



West Hudson Psychiatric Society

Serving Rockland, Orange, Sullivan & Delaware Counties

10 Flitt Street, West Nyack, NY 10994 | P: (845) 893-1920

www.westhudsonpsych.org | westhudsonpsych@gmail.com

eSynapse

January 2019

Editor's Comments

James Flax, MD, MPH, DLFAPA

In the last issue I wrote that we will miss the contributions from Dr. Abdullah. Scroll down to see more from Dr. Abdullah.

Many of our colleagues, including myself, attended the funeral of fellow psychiatrist Dr. Tovah Feldhammer on Friday, 1/25/19. She died on Wednesday 1/23/19 after a long and courageous battle with cancer. She was a well-known & active psychiatrist in the West Hudson community and Columbia University. She was married to our former president, Andrew Hornstein, MD. She was eulogized as a “lioness” who cared deeply about & for her family, her patients and her students. This funeral was another reminder to me of how short life is and the importance of appreciating every day, to love, to work, and to be patient & insightful when angry.

You will also find news from Orange County, Rockland County, NYSPA, APA, ads and announcements that may interest you. Please scroll all the way to the end to see it all. And, if you are not receiving the MSSNY eNews, here's a link where you can read about issues of interest to all of medicine in New York State: <http://www.mssny.org>. (If the links in eSynapse don't work, copy and paste into your browser)

In the Announcements section there is a repeated summary of all that I've been using to keep up to date. You can add Up-to-Date to that list. Dr. Ferro wrote an announcement regarding how to obtain a WHPS discount to Simple and Practical Mental Health, a very useful source of information relevant to our practice. See below.

As I've said and written many times, I **will** publish anything you'd like published. I'll add a caveat to this longstanding invitation - **if** it's suitable for the eSynapse newsletter and of relevance to our profession, our patients or about a member, such as – professional opinion, recipes, personal announcements, travelogues, etc.

I want to underline the importance of the APA PAC. However much we may dislike it, this is the way American politics works. **More important than the amount of money contributed is the number and percentage of members who contribute.** Politicians want to know how many people feel strongly enough about the issue to give to the PAC. If you haven't contributed, please consider doing so. Even \$1 adds your name to the list and the number of donors. **See the form appended to the last page of this eSynapse.** I make a point of giving every year because it is the

APA PAC that advocates for my interests as a psychiatrist better than any other organization.

Our website is now operational. The content will be updated over the next few months, thanks to the efforts of Liz Burnich. We prominently include a link to the APA “**Find A Psychiatrist**” database. (<http://finder.psychiatry.org>). This is a wonderful public service and can provide a source of referrals to your practice. Please join APA's **FREE** “Find a Psychiatrist” Database by signing in to psychiatry.org, under the Psychiatrist menu go to Search Directories and Databases, scroll down to Find a Psychiatrist Database and “opt-in”.

In this issue of eSynapse you will find a summary of our Executive Council meeting so all readers will have an idea of district branch business. But, it’s only a summary. Please **come** to one of our friendly meetings to appreciate the rich discussions and enjoy a tasty lunch at Il Fresco.

Executive Council Meeting
Il Fresco Restaurant, Orangeburg, NY
Friday, January 4, 2019
Friday, March 1, 2019
PROMPTLY at 12:30

Please contact Liz Burnich (westhudsonpsych@gmail.com) if you are planning to attend.
IT’S A FREE LUNCH



Nigel Bark, MD

The WHPS probably does more for its members and for psychiatry, proportionately (considering the number of members), than any other district branch, as was recognized by the APA in awarding it the Best Practice Award in 2018. **For our members:** twice yearly educational dinner meetings with high quality speakers; open executive committee meetings that all members can attend with a journal club or presentation from local leaders of psychiatric services or organizations; a mentoring program for residents at Orange Regional Medical Center; a women’s group of female psychiatrists that meets every six weeks. For psychiatry and the community: the Mental Health Coalition of Rockland County organized by Lois Kroplick 22 years ago, with about 20 local mental health organizations, has been perhaps the most active and successful undertaking by WHPS, with its highly successful annual Forum, attended by 500 or so people, its educational programs in local Colleges, elementary schools, high schools, its presentations to groups of clergy, police, Rotary clubs, PTAs; many members have been involved in these programs. eSynapse, (with news of psychiatric and WHPS activities in our area, a summary of the executive committee meeting, original articles, advertisements for jobs and offices etc) has been recognized with awards by the APA for its quality and interest. Of course if you don’t read it you

wouldn't know and you may not know what the WHPS does. We are involved with representing our members and patients at NYSPA and its committees and the APA on the Assembly and its committees. If you don't think we are doing enough, please join us and contribute.

