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Ideas of Reference

is the newsletter of the Minnesota Psychiatric Society, a district branch of the American Psychiatric Association.



MINNESOTA PSYCHIATRIC SOCIETY

Improving Minnesota's mental health care through education, advocacy and sound psychiatric practice.

Our vision is physician leadership creating the nation's highest quality, most affordable, and accessible system of mental health care.

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Legislative Update

Tara Erickson, MPS Lobbyist

The 2020 legislative session is anything but normal because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The legislature needs to adjourn by midnight on May 18th but political insiders assume there will be a number of "special" sessions that are called throughout the summer and fall depending on Minnesota's needs during the pandemic.

Economic Forecast

On May 5th, Minnesota Management and Budget Commissioner Myron Frans released an updated budget projection for the current biennium. Minnesota's budget and economic outlook has significantly worsened since the coronavirus pandemic. A deficit of \$2.426 billion is now projected for the current biennium, which is almost a \$4 billion change compared to the February forecast.

Prior Authorization Reform

Legislation pushing for major reforms to the prior authorization process look poised to move forward this legislative session. Senate File 3204/ House File 3398 authored by Sen. Julie Rosen and Rep. Kelly Morrison reforms the prior authorization process that HMOs and PBMs must use and would mandate a more transparent and streamlined process. MPS participated in a coalition led by the Minnesota Medical Association (MMA) and the Minnesota Hospital Association (MHA) and lobbied on the issue extensively the last five years. The bill requires prior authorization determinations to be made in 5 business days instead of 10 business days. The bill maintains the current time requirement of 72 hours for expedited prior authorization determinations but accelerates the timeframe to 48 hours effective in 2022. Standard appeals of prior authorization denials must be made within 15 days instead of up to 30 business days. It also ensures that existing prior authorizations are kept in place for 60 days even if a patient changes insurance plans. Physician specialty groups insisted that

physicians licensed in Minnesota and who have experience treating patients with the illness, injury, or disease for which the health care procedure or diagnostic test has been requested will decide the prior authorization.

Physician Assistant Scope of Practice

The Minnesota Physician Assistant Association brought forward legislation to allow for independent practice meaning they would not need a collaborative practice agreement with a physician. House File 3402/Senate File 2043 authored by Rep. Jennifer Schultz and Sen. Mary Kiffmeyer was contentious between physician and physician assistant associations. The final agreed to legislation with the Minnesota Medical Association would require "practice agreements" with practice settings or the employers of the PAs, not physicians. Meaning physicians would not be delegating or supervising PAs anymore.

MPS worked with other mental health advocacy organizations to push for an amendment that would put safeguards on physician assistants and treatment of children with emotional disturbance or adults with serious mental illness.

Governor issues new Executive Order

Starting May 10th, healthcare facilities that offer procedures that utilize PPE or ventilators must develop and implement an internal oversight structure and written plan establishing criteria for determining whether a procedure should proceed during the COVID-19 pandemic, for prioritizing procedures, and for ensuring a safe environment for staff, patients, and visitors. Detailed Plan requirements are set forth in the MDH guidance Requiring Facilities to Prioritize Surgeries and Procedures and Provide Safe Environment during COVID-19 Peacetime Emergency available at: <https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/hcp/guidesurgery.pdf>. ■



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Ideas of Reference

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MPS Executive Director's Column

Linda Vukelich

MPS Executive Director

Greetings, MPS members!

I am so happy to introduce this new column and open a new line of communication with MPS members. As your executive director, I can honestly say that I am privileged to be involved in the important work you do to serve your patients and our community. Since I started in this role in 1997, I have enjoyed individually connecting with literally hundreds of members, but this column gives me the avenue to regularly reach out to everyone to connect and get your input. Any of you who know me know that I have a lot of energy and I am always excited to connect and see what we can do together. Although our current situation is truly historic and fundamentally disruptive, I, for one, am finding that some of the changes we are sharing are actually encouraging. We can all see that this has been a very difficult time for everyone, especially those involved in the health care system – patients and providers alike – but those challenges have shown how unified we all are when it comes down to it. Just a few months ago, we were all much more focused on our specific roles and needs. Today, I see a level of cooperation that encourages me and reminds me that we are all in this together. I am particularly proud that MPS is partnering to support all healthcare workers, first responders and essential personnel with the COVID Cares Support Service where licensed individuals cover 1-hour timeslots from 9am to 9pm to answer calls and provide supportive listening and referral to help those on the front lines manage stress and find resources. In partnership with the Minnesota Psychological Association, the Black Psychologists of Minnesota, and Mental Health Minnesota, MPS is offering the service through FastTrackerMN.org – another life-saving tool MPS members can be proud of. Check it out at www.FastTrackerMN.org. ■

People working on the front lines of COVID-19 are experiencing unparalleled levels of stress.



