



West Hudson Psychiatric Society

*Serving Rockland, Orange Sullivan & Delaware Counties
of New York State*

eSynapse

May 2020

EDITOR'S COMMENTS

James Flax, MD, MPH, DLFAPA

Your district branch is being asked to help provide psychiatric services to health care providers in our communities. We are looking for any VOLUNTEERS who are willing to donate time to provide telehealth psychiatric care or to lead groups for those on the front lines in our hospitals and other first responders. Some of us on the Executive Council have volunteered to see patients who are frontline personnel or those who are directly affected by the Coronavirus who do NOT have insurance or who cannot get an appointment within a reasonable amount of time PRO BONO for 5 sessions. You'll read in our president's column and the minutes about the other activities your district branch has started.

If you are willing to donate any amount of time doing what you do best, please call or email Liz Burnich at (845) 623-0658 or westhudsonpsych@gmail.com.

You've already noticed we've changed our logo and I've changed the formatting of eSynapse. I hope you like these changes. A huge thank you to a high school friend, Jerry Stebbins (StebbinsPhotography.com) for professional assistance with the logo.

In this issue of eSynapse you'll see most of our attention has been drawn to the effects of

COVID on ourselves and our community. You will find a multitude of announcements and articles in the remainder of this issue of eSynapse. Our WHPS president, Laura Antar, MD, PhD describes coping with the effects of Corona Virus. 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).

FIND A PSYCHIATRIST is a wonderful public service and can be a source of referrals to your practice. I just checked and there are only 5 psychiatrists listed in Rockland County, one of whom has relocated, 3 within 20 miles of Middletown and none within 20 miles of Liberty. This level of participation makes the list virtually useless for patients searching for care. **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". Doing so could be of benefit to your practice and will be of benefit to prospective patients searching for care.

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

I want to underline the importance of the NYState Psychiatric 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 NYSPA PAC that advocates for my interests as a psychiatrist better than any other organization.

In this issue of eSynapse you will also find a summary of our last 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. All members are welcome.

Next Executive Council Meetings

Virtual Zoom Meeting

Friday, June 19, 2020 & Friday July 17, 2020 PROMPTLY at 12:30

Please contact Liz Burnich (westhudsonpsych@gmail.com) for a Zoom invitation if you would like to attend.