President's Column

Legalizing Marijuana: Popular Delusion or Rational Conclusion?

Nigel Bark, MD

There is a wonderful book published in 1841 called "Extraordinary Popular Delusions and the Madness of Crowds" written by a Scottish journalist, Charles Mackay. It is still in print and readily available and is funny, interesting and enlightening. It covers fads and fancies, some with major economic or political consequences, in all areas of life: religious: crusades, witch hunts and relics; economic: the South Sea Bubble, the Mississippi Scheme and tulipomania; philosophic/scientific: alchemy and magnetism; fashion: hair and beards, duels. It is easy to think of more recent "inexplicable" fads: hula-hoops in the 1950s, cabbage patch dolls in the 1980s and fidget spinners two years ago.

But are some current political or even scientific trends driven by popular delusions and the madness of crowds? With so little evidence for the benefits of marijuana one could conclude that the rush to legalize medical marijuana in most states is one such example. (There is evidence that it can help pain, but the dose and method of delivery are not known and only anecdotal reports of its help with nausea, seizures or any of the other myriad of conditions it is touted for.) And the legalization of recreational marijuana in eleven states when we know so little of its harmful effects is another example. At least this is the conclusion of Alex Berenson who had an op-ed in the New York Times on January 4, 2019 and a discussion of his book on the subject in the New Yorker on January 14. Only 15 percent of people over 12 used marijuana in 2017 but 65% favored this legislation. He cites the 2017 report by the National Academy of Medicine that "Cannabis use is likely to increase the risk of schizophrenia and other psychosis". This was known 20 years ago from (among many other studies) a study of Swedish army conscripts in whom anyone with signs of psychosis at conscription was excluded: those who had smoked cannabis more than 50 times before conscription had a six-fold increase in schizophrenia in the next 15 years, 10-50 times 2.4-fold increase and 1-10 times 1.3-fold increase. South East London had the highest rates of schizophrenia in Britain in 1997, the rate having doubled since 1965 (without an increase elsewhere in Britain). Marijuana use had increased ten-fold in that area in that time. The Dunedin, New Zealand, cohort study showed that those who started using marijuana in early teens had a five-fold increase in schizophrenia; if they started after 21 there was no increase. Likewise starting early reduced IQ; starting after 25 did not. But it can affect motivation and executive function. Of note: these studies were done when marijuana had 5% THC; most now contains 25% and pure THC is available. Interestingly legalizing marijuana has not increased the number of people using it but those who do use it use it much more frequently, with a tripling of emergency room visits and an increase in murders and assaults in the first four states to legalize it (according to FBI data – disputed by other measures). The effects on driving and the lack of a quick, non-invasive test are additional problems.

Curiously a strong argument many people make for legalization of marijuana is to counter the bad consequences of another “popular delusion” of 30-40 years ago: that very strong measures were needed to counter the crime wave caused by the “crack” epidemic. This was when “three strikes” laws were passed making 25 years in prison mandatory for three convictions; automatic long sentences for “crack” possession (but not for cocaine); “broken windows” policing leading to “stop and frisk”; “smoke a joint, lose your license” federal law from 1990; the myth that crack babies were permanently damaged (but not cocaine babies); the idea that prisons were for punishment only and so recreation and education (and rehabilitation) were forbidden in prisons. “Crack” was used predominantly by blacks and cocaine by whites. The result was that the United States had (and still has) the highest rate of prisoners in the world, and 21% of the world’s prisoners with 4.4 % of the world’s population. The peak was 2008 with 750 prisoners per 100,000 population, with the rate for blacks 2,306 per 100,000. In 2016 it was 655 per 100,000 but 1,608 per 100,000 African-Americans, 856 per 100,000 Hispanics. Other developed countries had 50 to 150 per 100,000, and Russia was second with 411 per hundred thousand. Some people argue that these measures lowered the murder and crime rate. Most experts do not agree. But it is incontrovertible that African Americans were disproportionately targeted, arrested and convicted of marijuana possession. Legalization may reverse this, it is argued, and have those convictions overturned.

