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WVPA: Our expansion and victories of 2015

Autumn is often viewed as a time of the year for reflection and thanksgiving. As I look out at the fall foliage outside my office window in Charleston, I am grateful for the support I have received over the past year from our members from around the state of West Virginia. In particular, our dedicated board members and committee members have assisted in every way imaginable throughout the year. As president of this organization, my over-arching goal has been to stimulate more interest and involvement in WVPA in 2015. While there is always room for improvement, I have been proud of the results thus far.

WVPA members are working with schools, hospitals, the legislature and the public to raise awareness as it applies to wellness issues such as sports-related concussions and child obesity, to name a few. We have partnered with forward-thinking organizations such as the West Virginia School Board Association, the West Virginia Primary Care Association and First Choice

Health Systems so that we can combine our voices to better serve our citizens in the future. We have worked with the West Virginia Association of Professional Psychologists (WVAPP) and the West Virginia School Psychologists Association on recommending the newly appointed members of the Board of Examiners of Psychologists who replaced the prior board members whose terms had expired. We also collaborated with WVAPP when troublesome issues arose around forensic psychology reimbursement rates.

Expansion and Victories
Continued on page 10



Is your profession worth \$216 in your pocket?

By WVPA Executive Director Diane Slaughter, CAE, APR, Fellow PRSA

Welcome to the holiday season, following a year full of blessings for psychology and the WVPA (as highlighted in President Dr. Scott Fields' article)..

Members of the West Virginia Psychological Association (WVPA), as well as other West Virginia psychologists, enjoyed our 2015 Fall Conference, which is highlighted on pages 8 and 9.

In making your plans for 2016, be sure to include our April 8 Spring Event in Charleston and our October 7-9 Fall Conference at Stonewall Resort. With our variety of dues categories available and the member discount, you're actually putting up to \$216 back in your pocket! Where else can you make \$216 for joining your professional association and attending the premier conferences in West Virginia? You can join online at www.wvpsychology.org; check the category that's right for you!

Our membership categories now include:

- Academic/Government;
- Affiliate;
- Associate;
- Compassionate circumstances;
- Early Career Psychologist;
- Full;
- Life;
- Retired; and
- Student.

As a members of WVPA, you enjoy a wide range of benefits! You will stay current and competitive by attending our cutting-edge education conferences in the spring and fall with member discounts totaling up to \$216; in some cases this discount more than pays for your annual dues! You can grow your practice and improve your cash flow through our web-based referral and credit card acceptance programs. You can rest easy knowing your profession and your patients are protected through our federal and state legislative advocacy efforts. You can take advantage of outstanding opportunities for career and personal growth through our work with students and early career psychologists, association committee service and leadership opportunities. You can make connections with colleagues through our subscription listservs, membership directory and conferences. Finally, you have access to quality and timely information through our public outreach programs, our award-winning newsletter and our web site at www.wvpsychology.org. Just visit the web site and click the "join" tab!

In addition to renewing your dues online, we will be sending paper statements to your address of record. Dues are due as of

January 1, 2016, but must be paid by March 1 to get the spring conference discount.

Wishing you all the blessings of the holiday season!



Diane Slaughter

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Reforming BMI reporting in schools

By WVPA Intern Scott McCarus

In October, the West Virginia Psychological Association rallied at the West Virginia State Capitol building for Lobby Day. More than two dozen psychology professionals and professionals in training gathered to inform our elected representatives about a growing problem in the way we provide health comparisons to children and teens in the public school system.



In her work at the WVU Disordered Eating Center of Charleston, Dr. Jessica Luzier has seen firsthand how well-intentioned health promotion programs in schools may have deleterious effects on children. For instance, in the Fitnessgram program, some school districts choose to have health and PE teachers measure students' height and weight (sometimes in front of their peers), then instruct the students on dietary and exercise interventions based on the calculated Body Mass Index. Unfortunately, BMI is not an accurate and reliable indicator of health in children, nor is "assigning" a child a diet/exercise

regimen an effective treatment for obesity. Thus, some children respond in extreme and dangerous ways to these recommendations. Worse yet, parents are often unaware their children are enrolled in this program because no consent is mandated. Dr. Luzier (with the help of a concerned parent and WVPA lobbyist, Frank Hartman), amended the current statute to mandate parent consent for this health program, and to allow parents the option to instead have a healthcare provider gather the data on health markers to provide schools. Though the legislation was introduced in both the State House and Senate in the 2015 spring session, it was held up in committee and not prioritized. We have high hopes that the legislation will have success in the 2016 legislative session.