IT'S NO LONGER A FREE LUNCH UNTIL WE MEET IN-PERSON



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: The Phases of Disaster



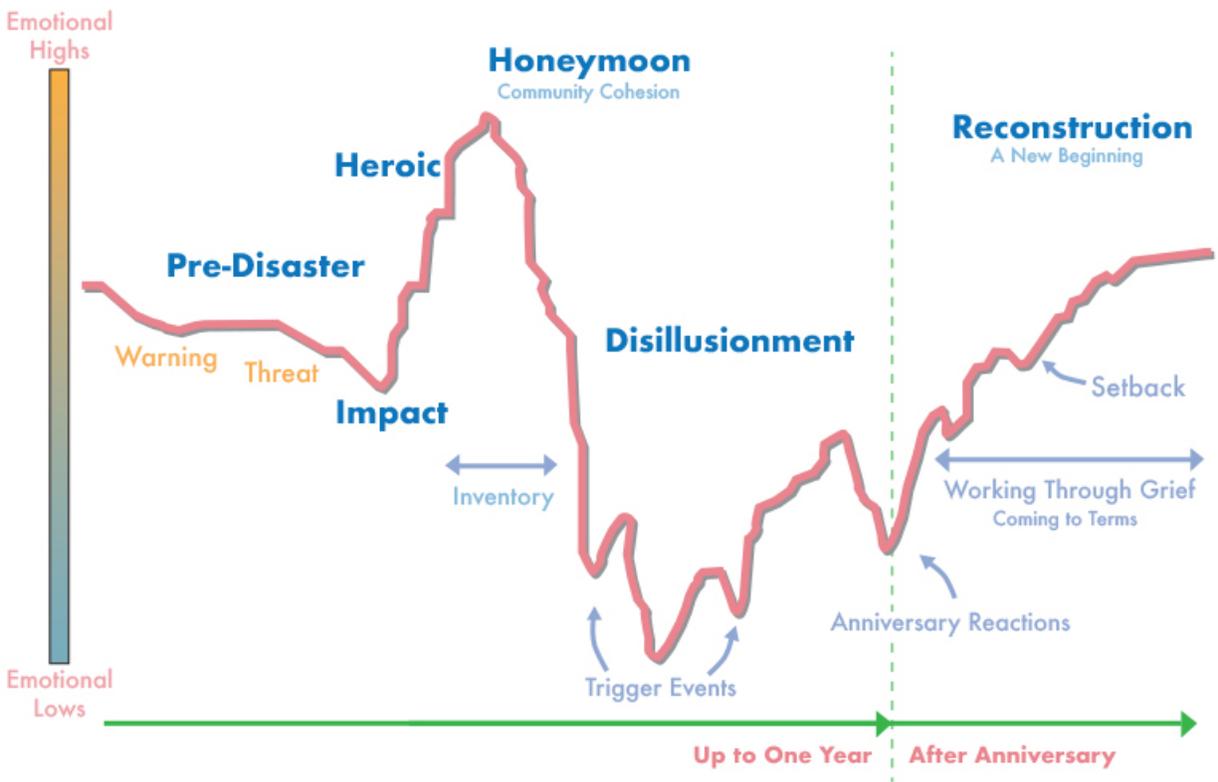
Laura Antar, MD, PhD

Phases of Disaster

Two years ago, I attended an APA course on disaster psychiatry where a graph, much like the one below, was distributed. I wanted to be prepared for the next 9/11. Today, I plot my patient's (and my own) behaviors during the COVID-19 pandemic on the graph, and by recognizing the phases we are in, can sometimes provide insight and comfort and help find mastery in an otherwise perplexing process. Much as Shakespearean plays have five acts, the prologue, conflict, rising action and climax, falling action and denouncement, I suggest we may examine our own COVID-19 stories in a manner of a six act play

outlined by this graph. If you recall from an earlier president’s column on eudemonics, we examined that, understanding one’s story is a key piece of achieving contentment.

THE PHASES OF DISASTER



Along my journey through this pandemic, several defining moments changed my perspective about my role as a community psychiatrist. For example, my patients now ask how my family and I are doing, seemingly recognizing we journey together as fellows, I feel a member of their group, not a distant expert. Due to telepsychiatry, they are welcomed into my home, and I theirs. I feel a richer bond, and I wonder if doctors felt similarly when they used to make house calls.

An example of pre-COVID-19 indifference to my humanity, I recall the moment I knew I needed to close my office: a patient came to her appointment, after having been asked the appropriate screening questions, and toward the end of her visit stated she home from work because she was considered “high risk.” Her co-worker had come become sick and she was exposed. I asked her why she had come to the office exposing me and my staff, and she was genuinely surprised. She hadn’t thought of risk to “the office.” I felt dehumanized, an automaton in my patient’s eyes. I didn’t consider or want to consider any psychodynamic constructs involved in the behavior; I didn’t worry about countertransference. I worried that their behavior would hurt my family, a conflict recapitulated by so many front-line workers. I felt an antagonistic feeling towards patients, for the first time since I worked on locked wards, where I knew that my patients could hurt me.

When the Impact Phase hit, I recall sleepless nights, going to bed at 4 AM trying to change my office’s land line into a mobile cell line I could control from home, staying on hold for hours, learning how to get food on-line, spending unending hours helping my most vulnerable patients. There was a surge of adrenalin ‘round the clock. I could feel the danger to my family, patients and community. I volunteered to

work on Cuomo's hotline, to organize and run some groups for healthcare workers, talked on radio. A colleague and I wrote a couple of handouts for community consumption. Several colleagues and I researched how to help traumatized patients and communities. I was busy. Busy with webinars, reading, exponentially expanding my knowledge base. I started almost all of my patients on some form of a meditative practice. Some of my plans were effective, and some were very labor intensive, but of little benefit to the community. I felt energized and altruistic. I celebrated the opportunity to work on the platform I had identified for my presidency at West Hudson Psychiatric Society even before the pandemic: enhancing our presence in the community. I worked to try to help organize our small group of psychiatrists to provide pro-bono work for community members and hospital workers who were traumatized. My colleagues and I contacted hospitals that had working mental health support systems asking them to share their methodologies with others that were not yet up and running. Little did I realize that I had entered the Heroic Phase of the disaster curve. Lots of work, some highly effective, some less high yield. Key word: busy.

Predictably, I transitioned after a few weeks. I am now in the Honeymoon phase of the pandemic. I enjoy community cohesiveness; there appear to be enough hospital beds for COVID-10-afflicted community members, optimism continues to drive behavior. I've begun to count "silver linings." While I continue to volunteer my time, my sleep and eating and exercise have stabilized. I've settled into my work routine, have gotten more at home with doing more chores, I've even been getting the kids to help with chores as well. I notice I am happier with my interactions with my colleagues, and feel closer to my community than perhaps I ever have, though the backdrop of the threat still looms.

With some trepidation, I can feel seeds planted for the next to last phase of response to disaster: the Disillusionment Phase. I know that the open-heartedness will end, likely even before this extended disaster does. People are tiring of volunteering. There is a lot of talk of returning to "business as usual" which inspires insecurity and fear for many of our patients and members of WHPS (who have not all along been on the front-line). I worry that the government and insurances will revoke the equal payment for telemedicine as in-office visits. It is this change that made my patients safe and my livelihood possible during the pandemic. I am concerned I will be pushed to open the office even though it is not really safe to have close, long-lasting contact with people. Some patients and colleagues share my concerns; others want to reopen. I have patients previously diagnosed with PTSD, who feel revictimized and panic when employers ask them to go back to work; they do not trust that they will protect them. We are a nation fractured: some wanting to open up the government, some feeling their civil rights are being violated while others feel the government has not done enough to protect them, many feel safer with the closure. I understand that this is the Disillusionment Phase, and it can last for years. I wonder how my new, more egalitarian relationship which I have enjoyed during this pandemic will evolve.