I don’t know if that’s a good argument for legalization. Would decriminalization do the same? In conclusion I think there is some popular delusion in our attitude towards marijuana but also some rationality too. Either way legalization can be viewed as a great social experiment and as such we must know the results of this experiment. We must study its effects: compare different states, compare before and after, do controlled trials of medical effects and side-effects, study its effects in normals. To do that requires change in federal laws, not only to stop the embarrassing opposition of federal and state laws with arbitrary changes in implementation depending on the Attorney General of the time, but also to allow research with marijuana which is severely hampered by several federal laws as well as it being a Schedule 1 substance (no medical use and abuse potential) which almost prohibits research. The alternative is ignorance and possibly disaster.

Minutes

WHPS Executive Council Meeting

Friday, January 4, 2019

12:30pm - Il Fresco

Attendees Present: Nigel Bark, Raj Mehta, Laura Antar, Jim Flax, Lois Kroplick, Russ Tobe, Mona Begum, Dom Ferro, Ulrick Vieux (remotely), Nick Batson (remotely), Eric Jarmon (remotely) and some of the ORMC residents.

1. Virtual Meeting linkup with Orange County
 - a. We attempted to set up a virtual meeting with our Orange County reps but experienced some technical difficulties. We had trouble with both the audio and visual projections but also, we are trying to do this in a location that is not really set up for virtual meetings.
 - b. We discussed purchasing equipment that would allow this process to work more smoothly vs. move the meeting to a location more conducive for

- teleconferencing.
- c. Liz will look into some better options for our next meeting.
- 2. Spring 2019 Meeting Planning:
 - a. Dan Gillison, the Executive Director of the American Psychiatric Foundation will be our guest presenter at our spring meeting on Friday, April 5. This will not be a CME event but it will be an informative meeting where members can learn more about the APA Foundation's focus, mission and programs.
 - b. It was decided that we should have a 2nd spring meeting on an educational topic so that we can offer CME. Nigel is going to see if the APA CEO, Saul Levin, MD would be interested in presenting to our group.
 - c. Raj said he would reach out to Bruce Schwartz, MD, APA President-Elect, about speaking at our Fall Educational meeting.
- 3. Committee Updates:
 - a. Dom reported that he met with Brittany Weiner of MHA who runs a workshop with a consumer entitled "Disable the Label." The focus is changing the language to decrease stigma. This tipped off a discussion about having the director of MHA come to a future EC meeting. Raj will reach out to her.
 - b. Lois gave a recap on the Public Forum that was held on Oct 24 at RCC on the topic of Anxiety.
 - c. Laura discussed Project Echo thru Montifiore, which includes free supervision and once a month training webinar. She recommends the projects about Suboxone training.
 - d. Ulrich was proud to announce that all three PGY-4 residents were accepted into Fellowship programs.
- 4. 2019 Planning
 - a. NYSPA Area 2 Council meeting is scheduled for Saturday March 16. Please mark your calendar and try to attend.
 - b. 2019 PRMS Partnership Agreement – all members present unanimously voted to extend the PRMS Partnership Agreement into 2019.
 - c. 2019 Mentorship Program – we are waiting on one more questionnaire from the new residents and we can begin matching them up to mentors.
 - d. In May, 2019 we will have vacancies on the Executive Council positions of President-Elect, RFM Rep and ECP Rep. A committee consisting of Past President, President and President-Elect will work together to cultivate our new leadership.
 - e. In addition to our President, we are allowed to designate two NYSPA Reps each year. These reps have voting privileges and should to be able to commit to attend the March and October NYSPA Area II meetings. All Members are welcome and encouraged to attend the NYSPA meetings but we should make sure our designated Reps can make the commitment to attending these meetings.
- 5. NEXT MEETINGS:
 - a. EC Meeting - Friday, March 1, 2019 at 12:30pm at Il Fresco, Orangeburg
 - b. NYSPA Area 2 Council Meeting – Saturday, March 16, 2019, location TBA
 - c. Spring Dinner Meeting - Friday, April 5, 2019 – with guest Dan Gillison, APA Foundation

- d. EC Meeting - Friday, April 12, 2019 at 12:30pm at Il Fresco, Orangeburg
 - i. NOTE: the locations of the EC meetings may change in which case, an email will be sent out with the change notification.

