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Improving Mental Health Care in Criminal Justice Settings

APA, alongside the National Association of Social Workers and the American Psychiatric Association, led a coalition of criminal justice and mental health organizations in developing [consensus recommendations for Congress](#) to improve mental health care in the criminal justice and juvenile justice systems. These systems provide a growing proportion of mental health services in the United States and they are struggling to adapt. Recommendations from the coalition call for policymakers to increase support for mental health services, such as by providing more training and funding for mental health treatment, crisis intervention, diversion and re-entry.

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

Working to Increase Access to Mental Health Services

Rep. Billy Long (R-Mo.) and Sen. Martin Heinrich (D-N.M.) co-sponsored the Medicare Mental Health Access Act ([H.R. 884/ S.2772](#)), legislation that would eliminate Medicare's requirement that clinical psychologists first obtain physician approval before seeing patients in certain settings. Rep. Long is a member of the influential House Energy and Commerce committee, one of the two committees that oversee Medicare. He joins 48 of his other congressional colleagues in co-sponsoring this legislation.

For more information, contact Laurel Stine, JD, at lstine@apa.org or Scott Barstow, MS, at sbarstow@apa.org.

Promoting Non-Opioid Management of Acute Pain

On Dec. 5, APA participated in a daylong conference focusing on policies to address acute pain and the opioid epidemic in America as part of the Voices for Non-Opioid Choices Solutions Summit held at APA. Representatives from an array of national and regional organizations representing addiction treatment programs, health-care providers, family members of overdose victims and surgical centers spoke at the conference, along with Dr. Amy Wachholtz, an expert on psychological interventions for acute pain management. As program director of clinical health psychology at the University of Colorado, Denver, Dr. Wachholtz focuses on the treatment and management of acute and chronic pain, which can reduce the use of opioids and prevent the development of opioid use disorders. On the day before the summit, Dr. Wachholtz joined APA staff and dozens of other representatives from Voices for Non-Opioid Choices on Capitol Hill to talk to members of Congress and their staff about non-opioid alternatives for treating acute pain.

For more information, contact Scott Barstow, MS, at sbarstow@apa.org or Laurel Stine, JD, at lstine@apa.org.

Working to Protect Victims of Sexual Misconduct

APA met with key regulatory officials in the Office of Management and Budget in the White House to share concerns about pending Title IX regulations on campus sexual assault as the rule moves through the final stages of review. APA [reiterated concerns](#) that the proposed rule would lead to under-reporting of sexual misconduct and re-victimization or traumatization of the parties involved, and shared [the APA Resolution on Campus Sexual Assault](#). Staff will continue to monitor the rule and work with Congress and the Trump administration as the rule advances.

For more information contact Amalia Corby at acorby-edwards@apa.org or Kenneth Polishchuk at kpolishchuk@apa.org.

Urging Congress to Pass Fiscal Year 2020 Funding Legislation

APA joined forces with two coalitions focused on research at the Departments of Defense (DoD) and Veterans Affairs (VA) in urging Congress to pass Fiscal Year 2020 appropriations bills. The Friends of VA Medical Care and Health Research coalition and the Defense Health Research Consortium highlighted how gaps in research funding affect DoD and VA research on some of the toughest health challenges military personnel and veterans face, including post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, chronic pain and substance use. APA continues to meet with committee staff on Capitol Hill to push for passage of appropriations bills in the next two weeks.

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