When the West Virginia Psychological Association took to the Capitol and met with state leaders, legislators were almost unanimously supportive of this initiative. At least a dozen legislators were open to hearing more on the subject and would

like to see more supporting material. Overall, our efforts at the state capitol were not unheard. We gained serious momentum



to the reformation of BMI on behalf of children in West Virginia.

Participants included: Drs. Jeff Boggess, Huntington, Marty Boone, Morgantown, Scott Fields, Charleston, Sarah Jarvis, Barboursville, Patrick Kerr, Charleston, Penny Koontz, Huntington, Jessica Luzier, Charleston, Marshall University students Shannon Beish, Emily Bushong, Elise Edwards, Jessica Elliott, Megan Lawhon, Shelby McGuire, Raquel Munoz, Whitney Myers, Britni Ross, Rachel Rudd, Brittany Stalder, Brittany Weeks, University of North Dakota student Madison Hassig, WVU students Hannah Greenbaum, Chelsea Lattore, Sarah Berkey Milam, WVPA Intern Scott McCarus, WVPA Government Relations Specialist Frank Hartman and Executive Director Diane Slaughter.

WVPA will continue its commitment to improve access and mental health care to citizens of West Virginia.

2016 Medicare fee schedule final rule out

By APA Legal and Regulatory Affairs Staff

On Oct. 30, 2015, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) released the final rule (PDF, 5.7MB) on the 2016 Medicare physician fee schedule, establishing Medicare's payment policies for the coming year.

In its Sept. 8 comment letter on the 2016 Medicare Physician Fee Schedule Proposed Rule, the APA Practice Organization (APAPO) addressed areas that could impact reimbursement of psychological services, and CMS considered many of these comments when it developed its final rule.

Impact of payment formula for psychologists

CMS estimates the impact on Medicare reimbursement for clinical psychologists in 2016 to be 0 percent. Most other specialties also will see no impact on reimbursement next year based on the final rule.

However, since 2013, a mandatory sequestration cut has been imposed to all Medicare providers. This cut will reduce psychologist reimbursement by 2 percent in 2016. The Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015, signed by President Obama on Nov. 2, extended the 2 percent sequestration cut for Medicare providers through 2025.

In addition to losses caused by sequestration, Medicare payments to psychologists have

declined significantly since 2001 because under the current formula Medicare pays more for higher-cost, technology-driven services with high overhead. APAPO continues to advocate for a legislative change in the Medicare payment formula so that psychologists are appropriately and fairly compensated for treating Medicare beneficiaries.

The Physician Quality Reporting System (PQRS)

CMS is not making changes to the claims-based reporting method for PQRS in 2016. Even so, the agency has stated in the past that claims-based reporting will be eliminated in future rulemaking.

Further, the reporting requirements for eligible professionals (EPs) for 2016 are the same as the 2015 requirements: EPs must report nine measures across three National Quality Strategy (NQS) domains and include at least one cross-cutting measure.

New measures:

- No. 411: Depression Remission at Six Months – registry reporting only.
- No. 431: Preventive Care and Screening: Unhealthy Alcohol Use: Screening and Brief Counseling – registry reporting and measures group reporting and note: 431 is a cross-cutting measure.

- No. 414: Evaluation of Intervention for Rising Opioid Use – registry reporting only.

Revised measures for 2016:

- No. 370: Depression Remission at Twelve Months – registry reporting being added.

Measures removed for 2016:

- No. 131: Pain Assessment and Follow-Up: (will be available only through a new measures group).
- No. 173: Preventive Care and Screening: Unhealthy Alcohol Use – Screening.
- No. 285: Dementia: Screening for Depressive Symptoms.

APAPO PQRSPRO is a CMS-qualified PQRS registry. To register, visit the PQRSPRO website.