CORRESPONDENCE AND EVENTS

I wrote in the last issue of my gratitude for Syed Abdullah's years of thoughtful and interesting articles for eSynapse. Months after he wrote me he was no longer physically able to send articles, I received another contribution from Dr. Abdullah. To my pleasant surprise, Dr. Abdullah wrote:

Dear Jim,

I have one more article to send you "Larry's Discourse on Anger". Thank you.

I **thank you**, Syed! In this age of seemingly acceptable & widely prevalent anger, this article is particularly timely and relevant.

Larry's Discourse On Anger

Syed Abdullah, M.D.

I had the good fortune of spending some cherished moments in the company of my friend Larry before he passed away. He was a man of great learning and deep spiritual insights. Towards the end of his life, his body had weakened and was declining. During one of my visits, I found him sitting in his wheelchair, in considerable discomfort and pain but in high spirits. He greeted me warmly like always. He had a way of making every visitor feel special. I sat down in front of him and was soon absorbed in listening to a mystical discourse from him. Referring to his failing physical condition and advanced age, ninety seven years, he drifted into the following discourse:

“No matter how well we look after ourselves, our physical powers gradually deteriorate as step by step we approach death.” After a brief pause which was marked by a bout of cough, he resumed, “But as far as our spiritual State is concerned there is no such limit. We can continue to grow spiritually throughout our lives. But we must promote conditions to ensure that growth. We have to weed out those traits that choke the precious plant.”

Our conversation was interrupted by a phone call from someone seeking Larry's advice about how to deal with his wife who was driving him crazy with uncontrollable rage. After counseling the caller with patience and loving good humor he agreed to see him and his wife at their convenience. His parting words were "Let us not make any hasty decision in a fit of anger."

Returning to his discourse on the prerequisites of life-long spiritual growth he said: "One of the most harmful weeds, the most inimical to spiritual growth, is anger, generated by the sensitivity of our egos. When anger rages it engulfs the light of faith, transforming that light into fire. The light of faith is the pure light within us; but when it is transformed into fire it no longer illumines, it burns. It can lead to a conflagration that can destroy innocent lives. It can start wars."

Larry continued "Very few people can turn back anger once it is triggered. This is why so few people advance spiritually. The reason that anger is so difficult to avoid is because it is an intrinsic part of our constitution. The ancient wisdom taught us that the elements of fire, water, earth and air are blended together in our physical and spiritual make-up. Anger corresponds to the element of fire. Only those who have been well trained by enlightened parents or teachers, will have learned to keep these elements in balance."

I ventured to ask, "Larry could you suggest an easy way of stemming the tide of anger when it threatens to overwhelm us?"

After reflecting briefly, Larry responded: "When you find yourself overcome with anger you must quickly look into a mirror and behold the ugliness spreading over your face. Who wants to look like a devil himself? An angry person's actions are destructive to him and others. When anger dominates a person, his capacity to think rationally is undermined. Anger also wreaks havoc on our bodies. When a chronic state of anger is sustained over an extended period of time physical illnesses and premature aging result."

"Whenever you feel anger arising be aware that you are being tested. Such tests are sent your way from the unseen world to ascertain your trustworthiness. Disliked events are sent from that realm so that you may have a chance to forbear, and

thereby advance toward your spiritual goal. If there were no benefits to be found in anger, it would not exist. The benefit is found in being patient in the face of it. Forbearance is a key to higher spiritual stations, that key is forged by facing offensive events with tolerance, by letting go, and by seeking God's help

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND ADS

Helen Hayes Hospital

Helen Hayes Hospital is seeking a dynamic BC/BE psychiatrist to provide consultation-liaison services in a part time capacity. The successful candidate will be part of a behavioral medicine team that includes psychologists and a clinical social worker. The team works closely with an outstanding group of physicians, therapists, social workers and nurses to optimize outcomes for patients undergoing medical rehabilitation.

The Psychiatrist will conduct comprehensive psychiatric evaluations, make diagnoses, prescribe and supervise appropriate psychiatric treatment.

