

What's New at the APA

- APA elections concluded with members choosing Rebecca Brendel, M.D., J.D. to serve as the next President-Elect of the association. Dr. Brendel is an APA Distinguished Fellow and the current chair of APA's Ethics Committee. Her term as APA President-Elect will begin at the conclusion of the APA Annual Meeting in May. The results are not official until confirmed by the Board of Trustees during their March meeting. You can read more about the Dr. Brendel and view the full slate of election results [here](#).
- APA issued a statement urging state public health authorities to include people with serious mental illness (SMI) and substance use disorders (SUD) in the local equivalent of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Phase 1-C. vaccine prioritization schedule. People with SMI and SUDs are at increased risk for contracting and suffering complications from COVID-19. You can read the full statement [here](#).

Key Dates and Observances

APA Communications staff maintains a calendar of key dates, observances and events at APA and in the world of mental health in general. The calendar is kept up to date a few months in advance. You can view the calendar and keep track of important mental health dates and observances [here](#).

March Course of the Month – Buprenorphine Update and Evolving Standards of Care

This course will describe recent changes in the epidemiology of opioid use disorder, including the current epidemic of fentanyl, carfentanyl, and other fentanyl analogs. The course will review: 1) recent regulatory changes and their effect on clinical practice and collaborative care models, 2) the results of research studies comparing buprenorphine and extended-release naltrexone, 3) the impact of new medication formulations, including injectable buprenorphine, 4) evolving standards of care for medication-assisted treatment including models for the management of opioid overdose and the efforts to reduce or eliminate barriers to admission to long-term medication treatment, and 5) plans to expand access to evidence-based treatment within the justice system. [Click here to access the Course of the Month and sign up for updates about this free member benefit.](#)

APA Unveils New Strategic Plan on Mental Health Equity

APA's Division of Diversity and Health Equity (DDHE) has launched a new strategic plan to work toward achieving diversity and mental health equity. The plan, entitled *Charting Excellence Through Partnerships: Strategic Goals for the Division of Diversity and Health Equity* is publicly available [here](#). The strategic plan is a dynamic document with the expectation that priorities will be adjusted, and accommodations will be made for emerging needs of both APA members and the diverse patient populations served by the organization. Read more about the new strategic plan on [APA's Blog](#).

Moving the Needle on Mental Health with APA's Access Agenda

APA has identified three areas of focus that the Biden-Harris administration can focus on to increase access to mental health care and improve the lives of people with mental health and substance use disorders. The #APAAccessAgenda is designed to highlight areas where the administration and Congress can take immediate action so that more people can get the high-quality psychiatric care they need. These areas include, connecting patients to care and coverage, addressing inequities, and investing in mental health and substance use disorder services. You can read more about [#APAAccessAgenda on APA's Blog](#).

News & Updates from the APA Foundation

- We are excited to announce the official launch of [Notice.Talk.Act.® at Work](#) - An e-Learning training module that supports leaders, managers, and supervisors as they learn about the impact of mental health on employees and the organization.
- The application cycle for the [2021 Awards for Advancing Minority Mental Health](#) has extended its deadline to Friday, March 5th. The program recognizes community organizations that have raised awareness and increased access to quality mental health services in underserved minority communities.
- **Save the Date:** Saturday, July 10th for the inaugural **MOORE Equity in Mental Health 5K** event hosted by APA's Division of Diversity and Health Equity and the APA Foundation. The event, in honor of author and mental health advocate, Bebe Moore Campbell, will raise funds and awareness to advance mental health equity. Please plan on participating virtually in your communities, and/or supporting a peer who is doing so. Additional details to follow.

New Schizophrenia Guideline Resources

New resources to accompany the APA Practice Guideline on the Treatment of Patients With Schizophrenia are now available: clinician guides (including a guide focused on tardive dyskinesia), a patient and family guide, and two CME-related activities, a Performance in Practice Assessment Tool and SMI Adviser webinar. [LEARN MORE](#)

Frequently Asked Questions about Telepsychiatry

In this installment of APA's Telepsychiatry Blog, Drs. Steven Chan and Krysti Vo tackle some frequently asked questions about telepsychiatry practice and licensing.

<https://www.psychiatry.org/psychiatrists/practice/telepsychiatry/blog/frequently-asked-questions-about-telepsychiatry>

Project N95 – PPE Now Available 24/7

More than 1,000 members have obtained PPE through our collaboration with Project N95. Now, you no longer have to wait for group buying opportunities or worry about missing order deadlines. The Project N95 Shop allows you to purchase vetted PPE from verified suppliers online at any time.

<https://www.psychiatry.org/psychiatrists/covid-19-coronavirus/project-n95>

Update on 2021 Office/Outpatient E/M Billing and Documentation

CMS has finalized changes to the way office/outpatient E/M codes (99202-99215) will be chosen and documented. APA has updated its member resources to help navigate these changes.

<https://www.psychiatry.org/psychiatrists/practice/practice-management/coding-reimbursement-medicare-and-medicaid/coding-and-reimbursement/member-resources>

Medical Cannabis Research and Advocacy Alliance

Medical Cannabis Research and Advocacy Alliance (MCRAA) is a recently formed physician-led, patient focused coalition created to educate patients, policymakers, and the medical community, as well as to advance medical cannabis research and promote evidence-based medical cannabis treatments. MCRAA now has an official website (MCRAA.org) and has also planned its first virtual symposium on March 13th as part of its mission (<https://www.mcraa.org/events>). The coalition is encouraging participation from all stakeholder communities; all APA members and staff are eligible for the membership rate of \$49 for participation.