Additional PQRS resources are available on the Quality Improvement Programs section of the Practice Organization's Practice Central website.

Highlights for psychologists Advanced care planning

CMS finalized its proposal to reimburse Medicare providers for Advance Care Planning services by a physician or other qualified health professional under new CPT codes 99497 and add-on code 99498. In the final rule, CMS was not clear on which nonphysician provid-

Medicare fee schedule
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Support WVPA when you take a Trust webinar

By Greg Hill, The Trust

Support the West Virginia Psychological Association each time you register for a Trust ethics and risk management webinar.

The Trust is offering our association a way to benefit from each purchase of its on-demand Ethics and Risk Management Continuing Education Webinar Sequences.

While The Trust's live workshops involve new content in a classroom setting and the potential to spend time with colleagues, not everyone can attend at the time and place the workshop is scheduled. Webinars enable you to earn CE credits without travel, lodging, and days away from work. Webinars also enable you to view content at your own pace.

If you have no plans to attend, or have not been able to attend, The Trust's live Ethics and Risk Management Workshops, you can now virtually attend any of four on-demand webinar sequences and attribute a portion of the registration fee to the West Virginia Psychological Association. You can do this simply by entering the promotion code TRUST-WV during webinar registration.

You must voluntarily enter the promotion code TRUST-WV for WVPA to get credit!

Choose from Trust Ethics and Risk Management Webinar

Sequences:

- **Sequence II:**
Legal and Ethical Risks and Risk Management in Professional Psychological Practice: Risk Management in Specific High Risk Areas
Featuring Eric A. Harris, Ed.D., J.D. (6 hours)
- **Sequence III:**
Ethical Decision Making and Risk Management in Clinical Practice
Featuring Jeffrey N. Younggren, Ph.D., ABPP (6 hours)
- **Sequence IV:**
Adventures on the Electronic Frontier: Ethics and Risk Management in the Digital Era
Featuring Eric A. Harris, Ed.D., J.D. (6 hours)
- **Sequence V:**
Hot Topics in Ethics and Risk Management
Featuring Jeffrey N. Younggren, Ph.D.; ABPP, Eric A. Harris, Ed.D., J.D.; Joe Scropo, Ph.D., J.D.; and Daniel O. Taube, J.D., Ph.D. (6 hours)

Here's how to earn 6 CE credits and support your West Virginia Psychological Association:

1. Get details, select a webinar, register (be sure to enter the **promotion code TRUST-WV!**), and create a login.
2. View the webinar on a web-enabled device at your



convenience. Contact the Help Desk with questions regarding purchase, login, streaming, etc.

3. Pass an online exam and complete a brief online webinar evaluation.
4. Download and print or save a PDF of your CE certificate.
5. Individuals and groups insured through The Trust Sponsored Professional Liability Insurance Program may qualify for a 15% discount on their annual insurance premium for two consecutive renewals by submitting certificate(s) along with their insurance renewals.

Watch your
email for
Spring
Conference
information!

Your well-being: Stillness

By John F. Christensen, PhD, APA Advisory Committee on Colleague Assistance

A recent development in information technology is the advent of Google glasses. These are smart goggles that allow streaming of data via the internet onto a sector of the lens and linked to a GPS embedded in the frame. Imagine walking by any place of business and with a glance at the storefront accessing the company website (restaurant menu, movie marquee with IMDB reviews) or being able to encounter a bird in the wild and with instant photo with feature recognition see all the information you want about that bird displayed in your field of vision. Pretty cool!

Without waiting for this next best thing to emerge, we already have instant access to more information than was available in the great library of Alexandria (or any historical repository of human knowledge). If we wish, we can allow the information to roll over us in a continuous flow. But is there a cost to wading through this incessant stream?