We are seeking mental health professionals willing to volunteer their time to help provide them with support and a listening ear.

Sign up to help today.

We're all in this together



Sheila Specker, MD, DFAPA
MPS President

We have received this message from the governor, the media, and the World Health organization and may be relieved or tired of hearing it. Regardless, we, as psychiatrists, are in a critical position to provide support for our patients and families, other healthcare providers and our communities. Words have always been our tool and never more so than now. Physician author H. Steven Moffic offers this wisdom: "We psychiatrists and other mental health care professionals should be masters of words, as we have the challenge to use just the message to convey empathy and to interpret complex problems. If not, our therapeutic alliance and positive impact may be compromised." And while we must maintain our physical distance, whether it be six feet or from a telehealth platform, maintaining the therapeutic connection is never more important.

We too must combat the aloneness and self-isolation that our patients experience. According to actress Angela Lansbury, it is "better to be busy than be busy worrying." We offer words of advice on staying busy, having structure, exercising, meditation, and coping strategies but must not forget that humor too is healing. It decreases stress hormones, it strengthens immune systems. For example, have we considered how odd it might be to walk into a bank wearing a dark mask? Or getting your picture taken for your driver's license with your favorite mask?

These are difficult times. "We need to get prepared but avoid being scared. We cannot put our heads in the sand, but we need to not fuel the hysteria...we have more information and reasoning than that", from author Kitty O'Meara. The APA has highlighted the role of the psychiatrist: We educate people about common adverse responses such as insomnia, increase in alcohol use, aggressive behaviors and ways to reduce stress such as adequate sleep, staying connected and offering resources. This includes recommending health-promoting behaviors such as taking steps to safeguard health including limiting media exposure. Another role of psychiatrists is to support our interdisciplinary teams and colleagues on distress responses and provide early interventions. MPS in conjunction with other organizations has just set up a volunteer work force to support health care professionals (see further description on MPS website). Uncertainty about the future can be addressed by the psychiatrist facilitating practical problem-solving which in turn enhances calming and increases self-efficacy. We also can empower patients, families, and care providers about the psychological effects of isolation and quarantine which range from anxiety, fear of infecting others, to post-traumatic symptoms. While acknowledging the losses that occur, providing a sense of hope about the future is what we do.

This past year as your president has been humbling, rewarding, exhausting at times, but I am grateful for the opportunity to serve the psychiatric community. By advocating at the legislature and testifying on our mental health and addiction needs, I have realized the impact we can have as a society. Linking with other organizations on shared missions such as enforcing parity measures and maintaining an appropriate scope of practice for PA's and pharmacists has shown me the importance of partnering. Our committees are active with energetic members. Through Linda Vukelich's tireless efforts, Tara Erickson's lobbying vigor, the council and many others who step up at times of need, our society is in an excellent position to continue our mission.

Stay safe and healthy! ■

People working on the front lines of COVID-19 are experiencing unparalleled levels of stress.



We want to support all those who are working hard to save lives.

That's why a group of mental health professionals have come together to provide free support sessions to people in Minnesota working in healthcare, essential personnel, and first responders.

They have volunteered their time to provide support and a listening ear. Available seven days a week, now through August 31, 9AM to 9PM

To reach an on-call volunteer, visit www.fasttrackermn.org



You're here for us. Let us be here for you.

This service is provided through a partnership of the Minnesota Psychiatric Society, the Minnesota Psychological Association, and Mental Health Minnesota.



Congratulations, New Distinguished Fellows!

No convocation, but we celebrate your achievement!

Excellence is the hallmark of an APA Distinguished Fellow. Each of the following was first nominated by the MPS Council for their distinction in the field, scope of knowledge, and breadth of skills worthy of recognition. They got letters of support and submitted applications demonstrating their contributions in categories ranging from APA/MPS involvement to clinical, administrative, and teaching contributions, scientific and scholarly publications, and more.

New Distinguished Fellows are honored each year at the APA Annual Meeting during the Convocation of Distinguished Fellows and mor close to home as honorees at the annual MPS Recognition Dinner. Unfortunately, both events had to be cancelled due to COVID-19, so we are honoring our 2020 Distinguished Fellows here. We have asked each to share a meaningful quote in the hope that our readers get to know a little more about them. Please join us and congratulate them!