I know that the Reconstruction Phase, where individuals and communities rebuild, adjust to the more enduring changes to society is approaching. I also know that, much as the Stages of Grief are not necessarily experienced linearly, so too the phases of Emotional Change During a Disaster can be variable. I hope that while in the Reconstruction Phase, we recognize our connectedness as doctors and patients, as co-members of the community can be preserved.

I would love to hear how other members of the WHPS community see their own "play" carried out, how have your doctor-patient relationships changed? How about your feelings about your colleagues? Though the pandemic is not over we can still reflect. We are part of the history of psychiatry. Please submit your stories!

Table Adapted from Zunin & Myers as cited in DeWolfe, D. J., 2000. *Training manual for mental health and human service workers in major disasters* (2nd ed., HHS Publication No. ADM 90-538). Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Mental Health Services. SAMSHA Disaster Distress Hotline 1-800-985-5990

WHPS Executive Council Meeting Minutes
Friday, May 1, 2020 @ 12:30pm
Virtual Zoom Meeting

Attendees Present: Laura Antar, Nigel Bark, Lois Kroplick, Russ Tobe, Dom Ferro, Jim Flax, Ulrick Vieux, Madhu Ahluwalia, Nick Batson and Liz Burnich



1. 2020 Executive Board Positions
 - a. We opened the meeting with a review of the Executive Council members and their roles on the board.
 - b. Ulrick Vieux advised that due to added work responsibilities, he is unable to continue in the role of Assembly Rep. The Nov 2020 Assembly meeting is moved to a virtual format (all APA meetings are virtual for the rest of 2020). Everyone present agreed that it would make the most sense for Nigel Bark (our former Assembly Rep) to assume the role as Assembly Rep for the next year while we look for someone in our DB who is interested in expanding his or her leadership roles within West Hudson and the APA.
2. Educational Meetings:
 - a. Before the Coronavirus crisis, we had scheduled our June 5th Educational Dinner Meeting with speaker, Jeffrey Geller, MD, current APA President. Because Dr. Geller plays a high-profile role in the APA, Raj suggested that we postpone the June 5th event and reschedule to a time where we can host an in-person event. There was discussion about whether we can do this in the fall but many were skeptical. Education Chair, Raj Mehta, will reach out to Dr. Geller.
 - b. Crisis Intervention Training – Laura Antar suggested that this would be a great topic for a late spring virtual event because so many of our members are being called to do crisis intervention psychiatry. This also complements our program where many of our members have agreed to offer 5 free psychiatry sessions for frontline workers and people who are directly affected by the Coronavirus crisis who do not have insurance or cannot get an appointment in a timely manner.
 - i. Laura suggested Jim Gordon as a potential speaker on crisis intervention. Liz will inquire if he would be willing to do this.
 - ii. Liz will also poll other DBs to see if anyone has any expert speaker recommendations on the topic of crisis intervention.
 - c. PRMS Risk Management virtual meeting to highlight changes to risk management during the coronavirus crisis.
 - d. Joint virtual meeting on one of the above topics or another topic with other local DBs.
3. COVID-19 Community Efforts:
 - a. Weekly Process Group @ ORMC with moderators Laura Antar & Lois Kroplick – they are several weeks into this group and it is going well.
 - b. Pro Bono patient guidelines and prioritization: Five crisis intervention sessions for frontline personnel or those who are directly affected by the Coronavirus who do NOT have insurance or who cannot get an appointment within a reasonable amount of time. Marc Tarle accepts insurance and has committed to taking on new patients who are directly affected by the coronavirus.
 - c. Montefiore Nyack Process Groups – Laura Antar spent a lot of time coordinating with the EAP administrator, Susan Mazerella on how to set up and structure various different groups (process groups, skills groups, etc.) to help employees of Montefiore Nyack who are adversely affected by working on the frontline. While

Laura initially thought WHPS volunteers would be moderating these groups, Montefiore Nyack has decided that they will run these groups in house. Laura played a key role in helping them get organized.