Although our brains are quite adaptable and resilient, they require the full cycle of a night's sleep to prune unnecessary synaptic connections and consolidate and strengthen the connections of new knowledge. They also require stillness and silence to find the depth and meaning in what we absorb. For us (and our children) these

moments of stillness are disappearing as rapidly as ice sheets in the polar regions. I found a *New York Times* article by Pico Ayer to be a compelling reminder of the deep value of cultivating silence and stillness. <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/01/opinion/sunday/the-joy-of-quiet.html?pagewanted=all>

Making a conscious effort to create "unplugged" time can reap dividends beyond the investment of time (be it a day or an hour or even 5 minutes). When we disconnect from light emitting screens, email, Facebook, and the text messages we might delay, we open ourselves to the possibility of encountering what the poet Gerard Manley Hopkins called "the dearest freshness deep down things," whether it be a manifestation of nature, the touch of a loved one, or the murmurings of our own soul. A physician colleague in New York tries to honor the Sabbath in whatever small way he can. If he cannot take a sabbath day, he takes a "sabbath hour," into which he enters by placing the devices that connect him to the nonstop world (pager, smart phone, iPad, car keys) into a "sabbath box," where they remain to be picked up at the end of the sabbath time. The discipline to collect these moments of stillness requires that we tolerate the technological

withdrawal symptoms of boredom or the anxiety of missing out on something.

For a deeper read on this issue, I recommend "The Shallows" (no pun intended) by Nicholas Carr (<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/06/06/books/review/Lehrer-t.html>)

He refers back to Marshall McLuhan's *Understanding Media* to explore how the media of technology (rather than the message or content) are reshaping our minds.

To live consciously as humans entails being mindful not only of good nutrition, restorative sleep and adequate exercise—but also ensuring we get our recommended daily allowance of stillness.

"When you lose touch with inner stillness, you lose touch with yourself. When you lose touch with yourself, you lose yourself in the world. Your innermost sense of self, of who you are, is inseparable from stillness. This is the I Am that is deeper than name and form."

—Eckhart Tolle

The APA Advisory Committee on Colleague Assistance (ACCA) seeks to promote the health and well-being of psychologists by providing resources to help them prevent burnout and to thrive and flourish in their personal and professional lives.



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2015 Fall Conference highlighted

by WVPA President-elect and Program Chair Jeff Boggess, PhD

The 2015 WVPA Fall Conference took place at the Waterfront Place Hotel in Morgantown from October 2nd to 4th. While the weather was a bit chilly, the views of the fall foliage were spectacular! The theme of this year's program was "Commitment to Excellence: Psychological Issues Surrounding Trauma." Consistent with that theme, psychologists from all parts of West Virginia converged on Morgantown to share their expertise with colleagues and trainees.

The Fall Conference opened on Friday with an ethics session on the current state of Tarasoff-related duties with Dr. Bruce Clay. The opening session was well received with one participant saying, "Excellent session with relevant information for all. Well thought, planned and executed."

The morning session was followed by lunch and the annual business meeting. President Scott Fields, PhD, thanked board members for their years of service and new board members were sworn in for 2016.

The afternoon opened with a town hall meeting with members of the WV Board of Examiners of Psychologists, the first in a number of years.

Participants enjoyed this highly-rated session, with comments including, "Wonderful to have this interactive meeting with the Board," "Do it annually" and "It was very nice to have the Board back at WVPA."

In addition to the educational offerings, Friday evening was packed with an early career psychologist mixer, the annual poster session for psychology students and interns and a cook-out. Participants and judges alike commented on the high quality of the posters and the presentation style of our Marshall and WVU psychologists in training. The top three posters, as voted on by our panel of judges were:

1st
Richard Cui
WVU



2nd
Briana McElfish
Marshall

3rd
Josh Carter
Marshall



WVPA would like to thank all the students and psychology interns who participated, and we also extend a special thanks to Dr. David Clayman for sponsoring the poster prizes.



Those who attend the WVPA Fall Conference know that no

weekend is complete without the Annual Psych Bowl. This year's competition was the 11th Edition deftly hosted by our very own Dr. Scott Fields, substituting for our nine-year host, Dr. John Linton, who was called away on business.

Saturday opened with a full-day course on Dialectical Behavior Therapy, presented by Drs. Patrick Kerr and Maria Fernandez. One participant said of this course, "Excellent workshop and presentation. It was one of the best workshops I've been at for a long time."