Qualifications

- Certified in psychiatry by the American Board of Psychiatry and licensed to practice in the state of New York
- Experience in providing inpatient treatment and evaluation services to adults with mental illness and co-occurring medical conditions
- Demonstrated history of excellent interpersonal skills and the ability to effectively facilitate and manage interdisciplinary collaboration and service delivery.

Helen Hayes Hospital is located in Rockland County, New York, is affiliated with the New York-Presbyterian Healthcare System, and is operated by the Department of Health of New York State. The hospital received Joint Commission Certification with Distinction for post-acute care in 2017 and has been serving the Lower Hudson Community for more than a century.

<http://helenhayeshospital.org/>

Competitive candidates should contact Dr. Marjorie King, Chief Medical Officer, Helen Hayes Hospital, at kingm@helenhayeshosp.org or (845) 786-4429.

Helen Hayes Hospital is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer.

The Orange Regional Medical Center

The Orange Regional Medical Center (ORMC) GME program is growing exponentially. They anticipate that starting July 1 they will have 73 residents in their 6 GME programs. As a result, the need to be able to refer at risk residents to

effective, empathic mental health professionals is great. Due to confidentiality issues many residents may not feel comfortable receiving treatment at Orange Regional Medical Center. ORMC would like a list of therapists that would be willing to see residents as needed. The director of the psychiatric residency program would like to get a list of members of the West Hudson Psychiatric Society that would be willing to see ORMC residents in their private practices. Insurance is Blue Cross/Blue Shield of NY, with varying levels of reimbursement depending on which plan the resident chooses. Please contact:

Ulrick Vieux DO, MS
Psychiatry Residency Program Director/ORMC
Cell #: 845-741-4990/Office #: 845-333-1763

PROJECT TEACH: PERINATAL CONSULTATION

If you practice in New York, you are entitled to online resources including didactic materials, and live consultation from perinatal psychiatrists in our program offered 2x per week. Twice per week, one of our Perinatal Psychiatrists staff a consultation forum via teleconference. At this time, it is only available to NY providers. For more information, please see the attached flyer and the website: <https://projectteachny.org/mmh/>. This initiative is funded by the Office of Mental Health in NY.

APA NEWS & NOTES FOR DB/SAs



News and Notes for APA District Branches/State Associations

February 2019

This monthly newsletter is prepared by the APA's Communications Team as a benefit for our District Branches and State Associations. If you have any questions, please contact James Carty at jcarty@psych.org or 202-609-7077. Want to keep up with APA in between newsletters? Connect with us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), ([@APAPsychiatric](#)), [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#) for the latest news and updates.

What's New at the APA

- APA released a statement expressing deep disappointment at the decision by the U.S. Supreme Court to lift injunctions against the Trump administration's ban on transgender servicemembers in the military. The APA opposes discrimination against transgender people and calls for their civil rights to be protected. You can read statements from APA leadership condemning the decision [here](#).
- APA has entered into a partnership with the American Foundation for Firearm Injury Reduction in Medicine (AFFIRM), a grassroots physician-led foundation dedicated to the funding of high-quality, impactful research to prevent gun

violence. APA believes that robust study into the underlying causes of gun violence and the effectiveness of potential interventions is necessary to preventing further injury, death and other harms to society resulting from firearms. You can read a blog post by Dr. Saul Levin that details APA's decision to partner with AFFIRM [here](#).

Mark Your Calendar

- American Heart Month (February)
- Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month (February)
- National Senior Independence Month (February)
- Eating Disorders Awareness and Screening Week (Feb. 25 – Mar. 3)

February Course of the Month - Psychiatrists and the Treatment of Pain

Concerns about undertreatment of pain have led to rapid growth in the rates of prescription opioids and a dramatic increase in the prevalence of prescription opioid use disorders, which themselves pose risks of premature mortality. Psychiatrists often see patients with pain, yet most psychiatrists feel uncertain about their role in the treatment of pain. This presentation discusses treatments for pain to assist the general psychiatrist in the recognition and assessment of pain. Presented by Eric D. Collins, M.D. of Columbia University. [Click here to access the Course of the Month and sign up for updates about this free member benefit.](#)

Resident Members: Pitch an Idea. Build a Team. Design a Venture.