Kathryn Lombardo, MD, DFAPA



Psychiatrist, Olmstead Medical Center, Rochester, MN

"I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the waters to create many ripples."

- Mother Teresa

Sheila Specker, MD, DFAPA



Psychiatrist, Program Director, Addiction Medicine Residency Program, Psychiatrist and Professor, U of MN, Minneapolis, MN

"Serenity is not freedom from the storm ... but peace amid the storm."

- Refridgerator magnet

Kaz Nelson, MD, DFAPA



Psychiatrist, Program Director, Psychiatry Residency Training Program, Vice Chair for Education, Associate Professor, U of MN, Minneapolis, MN

In the Woodbury High School Class of 1998 yearbook, underneath my yearbook photo, these words are written:

"I want to be a psychiatrist".

I am deeply grateful to be living my personal and professional dream and especially thankful for the APA and MPS community for affirming and advancing the most noble values of our profession.

Mark D. Williams, MD, DFAPA



Psychiatrist, Population Health Scholar, Integrated Behavioral Health Division, Assoc. Professor of Psychiatry, Mayo Medical Center, Rochester, MN.

This quote reminds me to look beyond the surface in my patients and in the current world situation.

"All that is gold does not glitter, Not all those who wander are lost;

The old thing that is strong does not wither, Deep roots are not reached by the frost"

- JRR Tolkien



Congratulations, MPS Elected Leaders!

Although a lot has changed, some aspects of your professional association have been moving forward as usual. On March 15, MPS members completed their voting and elected the 2020 slate of candidates. With gratitude, we offer congratulations to our newly elected President Elect Chinmoy Gulrajani, MD, DFAPA, and the Councilors Mary Beth Lardizabal, DO, DFAPA and Marie Olseth, MD, DFAPA!

A few thoughts for the months ahead

Chinmoy Gulrajani, MD, DLFAPA, MMPS President Elect



The COVID-19 pandemic will cause no small measure of grief and distress, and in the near future, Minnesotans will need us more than ever before. It is therefore vital that as mental healthcare providers, we remain mindful and in control. It is important to process the fear and anxieties that all of us are experiencing and acknowledge that this is our natural response to crisis. Above all, it is important that we don't get burnt out by stress and get through this together.

Therefore, here, I have listed small steps that we can all take to ensure that we avoid letting this crisis get the better of us:

- Get daily physical exercise, even if it is for a short duration.
 - Make time every day to relax with yoga, meditation, music, or whatever works for you.
 - Set aside time to engage in activities with your loved ones that do not expose or burden you with news related to the pandemic.
 - Stay in regular touch with your loved ones, near and far.
 - Support your colleagues, especially those who don't have family here.
 - We are all prone to catastrophizing. Remain objective in your assessment of the problem, and recognize any cognitive errors that may not be based in science or the reality of the situation.
- Remember, the cumulative mental health toll of this pandemic is yet to be realized. In these trying times when our patients need us most, we can only help others if we help ourselves first. ■

MPS Membership Committee Plans to Succeed!

Bob Jones, MD, DLFAPA, Membership Committee Chair

The MPS Membership Committee has adopted a progressive agenda in support of the Committee's purpose: to increase and support the diversity of membership from all regions, practice environments, and demographics in collaboration with the MPS Executive Council. The Membership Committee's work plan and goals support the strategic focus of MPS including: 1) Advocacy for MPS in support of membership engagement, 2) Education in support of the clinical expertise of its members, and 3) Organizational advancement in support of the professional community and leadership of Minnesota psychiatrists.

Through its role managing communication resources, the Communication Committee is an essential collaborator with the Membership Committee through our shared goals of advocacy, education, and organizational advancement in support of all MPS constituencies.

Currently, the Membership Committee is developing strategies for member outreach and retention, communicating with former members the benefits and rewards of APA and MPS membership, and identifying potential new members, their needs, and opportunities for advocacy and support.

A key area of membership support and development involves consultation in the area of professional practice transitions. Practice transitions are both specific and diverse for early career psychiatrists, experienced mid-career psychiatrists, and those looking to move from full time to part time practices or developing new areas of psychiatric specialization.

The strength and organizational effectiveness of MPS membership is proportional to its engagement and diversity. The Membership Committee looks forward to success in membership support and development with the Minnesota Psychiatric Society. ■



Calling all MPS members!