- d. We continue to offer support to both NAMI and DBSA.
 - e. Some of our psychiatrists also volunteer for the OMH Emotional Support Helpline.
 - f. We had a discussion about reaching out to Bon Secours and other areas to see if they need help with front line workers in crisis – who do we reach out to and how do we make ourselves known?
4. Committee Updates:
- a. Updated eSynapse format: Jim Flax, our newsletter editor sent out a revised newsletter format that he recently worked on. Everyone agreed that it was improved over our previous newsletter format.
 - b. Public Forum: Dr. Katherine Shear will be the headline speaker on the topic of “Grieving” at October 21, 2020 at Rockland Community College. The Public Forum planning committee will meet virtually on May 6 and will discuss the option of a virtual public forum for this fall due to the Coronavirus.
 - c. Women’s Group Committee Meeting: The next virtual meeting is scheduled for May 29 at 12:30pm and Mona will run the meeting this month.
 - d. Nick Batson updated everyone on how Crystal Run Healthcare, who provides care for patients in Rockland, Orange and Sullivan counties, is weathering the crisis, including internal support groups, EAP program for executive level staff directly affected by the crisis, neuro-psych testing for recovered clinicians and the difficult task of having to furlough a large part of their staff.
 - e. Ulrick Vieux reports that the Orange Regional Medical Center PGY-4 residents will graduate in June. Ulrick and Liz will start planning the 3rd Annual Resident Meet & Greet for July – virtual style. More to come on this.
 - f. Legislative efforts: Should we be reaching out to our local government officials regarding COVID issues? Possible legislation to be aware of: Prior Authorizations, Tele-health, Prescriber Prevails and advocating for physician tuition forgiveness. Liz will reach out to Richard Gallo to see if they have any recommendations.
5. On Hold Events:
- a. EC Meeting Community Guest Speaker – Jim Kelleher, Behavioral Health Medical Director at Nyack Montefiore – postponed Mar 20 meeting. Reschedule when things calm down and social distancing restrictions are lifted.
 - b. Media Training – we were in discussions with APA about doing a joint event with Westchester and Bronx DBs at St. Vincent’s Hospital, Harrison (free use of conference room) on Wednesday, May 20 when the coronavirus escalated. Revisit this event in the future.
6. Upcoming WHPS Meetings:
- a. Friday June 19 @ 12:30pm – Zoom Meeting
 - b. Friday July 17 @ 12:30pm – Zoom or in person meeting TBD

Resident's Column

Community Involvement During Psychiatry Training

Bisundev Mahato, MD



I am the Associate Academic Chief Resident at the Garnet Health (Orange Regional Medical Center), Psychiatry Residency Program. With the support of my residency program, I have been fortunate enough to be involved in various community events around the world. While trying to provide support and bring psychiatry to the community at large, these experiences have also served as great learning opportunities that I feel have greatly enhanced my residency training. Thus we have been very fortunate to have the support of our Program Director Dr. Ulrick Vieux and equally supportive Designated Institutional Officer Dr. Frantz Duffoo (and formally Dr. Ron Israelski), in addition to the rest of our GME, Foundation and Medical Group leadership. They have not only encouraged community involvement of residents, but have also found ways to financially support such ventures, which multiple residents have already taken advantage of.

I am sure the rest of the residents will agree, when I say such opportunities have been and should continue to be an integral part of our training, as they play a tremendous part in shaping us as future Attending Psychiatrists, who in addition to treating patients individually, should strive to serve by becoming local, national, and international community leaders not only in psychiatry but in healthcare in general, or even outside healthcare.

I am going to share here three of my community involvements, which are really my attempts to contribute what I can to the community and in the process learn as much as I can.

Nepal: I was fortunate to be invited to be a keynote speaker at a conference held in Kathmandu (October 12-14, 2018), titled “1st NRN Global Knowledge Convention”. The other participants of the convention included the current Prime Minister of Nepal, Mr. KP Oli, former Prime Minister, Dr. Baburam Bhattarai, several other ministers, members of the Federal Parliament of Nepal, high-ranking policy makers (including members of their National Planning Commission), and international knowledge experts and private sector leaders. In my keynote speech, I talked about the importance of prioritizing mental health, especially in the setting of natural disasters given the devastating effects of a 2015 earthquake from which that the country continues to struggle to recover. I also talked about global health and what the U.S. and Nepal can learn from

each other's experiences and how they can help each other. After my talk, I had extended one-to-one conversations with various national leaders, inside and outside the healthcare industry. The former Prime Minister of Nepal, Dr. Baburam Bhattarai, invited me for an afternoon tea at his residence to extend our conversation. I felt very honored and humbled at the same time. We talked at length about the challenges and solutions involving various sectors of the country. The former Vice-Chairman of the National Planning Commission, also invited me for an evening tea, and we conversed for hours on various topics. I was in Nepal for a week, and I met various other leaders for individual discussions, including leaders of various political parties. Through these conversations, I gained a tremendous amount of knowledge about challenges facing a developing country like Nepal. Most of the things I learned there can be helpful to our perspective in assisting our own struggling communities locally. I am very grateful to my program leadership and the hospital leadership who made this opportunity possible. I am also very thankful to the Foundation at Orange Regional Medical Center, who assisted with funding.