Submissions are now open for the 2019 APA Psychiatry Innovation Lab. Pitch your idea for improving mental health care delivery through entrepreneurship, policy, systems redesign, education, collaboration, technology, and more. The Grand Prize is \$10,000. Submit your idea at <http://apapsy.ch/PIL19>. Official [Terms & Conditions](#) can be found on the submission site. All entries must be in the form of a three-minute public YouTube video. Entries not following the official guidelines will be disqualified. The top 7 entries will be invited to pitch their idea to a live audience and panel of judges at the 2019 APA Annual Meeting in San Francisco, Calif. on Sunday, May 19, 2019 from noon to 5:00 p.m. At the live event, one finalist will be awarded the grand prize of \$10,000. **Submission Deadline: Sunday, March 17, 2019 at 11:59 p.m. ET.** [Learn More & Submit](#)

Early-Bird Registration for APA Annual Meeting 2019 Ends Feb. 12

Early-bird registration rates for APA's 2019 Annual Meeting in San Francisco are available until Feb. 12. Advanced registration rates will take effect on Feb. 13 and run until April 9. Your 2019 APA membership dues must be paid to qualify for member registration rates. You can register and find out more about the 2019 Annual Meeting, including the APA's 175th Anniversary Celebration, by visiting Psychiatry.org/annualmeeting.

THE E-BULLETIN

NEW YORK STATE PSYCHIATRIC ASSOCIATION

Bringing New York State Psychiatrists Together



December 18, 2018

APA RESPONSE TO E/M CLAIMS ISSUE

Two NYSPA members recently brought to our attention a claims issue with Empire Blue Cross Blue Shield ("BCBS"). In connection with post-payment audits, BCBS has taken the position that "the use of E/M codes should be limited to new patients, patient re-evaluation after a series of treatments, or a significant change in a patient's condition." This policy is in direct conflict with the conventions of CPT and if enforced, with HIPAA rules and regulations. We immediately contacted the APA who agreed that BCBS' position is clearly erroneous. NYSPA and APA staff worked together to draft a letter to BCBS to raise our significant concerns regarding its E/M policy. Any NYSPA member who encounters a similar issue with BCBS, or any other health insurance carrier, is encouraged to contact NYSPA Central Office immediately at 516-542-0077.

A copy of Dr. Levin's letter to Craig Hersh, M.D., BCBS Chief Medical Officer, may be downloaded [here](#).

ONE POLICY. ONE DECISION.

WE PROTECT YOU

Selecting the right psychiatric professional liability insurance is a one-time decision when you choose PRMS. With our comprehensive policy that adapts to the changing stages of your career, you are protected from beginning to end.

JACKIE PALUMBO
CHIEF UNDERWRITING OFFICER



Full-career protection is just one component of our comprehensive professional liability program. Contact us today.

More than an insurance policy

(800) 245-3333 | PsychProgram.com/Dedicated | TheProgram@prms.com



Actual terms, coverages, conditions and exclusions may vary by state.

Insurance coverage provided by Fair American Insurance and Reinsurance Company (NAIC 35157).
FAIRCO is an authorized carrier in California, ID number 3175-7. www.fairco.com

In California, d/b/a Transatlantic Professional Risk Management and Insurance Services.

Mental Health Works is an interesting APA publication addressing mental health and the workplace. If you don't get it, I suggest you find it at the following website and see what you think.
<http://www.workplacementalhealth.org>

If you missed the dinner meeting on genetic testing for psychiatrists, here is a link to the slides from the talk by Jay Lombard, MD, the founder of Genomind.

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/ullqriwoa37nj kz/Genomind%20presentation.pptx?dl=0>

At the Spring 2018 dinner meeting Dan Iosifescu presented a comprehensive review and discussion of therapeutic strategies for treatment resistant depression. A copy of his slides is available here:

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/qbp3bwc zqi8dqq/WHPS%2C%20Iosifescu%204.20.18.pdf?dl=0>

If you missed the Fall 2018 dinner meeting slides from the presentation are available using the following link:

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/6ssdnjpi3a5ogpi/PlanetOfTheAppsStandardPresentation%20110418%20With%20Handouts.pdf?dl=0>

