENTS Task Force, which seeks to eliminate veteran suicide. Three scientists funded by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)—including two psychologists—highlighted new research in the areas of artificial intelligence, genomics, predictive analytics and neurobiology that is improving the VA’s ability to identify and care for veterans at heightened risk for suicide.

For more information, contact Heather O’Beirne Kelly, PhD, at hkelly@apa.org.

Promoting Mental Health Wellness for Hispanics and Latinos

APA joined the National Latino Behavioral Health Association in endorsing federal legislation aimed at reducing stigma and promoting mental wellness among the nation’s Hispanic and Latino populations. Introduced by Rep. Grace Napolitano (D-Calif.), the Reducing Mental Health Stigma in the Hispanic Community Act (H.R. 4543) would direct the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration to develop and implement an outreach and education strategy to promote behavioral and mental health for these populations. “Rep. Napolitano clearly understands the needs of this population,” says APA CEO Dr. Arthur C. Evans Jr. “This bill emphasizes the importance of evidence-based, culturally and linguistically appropriate treatments, which APA believes are

essential for all communities.”

For more information, contact Leo Rennie, MPA, at lrennie@apa.org.

Working to Ease the Transition After High School for Students with Disabilities

APA and Div. 22 (Rehabilitation Psychology) are advising the National Technical Assistance Center on improving the transition to postsecondary education and employment for students with disabilities. In [comments](#) to the Department of Education’s Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services, the two APA groups emphasized the need for students with disabilities seeking employment or further education to get more guidance earlier on about their strengths, challenges and limitations. In many cases, these students don’t have those discussions until age 14, or even later.

For more information, contact Ben Vonachen, at bvonachen@apa.org.

Fighting to Bring Science Back to the Department of Justice

In response to APA advocacy, the Senate Appropriations Committee included language in their FY 2020 appropriations report to re-establish the Science Advisory Board in the Office of Justice Programs (OJP) at the Department of Justice. Created in 2010, the board had been charged with reviewing and making recommendations on OJP research, statistics and grants programs, but it was disbanded by the administration last year. APA has urged lawmakers to re-establish the board to ensure that these programs are scientifically sound and pertinent to policymakers and practitioners. The new language will not take effect until both chambers of Congress can agree on a funding bill. Until then, APA will continue to press lawmakers to support the application of science across all government agencies.

For more information, contact Amalia Corby, MS, at acorby-edwards@apa.org.

Welcoming New Policy Fellows

APA’s [Congressional](#) and [Executive Branch Science](#) Fellowships enable psychologists to experience a year in Washington, D.C., working on Capitol Hill or for a federal agency. We are pleased to welcome three fellows for 2019–20:

- **Dr. Luis Rivera**, an experimental social psychologist and associate professor of psychology and the principal investigator of the Rutgers Implicit Social Cognition Lab at Rutgers University, Newark. Rivera will work on privacy and cybersecurity for Sen. Ron Wyden (D-Ore.).
- **Dr. Abigail Seibert**, a clinical psychologist and former president of the Massachusetts Psychological Association who holds an appointment at Boston Children’s Hospital. As the [Jacquelin Goldman Congressional Fellow](#) funded by the American Psychological Foundation, she will serve on the Subcommittee on Children and Families of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee with Sen. Bob Casey (D-Pa.).
- **Dr. Gina Roussos**, a social psychologist most recently at the Institute for Equity & Inclusion Sciences in Portland, Oregon. She will spend her Executive Branch Science Fellowship year at the National Institutes of Health in the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities.

Want to apply for a future policy [fellowship](#)? The deadline for next year is Jan. 5.

For more information, contact Amalia Corby, MS, at acorby-edwards@apa.org or Craig Fisher, PsyD, at cfisher@apa.org.

Seeking Funding for Health IT Use in Implementing Addiction Programs

APA and its partners in the Behavioral Health Information Technology Coalition are [urging](#) the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to fund the use of certified electronic health records technology by psychologists and other behavioral health providers to aid in the implementation of newly authorized opioid treatment demonstration programs.

For more information, contact Laurel Stine, JD, at lstine@apa.org.

Calling for Pain Management Incentives

In partnership with the Voices for Non-Opioid Choices, APA is [urging](#) CMS to encourage health-care providers to use evidence-based pharmacologic and nonpharmacologic approaches and therapies to treat pain in the hospital outpatient setting. Wider use of these treatments is essential to helping curb the opioid epidemic.

For more information, contact Laurel Stine, JD, at lstine@apa.org.