[Dr. Mahato (L) with former Prime Minister Dr. Baburam Bhattarai (R) and his wife the former Minister of Physical Planning Mrs. Hisila Yami (middle) at their residence]

Columbia University: I have had a long relationship with Columbia University, as I was employed there prior to going back to Harvard for medical school. I co-taught a course in healthcare

economics as a teaching fellow, while I took evening premedical courses in their Post-baccalaureate Premedical Program. So I was honored when I was invited by the Director of Alumni Relations (Aviva Zablocki) to talk about my own path to medical school and to psychiatry on April 30th of this year. Due to the COVID19 lockdown, it was a virtual meeting over Zoom. In addition to myself, there were two other panelists- Dr. Anthony Koerner, a retired internist, who used to be on faculty at Keck School of Medicine at USC and the Program Director of Internal Medicine at Huntington Hospital, and Dr. Judith Tanenbaum, who is an endowed (in will) Betts-Tanenbaum Chair in Clinical Psychiatry and a Clinical Assistant Professor at the Weill Cornell School of Medicine and New York-Presbyterian. This was part of the "Alumni in Conversation" series and was hosted by Dean James Colgrove, Dean of the Postbac Premed Program at Columbia and moderated by a student leader, Hunter Drake. The conversation was also attended by other deans and leaders of the university, and reportedly drew a record number of students since the series was started. Apart from sharing my own path to psychiatry and sharing advice to current premedical students, I learned a lot myself from the conversation, not only from the experiences of other panelists, but also from the audience members themselves.

Facebook Live Webinar: On May 2, 2020, I was part of a panel discussion surrounding COVID19, titled "Coronavirus (COVID19): Social/Economic/Mental Health Impact & Support," that was broadcasted live on Facebook, and viewed by over twelve thousand audience members worldwide, most of them Nepali-speaking, as the discussion was mostly held in Nepali language. It was organized by Madhesi Association of America, an association representing a marginalized group of people originally from the southern belt of Nepal called Tarai, and now living in the U.S. I was one of four panelists, which included the Consul General of Nepal (Mr. Pushpa Raj Bhattarai), Member of Maryland House of Delegates (Mr. Harry Bhandari), and a medical researcher and the President of the Association from the University of Cincinnati Medical Center (Mr. Ram Naresh Pandey). The discussion mostly centered on questions from the audience, and was moderated by Mr. Amit Shah, who is the Director of Asian American Business Affairs of Greater New York Chamber of Commerce and is a COVID19 survivor after his whole family got infected and had to be quarantined. I answered audience questions regarding economic and mental health impacts, whereas other panelists took questions on social support from the U.S. and Nepal governments, as well as NGOs. As the only physician panelist, I also entertained clinical questions regarding the Coronavirus. This was a tremendously valuable experience for me in facing a global audience on a currently burning topic, and I am sure has further shaped me into the kind of Psychiatrist I aspire to become.

CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)
Social / Economic / Mental Health Impacts & Support

PANELISTS

- Mr. Pushpa Raj Bhattarai**
Consul General of Nepal
New York, USA
- Mr. Harry Bhandari**
Member of Maryland
House of Delegates
- Mr. Ram Naresh Pandey**
Medical Researcher / MAA President
- Dr. Bisundev Mahato, MD**
Harvard Medical Graduate /
Res. Psychiatrist, ORMC

Moderated By:
Amit P. Shah, BPH
COVID-19 Survivor

11.30 Am EST Saturday, May 2, 2020

LIVE <https://www.facebook.com/maamadhesh/>
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/314097028657417/?ref=share>
Several US based Nepali Media will live broadcast this webinar.

Organized by: Madhesi Association in America (MAA) / www.maamadhesh.org
Media / Tech Support: Mohammad Rafiq / Sangit Rauniyar / Navin Sah / Raj Sarraf

Live Broadcast Media Partners



The above opportunities I describe are just a sample of experiences that my colleagues and I at the Garnet Health- ORMC Psychiatry Residency Program are involved in, and I believe are invaluable to shaping our future not only as psychiatrists, but also as healthcare leaders.



APA NEWS & NOTES FOR DB/SAs

AMERICAN PSYCHIATRIC ASSOCIATION

Medical leadership for mind, brain and body.

News and Notes for APA District Branches/State Associations May 2020

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

- Jeffrey Geller, M.D., M.P.H., began his one-year term as President of the American Psychiatric Association (APA) at the conclusion of the APA Virtual Highlights Meeting. You can read more about Dr. Geller's election and his priorities for his term, and view the other leadership candidates who took office at the conclusion of the Virtual Highlights Meeting [here](#).
- Joseph C. Napoli, M.D., assumed the role of Speaker of the APA Assembly of District Branches at the conclusion of the APA Virtual Highlights Meeting. You can read more about Dr. Napoli and the APA Assembly [here](#).
- APA urged the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to allow for additional access to telepsychiatry services during the COVID-19 pandemic. APA sent a letter to CMS requesting that they loosen the video requirement for telepsychiatry to allow patients with older phones that do not have a camera, or who do not have internet access, to receive individual therapy and medication management with their physician. You can read the full letter, and more about telepsychiatry and COVID-19 [here](#).