USEFUL INFORMATION RESOURCES: Dr. Ferro recently advised me of a useful electronic publication of psychiatric advice – SimpleandPractical.com. See below for a money saving tip. This prompted me to think of all the publications I use to keep up to date. I now use UpToDate.com and have found it very useful. I do use the APA publications, including Focus. I am a member of the listservs of Columbia University and multiple PsychoPharm listservs. I receive Amadeo on 4 different topics <http://m.amedeo.com> and Evidence Alerts <http://plus.mcmaster.ca/EvidenceAlerts/> for reviews of recent articles. I pay for The Medical Letter. I read APA News, Psychiatric Times and Clinical Psychiatry News. I sometimes will read Psychiatric Annals as well. I use Epocrates, Google, Wikipedia, WebMD and others daily. As a result of our modern digital resources, and encouraged by Dr. Citrome's Fall 2018 talk, I'm slowly throwing out all the ancient textbooks and printed articles taking up space. I'd be interested in hearing from others about what resources you rely on to keep up to date.

Simple and Practical

Dom Ferro, MD

For the last year, I have subscribed to Simple and Practical Mental Health. The website provides resources and summaries of issues pertinent to psychiatry. Subscribers receive daily emails, which can be read in a few minutes. The presentations are clear and concise. Larger issues are spread over several days with attention to effective learning. Information is briefly reviewed and developed gradually. For a small commitment of time, quality education with clinically relevant lessons takes place painlessly.

All materials are available for review on the website. So when I have forgotten my lesson, but remembered that I had learned it, I have been able to access it quickly when needed. I have found the subscription worthwhile and the psychiatrists whom I have told about it have agreed. I recommend it highly for all out practicing members.

If you are interested, you can receive a discount as a member of West Hudson Psychiatric Society. Several members have recently formed a group subscription. If you subscribe, indicate as the discount code: WESTHUDSON.

GoodRx.com – a plug for this service I have found useful for patients whose medications are not well covered by their insurance. Sometimes it provides very beneficial coupons and lists the least expensive retail source for a medication. Cash price can be less than co-pays or deductibles.

PRIVATE PRACTICE FEES: Here is a link to a legal public site where you can look up fees for a given zip code. <http://www.fairhealthconsumer.org/>

PRIOR AUTHORIZATIONS If you are frequently bothered with cumbersome and seemingly unnecessary requests for prior authorizations, the APA is eager to hear from you: Ellen Jaffe, Director, Practice Management HelpLine/Medicare Specialist, Office of Healthcare Systems and Financing, American Psychiatric Association, (703) 907-8591 ejaffe@psych.org Practice Management HelpLine (800-343-4671) - email at hsf@psych.org. Also, one of our members posted to an international list-serv with regard to any denial of benefit, so I quote Dr. John Fogelman:

The URL below will direct you to a database for the regional CMS (Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services) headquarters. The names of the regional Medical Directors are listed. When you call, hang in through all the options, and at the end type in the name of the medical director. You will get either the real live doc, an assistant, leave a message, or the name of someone to call for in an emergency. It usually works.

http://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Medicare-Fee-for-Service-Payment/sharedsavingsprogram/Regional_Contacts.html

My experience has been that the higher you go in any organization (hospital, government, insurance companies), the closer you are to the decision maker, and the decision makers do not have to stay on the unvarying mindless script. They do not instruct you to have a good day, apologize for your inconvenience, thank you profusely and hear how they know how valuable your time is. They usually listen, and if you do not scream at them, a favorable result often follows.

PARITY ENFORCEMENT FROM NYSPA: If you missed the NYSPA Webinar on parity I strongly suggest you listen to it; accessible on the NYSPA website. Seth Stein and Rachel Fernbach have presented a packet of wonderful new tools that potentially will allow us to better manage and respond aggressively to insurance company efforts to restrict care.

THIS IS IMPORTANT! NYSPA is soliciting detailed information on insurance reimbursements to identify fee and reimbursement discrimination in the payment for outpatient mental health services. **The NYSPA Parity Enforcement Project (PEP)**

NYSPA is rolling out its newest Parity Enforcement Project initiative to identify fee and reimbursement discrimination in the payment for outpatient mental health services. NYSPA has prepared two Request Forms - one for in-network services and one for out-of-network services - and a set of instructions for using the Request Forms. You will note that the instructions have been prepared for use for non-psychiatrists because these forms can be used by anyone who has health insurance through a job, through ACA or a Medicare or Medicaid managed care plan. We urge every psychiatrist who has health insurance coverage to submit either an in-network form or both forms (if you have out-of-network coverage).