Running concurrently in the morning was a presentation on mild TBI and co-morbid PTSD by Dr. Agnieszka Hornich. Her presentation earned comments of, "Great ideas for interventions" "Great presentation!" and "Nice work!"

Following lunch with exhibitors, the afternoon opened with "The Early Career Psychologist Supervisor: Clinical and Ethical Considerations Across Professional Settings and Roles," presented by Drs. Emily Selby-Nelson, Penny Koontz and Jennifer Hancock. One participant

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2015 Fall Conference

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commented, “Great differentiation. It was good to have several speakers on this topic. This also provides a good connection that will help them feel more comfortable as a supervisor.”

The final afternoon concurrent session focused on risk and rehabilitation in the criminal justice system with presented Dr. Meridith Smith. One participant she did a “good job of interpreting trauma and mental illness when deciding risk.” This was the highest-rated session of our conference, with overall ratings of 4.82 on a 5.0 scale.

Sunday offered two top-notch learning opportunities for attendees at the Fall Conference by Dr. Joseph R. Scotti and Claudia S. Neely, MA, MDiv, WV Provisionally Licensed Counselor. Their first session focused on developmental disabilities, trauma and PTSD, leading one participant to comment, “Great case examples. Excellent presentation.”

Their second session, and the closing conference session, addressed “Getting a Life: Parent and Professional Collaborations for Families with Children on the Autism Spectrum.” One participant called this “My best class.”

The Fall Conference provided a chance for psychologists in the state to



catch up on continuing education, reconnect with colleagues and friends, and to enjoy all that Morgantown has to offer. Our conference is also made possible by the support of The Trust and our exhibitors: Highland Hospital, PSIMED Corrections and WV Disability Determination Section.

As conference chair, I want to express my gratitude to the



presenters who put their time, energy, expertise and effort into making our conference a great place for psychologists to learn. I also want to thank Dr. Sarah Jarvis and our other volunteers for their tireless work in helping keep the fall conference running smoothly every day. I cannot wait until our Spring CE Event in Charleston next year and our Fall Conference at Stonewall Resort. I hope to see all of you there!

Watch your mail box
for your
2016 WVPA dues statement
and committee selection
opportunity!

We have
dues categories
for everyone!

Expansion and Victories Continued from page 1

Without a doubt, evidence indicates that when we work with others on common goals, it is a win for WVPA and most importantly a victory for our state.

Advocacy – Our Lobby Days in February and October at the WV Capitol were a success. In February, while the weather did not cooperate, the five WVPA members who made it through the snow were able to forge relationships with our elected officials. This was important since this year we have so many new faces in the legislature. We provided them with a helpful packet on dealing with distressed constituents, discussed what WVPA is and what we can do for them. In October, we followed up with that same message and then asked for their support in the winter session with our Child BMI Bill (HB 2866) drafted by our own Dr. Jessica Luzier and our government relations specialist, Frank Hartman. In brief, the bill would make it so that parents have to provide active consent for their children to get “Fitnessgrams” at school which are essentially public measurements of their height and weight. Our concern is that children and adolescents should get this kind of information from their health provider in a less intrusive setting and, at the very least, the parents should have to provide active consent for this to hap-

pen in WV public schools. That is, after all, the standard of care. During our October Lobby Day visits, we were able to prime the Government Organization committee chairs about the Sequence of Training issue (SOT). We let them know that in the future, we at WVPA plan to introduce an SOT bill that will level the playing field for doctoral psychologists in WV as it applies to our neighboring states. As mentioned in a prior *Beacon* article, the proposal would allow graduate school and internship clinical hours compiled by doctoral psychology candidates prior to graduation to count toward licensure once the doctoral degree is attained and all other necessary requirements are met. We indicated that we are still working on building more support as we have gotten letters of support from West Virginia University psychology faculty and Marshall University psychology faculty. Dr. Jessica Luzier and I have a busy schedule coming up as we are meeting with the WV Board of Examiners of Psychologists and the WVAPP board in the late Fall to further promote this proposed change in our licensure law.