May Course of the Month – What Should Psychiatrists Know and Do About Gun Violence Among America's Adolescents and Emerging Adults?

Gun violence—whether in the form of homicides, mass shootings or suicides, kills nearly 30,000 Americans every year. These daunting statistics have not motivated Congress to allow for more federal funding to understand this public health problem. This presentation will provide a public health framework to underscore why gun violence exposure is a serious health risk for adolescents and emerging adults. Presented by Stephan Carlson, M.D., Brookdale University Medical Center, Jason Hershberger, M.D., Interfaith Medical Center, Brookdale Medical Center, William Darby, M.D., UCLA, and Ziv Cohen, M.D., Private Practice, Manhattan, NY.

[Click here to access the Course of the Month and sign up for updates about this free member benefit.](#)

What Is APA Doing in the Nation's Capital for Your Patients and Practice?

APA's Department of Government Relations has released its latest update on APA's advocacy activities regarding policies and regulations that affect your patients and profession, including information on advocacy during the novel Coronavirus Pandemic.

<https://www.psychiatry.org/psychiatrists/advocacy/march-2020-advocacy-update>

New Episode of Psychiatric News Alert: APA COVID-19 Survey Results

A new episode of Psychiatric News Alert, *APA COVID-19 Survey Results*, is available as our Alexa Flash Briefing today. The episode is also available on the Psychiatric News home page and on the [Psychiatryonline.org](https://www.psychiatryonline.org) home page.

<http://alexapn.apapublishing.libsynpro.com/>

APA Coronavirus Resources: [Psychiatry.org/coronavirus](https://www.psychiatry.org/coronavirus)

APA is collecting authoritative and timely resources at [psychiatry.org/coronavirus](https://www.psychiatry.org/coronavirus) and will update this page on a continual basis. Upcoming webinars to help you navigate the rapidly changing clinical practice environment will be linked here, along with information for your practice, patients and their families, the public, and health care and community leaders. <https://www.psychiatry.org/psychiatrists/covid-19-coronavirus>

Telepsychiatry & COVID-19

Learn more about whether telepsychiatry may be a helpful option for your practice, and access APA's collection of resources on telepsychiatry.

<https://www.psychiatry.org/psychiatrists/practice/telepsychiatry/blog/apa-resources-on-telepsychiatry-and-covid-19>

On-Demand Webinars:

- **How to Address COVID-19 Across Inpatient, Residential and other Non-Ambulatory Care Settings**
 - Hear from experts about how to manage through different types of services, key messages to give to your team leaders, unique challenges for people with SMI, how to handle group therapy, and more.
<https://education.psychiatry.org/Users/ProductDetails.aspx?ActivityID=7272>
- **Telepsychiatry in the Era of COVID-19**
 - This free webinar from SMI Adviser (APA & SAMHSA) offers learners an overview of how to use telemental health and video visits in the changing landscape surrounding the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic.
<https://education.smiadviser.org/Users/ProductDetails.aspx?ActivityID=7257>
- **Managing the Mental Health Effects of COVID-19**
 - This free webinar from APA will outline how psychiatrists can support patients, communicate with family members and children, and be a resource to other providers during the COVID-19 outbreak.
<https://education.psychiatry.org/Users/ProductDetails.aspx?ActivityID=7266>

Working Remotely During COVID-19: Your Mental Health & Well-Being

The Center for Workplace Mental Health, an APA Foundation initiative, has a new employer resource on maintaining your mental health and well-being while working remotely, what to do if you have a mental health condition, and tips for managers and HR professionals on staying connected and supporting employees during this challenging time.

<http://workplacementalhealth.org/Employer-Resources/Working-Remotely-During-COVID-19>

Practice Management HelpLine

As an APA member, you have access to APA's [Practice Management HelpLine](#) to assist you with your practice management needs. Help is available on how to manage the day-to-day operations of your practice in the midst of this pandemic, including

telehealth, coding, documentation, reimbursement, contracting with managed care companies, Medicare, Medicaid, and more.

<https://www.psychiatry.org/psychiatrists/practice/practice-management/about-the-practice-management-helpline>

Have questions about COVID-19 and serious mental illness (SMI)?

Any mental health professional can submit questions about COVID-19 and bipolar disorder, major depression, and schizophrenia. Within a day, receive evidence-based guidance from SMI Adviser's team of national experts. Ask about medications, resources for families, telehealth options, and much more. This is a completely CONFIDENTIAL and FREE service for all mental health professionals.