Anyone with health insurance can submit the forms regardless of whether they have received, are receiving or expect to receive treatment for mental illness. The forms do not require the disclosure of any individual medical information and the responses will not include any medical information. These forms can be widely disseminated to individuals receiving treatment and support groups for patients. The key is that NYSPA needs to review the responses in order to identify evidence of discriminatory coverage. The forms can be downloaded from the NYSPA website by [clicking here](#). Please join us in participating in this effort to identify and root out reimbursement discrimination in the treatment of mental illness.

PLEASE MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO RETURN PHONE CALLS. EVEN IF YOU HAVE NO ROOM IN YOUR SCHEDULE FOR NEW PATIENTS: I have frequently heard complaints about patients leaving voice mails with psychiatrist's offices and never getting a return phone call. If true, this reflects very poorly on our profession.

Mandatory Prescriber Education in NY after 7/1/17

Prescribers licensed in New York to treat humans and who have a DEA registration number to prescribe controlled substances, as well as medical residents who prescribe controlled substances under a facility DEA registration number, must complete at least three (3) hours of course work or training in pain management, palliative care, and addiction by July 1, 2017.

Practitioners must notify the Department of Health that they have completed the educational requirements by submitting an attestation online.

Click on the following links for more information and guidance.

- [Mandatory Prescriber Education Guidance](#) (PDF)
- [Frequently Asked Questions - Updated June 2017](#) (PDF)
- [Attestation Process](#)
- Prescribers can access three hours of free course work covering the eight required topic areas, sponsored by NYSDOH, from the University of Buffalo* at [Opioid Prescriber Training Program](#).

Depression Support Group

- Depression support group meets 2 times a month in Pomona, NY. We are inviting new members at this time. We are moderated by a clinical social worker. This is not a therapy group but social support for people fighting depression. Call Kathy for more information (914) 714- 2837.
-

**Welcome to the Rockland County
Chapter of the Depression and Bipolar
Support Alliance** **Come join
our Mood Disorder, Friends &
Family and Under 30 share
groups on Thursday nights** from 6:30 to 8:30 pm
**We've been there. We
can help.**

Together we share and seek understanding and acceptance of the situations surrounding Bipolar Disorder, Depression, other Mood Disorders and Dual Diagnosis. Through frank and open discussion, compassion, real and true support, the members of the Rockland Chapter of DBSA have come together to create a cohesive unit that is vibrant and alive and offers hope and the means to help people help themselves. This group should be a welcomed part of your wellness program, and if you are a family member, or friend of an individual dealing with a Mood Disorder the same applies.

**Peer-to-Peer support is a proven
path to recovery and wellness.** **If you
are looking for a place, for people who truly want to help you help
yourself to change your life, waste no more time, look no further,
we'd love to meet you.**

All meetings
are held from 6:30 to 8:30 pm at **Dominican
College Forkel Hall, 470 Western Highway, Orangeburg, NY 10962**

**Any questions contact: Tony at 845-422-2084 or
Brian at 845-300-1343 Email us at: dbsa.rockland@gmail.com** To
learn more about our next meeting, or to RSVP, please [visit our group on
Meetup.com](#). There is no fee for attending the support group.

NEW YORK STATE PSYCHIATRIC POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE, INC.
400 GARDEN CITY PLAZA, SUITE 202
GARDEN CITY, NEW YORK 11530

Name: _____

Address: _____

Tel. No.: _____

I hereby join as a member of the NYSP-PAC for 2016 and enclose my payment in the following amount:

- | | | |
|-------|---------------------|------------------|
| _____ | General Member | \$100.00 |
| _____ | Contributing Member | \$150.00 |
| _____ | Supporting Member | \$200.00 |
| _____ | Sustaining Member | \$250.00 or more |
| _____ | Other amount | |

Circle one:

VISA MASTERCARD AMEX DISCOVER

I hereby authorize the charging of my credit card.

Account #: _____

Three or four digit number following account number that appears on signature bar on reverse side of credit card:

Expiration Date: _____

Signature: _____

Please make checks payable to NYSP-PAC.

Checks can be mailed to:
NYS-PAC, 400 Garden City Plaza, Ste. 202, Garden City, NY 11530