SUPPORT OUR COMMUNITY

Volunteer an Hour of Your Time

Individuals on the front lines of COVID-19 are experiencing unparalleled levels of stress.

In their seminal paper on AIDS and occupational risk for physicians, Zuger and Miles wrote,

“Medicine is an inherently moral enterprise, the success and future of which depend to a great extent on the integrity of individual professionals as they face the duties the calling of healer entails.”

Zuger A, Miles SH. Physicians, AIDS, and occupational risk: historic traditions and ethical obligations. JAMA 1987;258:1924-1928.

We* are looking for mental health professionals who are willing to set aside specific times to be available to talk with individuals on the front lines and provide them with support over the telephone. We are asking for licensed mental health professionals who are willing to set aside at least one hour a week until the end of August. We do not know how frequently the time will be utilized or what the demand for the service might be. We just feel it is important to offer trained support to our community at this time. You may volunteer for as many hours as you have available, but we ask that you at least be available for one consistent hour each week. If you are unavailable at the usual time one week, that can be accommodated. If you are interested, you can complete some basic information and capture your availability to volunteer at <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/805084AA8AA2FA1FD0-covid19>

Go to www.MnPsychSoc.org to get to the COVID Cares Volunteer Sign-Up Site & COVID Cares Schedule

Resource & Referral Tools are available at:

<https://www.mnpsychsoc.org/covid-care-support-services.html> & <https://fasttrackermn.org>

Questions? Contact lvukelich@comcast.net, trishas@trishastarkphd.com, or wilgarrett@comcast.net.

Thank you for your willingness to support our community during this difficult time.

*(Minnesota Psychiatric Society, Minnesota Psychological Association, Minnesota Association of Black Psychologists, and Mental Health Minnesota, along with Fasttrackermn.org)

Spread the word! Post the enclosed flyer in your clinic.



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Ethics in the Time of COVID

Mary Beth Lardizabal, DO, DFAPA
Ethics Comm Chair

On the MPS ethics committee, we often discuss ethical questions about the care of our patients. In the time of COVID, these questions have gone from the theoretical to the very, very real. How do we care for our mental health patients in the time of COVID? How do we ensure that they receive the same needed care as other patients?

Working in a healthcare system, I worry about our inpatients that live in a congregate setting, which is not unlike the nursing home settings we are reading about. Patients may sleep in double rooms, eat in the same dining room, use the same bathrooms, and touch the same tables and materials. The question of how to protect our patients and staff can literally be one of life or death. For many of us, this has become our constant question as we make decisions planning for the COVID wave as it comes to Minnesota. We grapple with the reality of PPE. We are taking precautions, using masks to protect our patients and our staff, but as we expect an increasing number of patients to be overflowing our emergency rooms, our worry and fear are real.

I think we are making the best decisions we can. Collectively as psychiatrists, I can see how much we are caring for patients and each other. Psychiatrists have jumped headfirst into the telehealth pool to provide necessary care. I am happy to be a peer support volunteer for our MPS COVID support line. Our colleagues are stepping up in so many ways. At this moment in time, there is the felt sense of the collective "We", among my psychiatry and medical colleagues. I am proud to be one of them. ■

Saturday, July 9, 2020, 9am-12pm

MPS Council Meeting (*members welcome!*) For ZOOM information, contact Linda Vukelich - L.Vukelich@comcast.net 651-278-4241. For more calendar updates, go to mnpsychsoc.org

Congressional Advocacy Network

Mental health is in the headlines every day—but policymakers need to understand psychiatry's important role, or they risk passing laws and regulations that hurt your patients and your practice.

APA CAN empowers member psychiatrists to connect with members of Congress and speak on behalf of the APA on mental health. You are psychiatry's best advocate for parity enforcement, fair reimbursement, and a healthcare system that values mental health. Your voice is needed in these debates. Will you join us?

How CAN Works CAN helps psychiatrists increase their impact on federal policy and advance the mental health cause in America.

- Congressional Advocates—APA's committed psychiatrists—are matched with members of Congress in both chambers.
- With assistance from APA's Department of Government Relations, Congressional Advocates attend meetings in congressional districts.
- Congressional Advocates are encouraged to build relationships by serving on advisory boards, or other events.
- CAN may complement the federal efforts of APA's District Branches and State Associations, and a network for joint rapid response.

Through CAN, Congressional Advocates are uniquely positioned to have direct, personal communication with their representatives and an opportunity to shape policy discussions important to psychiatry and mental health on Capitol Hill.

Join CAN Visit psychiatry.org/CAN to sign up. ■