<https://smiadviser.org/submit-consult>

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AMERICAN
PSYCHIATRIC
ASSOCIATION



April 2020

This digest of events during the April virtual Assembly meetings held via Zoom summarizes the business conducted by the Assembly. Many other reports presented in written form can be found in the Assembly Packet. It is best to download or read these notes online, but may also be printed and distributed in hardcopy (without access to the web links). You may use it as is, or edit and modify the content to suit your particular needs. Any errors or omissions are to be considered unconscious. Corrections and suggestions may be sent to [Adam Nelson, M.D.](#)



Speaker's Welcome — Paul O'Leary, MD



Dr. O'Leary welcomed all to the April virtual meeting of the Assembly. He discussed the tremendous effort put into organizing and orchestrating the format for the meeting, which is scheduled to run for 1½ hours today, rather than the usual 2½ days of meetings in person, as has been the tradition of the APA Assembly. However, circumstances involving the coronavirus COVID-19 have precluded the conducting of business as usual. In addition, many of us are all too aware of the toll this pandemic has taken on colleagues around the country. For them, Dr. O'Leary asked for a moment of silence.

Report of the Rules Committee — James R. Batterson, MD

Ordinarily, the Rules Committee report would not receive comment in the Notes. However, with recent changes in the Procedures Code of the Assembly, the Rules Committee was tasked with new responsibilities. In addition to the assignment of Action Papers and other actionable items before the Assembly either to the Reference Committee or to the Consent Calendar, the Rules Committee also assigned some Action Papers to a Reaffirmation Consent Calendar. In addition, because of the unique circumstances of this Virtual Meeting of the Assembly, a third assignment category option was to defer those Action Papers and other actionable business not considered time sensitive to the November Assembly Meeting, when they might receive more deliberative attention. Also, several authors volunteered to defer their Action Papers until November as well. The results of those action items on which the Assembly decided can be found below. Special Rules of the Assembly for this virtual format were also approved by the Assembly.



Assembly Election Results — James R. Batterson, MD, chair Assembly Nominating Committee

Results of last week's election of Assembly officers were announced. For Speaker-Elect, [Mary Jo Fitz-Gerald, MD](#) (Area 5) was elected by acclamation. For Recorder, [Adam Nelson, MD](#) (Area 6) was elected. Congratulations to the new officers and to all the candidates on a hard fought campaign.

APA Position Statements

The following Position Statements were approved by the Assembly: (by consent)

Retired Position Statement: Endorsement of the Patient Physician Covenant

Proposed Position Statement: Use of Antipsychotic Medication in Patients with Major Neurocognitive Disorder (MNCD)

Proposed Position Statement: Universal Health Care in the United States

Revised Position Statement: Banning of Pharmacy Benefit Management Policies that Require the Provision of Dangerous Quantities of Medications

Proposed Position Statement: Mental Health Needs of Undocumented Immigrants



refer a colleague

FOR EVERY REFERRAL, WE DONATE TO MENTAL HEALTH



Refer a psychiatrist or behavioral healthcare group practice to PRMS, and we will make a donation to support the mental health community.

WE ARE TRIPLING DONATIONS TO \$150 PER REFERRAL FOR THE ENTIRE MONTH OF MAY IN HONOR OF MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH!

**YOUR REFERRAL COULD BENEFIT THE
WEST HUDSON PSYCHIATRIC SOCIETY.
START EARNING DONATIONS TODAY!**



PRMS.com/Refer
(800) 245-3333
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 3715-7. www.fairco.com.

ALSO FROM PRMS:

Greetings and Happy May!

We hope you are staying safe and well. This week, we sent our insured clients updates to our [FAQs](#) regarding COVID-19, including resources about re-opening a practice and treating patients new to telemedicine, along with information on contingency / disaster planning – these can be found in the below email. We hope sharing access to our [FAQs](#) will be useful to you and your members as we continue to navigate this pandemic.

Refer a Colleague Donations TRIPLE This May

In honor of Mental Health Awareness Month, PRMS is tripling all donations through our “[Refer a Colleague](#)” program during the month of May to \$150, our largest donation to date! For every referral PRMS receives, we provide a \$50 donation (**tripled to \$150 in May**) to a state psychiatric association, NAMI, or a national or regional specialty psychiatric association of the referrer’s choice – whether or not an insurance policy is purchased. Please visit [PRMS.com/Refer](https://prms.com/refer) to learn more and start referring today.

Mental Health Awareness Month Blog

During this unprecedented health crisis, it is more important than ever that we stay home as much as possible. But while we continue to remain physically distant, we commend psychiatrists for staying connected, rising to the challenge, and continuing to find ways to deliver mental health services. In honor of Mental Health Awareness Month and in support of the entire health community at the frontlines of COVID-19 and those providing much needed care to both patients and healthcare providers, we are pleased to announce our donations to World Central Kitchen and Give an Hour this May. Check out our latest [blog post](#) to learn more about these organizations.