By-Laws Changes – I am pleased to report that by-laws changes will be on the ballot in 2016. The first one will be a proposal to change the definition of an Early Career Psychologist (ECP) to ten years removed from their final gradu-

ate training and not seven years as it currently reads. This would make our by-laws consistent with the American Psychological Association’s (APA) model so that an ECP in our organization would meet the same criteria as one in the APA. The second by-laws change would be that one of our Representative-At-Large positions be slotted to be filled only by someone meeting the WVPA definition of an ECP. This bylaws change would ensure that the ECP voice is heard year after year on our Board of Directors. I would love everyone’s support on these two important changes that I think would benefit our vibrant ECP community in WVPA for many years to come.

Conferences – Although it is not a WVPA Conference, several of our members gather each year at the State Leadership Conference in Washington, DC, in the early Spring. This year we had another outstanding group who were able to represent our state with pride and lobby for changes in laws that apply to psychological services. Thanks to the efforts of many, the Sustainable Growth Rate (SGR) was finally repealed. Those of you who know what this is will likely know that the SGR threatened to cut Medicare reimbursement rates by 21% for psychologists. That is a deep cut that many of our colleagues could not afford

Expansion and Victories
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Expansion and Victories Continued from page 10

to accommodate. Thus, the SGR threatened service provision to Medicare recipients across the country and in WV. Of course, we at WVPA were also honored at the conference to bring a major APA Award back to the Mountain State. Winning the APAGS Award as a state organization for the first time is certainly one of the highlights of 2015.


Just as with our Spring CE session in Charleston, our Annual Fall Conference was a big hit with our members. President-elect Dr. Jeff Boggess put together yet another stellar faculty for the three-day event. With a theme centering on treatment for trauma and the Waterfront Place Hotel in Morgantown as the backdrop, we had a wonderful time learning and fellowshiping with other psychologists and psychologists in training. As I have said many times before, our conferences and CE events are second to none! Please join us on the beautiful Memorial Campus of CAMC this April 8th for our Annual Spring CE Event. It promises to be another fantastic educational opportunity and I know that Dr. Keith Beard is already hard at work planning as the Program Chair.

Membership - It is no secret that we are always looking to swell our ranks at WVPA. At the beginning of 2015, the goal was to grow the organization membership by 20%. I am

pleased to announce that we now have 129 members. Let's not stop there! We have an opportunity to keep growing. I am asking each member to reach out to a colleague and tell them why you value your membership. I was very impressed with the new people I met in Morgantown at our Fall Conference and I would love to meet more fresh faces next year. I am also pleased to announce that Drs. Patrick Kerr, Jeff Boggess, Marty Boone and I have been calling members who have not re-joined in recent years and have been inviting them back into WVPA. It has been great to catch up with folks and to get some friends back in our organization. We hope to do this membership drive again next year. As we reflect back on 2015, it has been a busy one filled with new opportunities and continued connections with colleagues. The year to come promises to be an exciting one for our organization as well. Dr. Jeff Boggess has been a dedicated member of WVPA for years and he assumes leadership as president of this great organization on January 1, 2016. Please join me in welcoming him to this role and offering your talents to help make 2016 another banner year for our state organization. Dr. Boggess has done an excellent job in his role as board member and conference chairman throughout the course of this year and I have every confidence that his steady

hands will guide the organization into an even brighter future. I look forward to seeing all of you at the WVPA Spring CE Event next year on April 8th in Charleston. I also thank each and every member for your commitment to the voice of psychology in West Virginia, your West Virginia Psychological Association.

Warm Regards,



Scott A. Fields, Ph.D.
2015 WVPA President

Medicare fee schedule Continued from page 4

ers will be reimbursed for these services. APAPO has contacted CMS regarding this issue and continues to advocate for psychologists to have access to these codes.

Value-based modifier

CMS will not apply the value-based modifier for psychologists and certain other nonphysician practitioners. Instead, the agency will transition these providers directly to the Merit-Based Incentive Payment System (MIPS), which will occur after 2019. APAPO members can learn more about MIPS in Spring/Summer 2015 issue of Good Practice magazine (PDF, 2.2MB).

Make plans now
to join your colleagues and friends at the



WVPA Spring Conference
April 8, 2016

Roster of 2015 WVPA Board of Directors

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