Practice Survey

We created a quick survey to gather your members’ insights on how COVID-19 has affected their practices. We would greatly appreciate your members taking a few minutes to respond (responses are anonymous), as they will help PRMS ensure that our resources and guidance are meeting the needs of psychiatrists during this unprecedented time. Please feel free to share the [survey link](#) with your members.



CORRESPONDENCE, EVENTS, ANNOUNCEMENTS AND ADS

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.

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/ullqriwoa37njz/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/qbp3bwczqti8dqq/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>

MAOI Antidepressants

I am a member of the “MAOI Clinicians info and support group that can be joined by emailing maoi-info-and-support+unsubscribe@googlegroups.com. I recently added my name to an online statement on the use of MAOI medications. The statement can be accessed through this link: https://www.cambridge.org/core/services/aop-cambridge-core/content/view/32497C0FE4F08D0D4C07E6350A91B0EE/S1092852919001196a.pdf/revitalizing_monoamine_oxidase_inhibitors_a_call_for_action.pdf

If you are not familiar with the use of MAOI antidepressants, I suggest you take time to read this publication and join the googlegroup. J Flax, MD

USEFUL INFORMATION RESOURCES: Dr. Ferro recently advised me of a useful electronic publication of psychiatric advice – SimpleandPractical.com. 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 writes to inform our readers of this very useful resource.

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 our practicing members.

You no longer can receive a discount as a member of West Hudson Psychiatric Society.

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. 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.

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.



Ed Day, County Executive

Behavioral Health Resource Card

Don't Wait! Reach Out! Make the Call!

EMERGENCY SERVICES

If you need help with:

- **Immediate assistance:** Call 911 or proceed to the nearest emergency room.
- **Mobile Crisis Response:** Behavioral Health Response Team (BHRT), 24/7 availability, 845-517-0400
- **Suicide Prevention Lifeline:** 24/7 hotline, 1-800-273-8255
- **Crisis Text Line:** Text GOTS to 741741
- **Domestic violence, sexual assault and all crimes help:** Center for Safety & Change, 24/7 Hotline, 845-634-3344
- **Alcoholism/Drug Abuse:** NY HOPEline, 24/7 hotline, 1-877-846-7369
- **Veterans Crisis Line:** 24/7 hotline, 1-800-273-8255
- **Short term respite for adults:** Take Five Respite Program, 24/7 hotline, 845-825-0482
- **Safe Haven:** An overnight warming center in Pomona providing temporary, overnight shelter to men and women 18 years of age or older, from November 1 to April 30. Call DSS Housing Unit 845-364-3150 for information.

CLINIC AND PROGRAM SERVICES

Mental Health Services

Achieve Behavioral Health, A Division of Bikur Cholim Cornerstone	845-425-5252	(Monsey)
Frawley Clinic	845-999-3060	(New City)
Jawonio	845-368-5222	(Suffern)
Mental Health Association	845-708-2000	(New Hempstead)
Mental Health Association of Westchester	845-267-2172	(Valley Cottage)
Orangeburg Service Center	914-345-0700 ext. 7350	(Nyack, Haverstraw)
RCDMH Pomona Clinic	845-398-7050	(Orangeburg)
VCS Mental Health Clinic	845-364-2150	(Pomona)
	845-634-5729	(New City)

Substance Use Disorder Services: Inpatient Detox & Rehab

Good Samaritan Hospital	845-368-5242	(Suffern)
Montefiore Nyack Hospital	845-348-2072	(Nyack)
Russell E. Blaisdell ATC	845-359-8500	(Orangeburg)

Substance Use Disorder Services: Outpatient

Achieve Behavioral Health, A Division of Bikur Cholim Lexington Center	845-425-5252	(Monsey)
	845-369-9701	(Valley Cottage, West Haverstraw, Airmont)
Mental Health Association	845-267-2172x205	(Valley Cottage)
Montefiore Nyack Hospital	845-348-2070	(Nyack)
Samaritan Daytop Village	845-353-2730	(Blauvelt)

CLINIC AND PROGRAM SERVICES (Cont'd)

Substance Use Disorder Services: Prevention

CANDLE	845-634-6677	(New City)
Haverstraw Center	845-429-5731	(Haverstraw)
RCADD	845-215-9788	(Nanuet)

RESOURCE HELPLINE

MHA Client & Family Advocate: 845-267-2172, x.296
St. Dominic's Family Services Resource Line: 1-844-418-5618

WHO DO YOU CALL IF?

- You suspect your teen is using alcohol or drugs call **Teen Intervene at Haverstraw Center** or **RCADD** (listed above).
- You are concerned about an individual age 18 or over who can't provide for their basic needs and have no one willing or able to help in a reasonable manner. **Protective Services for Adults** 845-364-3571 for an assessment, 9AM - 5PM.
- You need information on all health and human services programs, call **211, Hudson Valley Region 2-1-1**.
- You need support and education for families in the mental health system. **NAMI Rockland Helpline** 845-359-8787.
- You need information on long term services and supports for all ages/disabilities. **NY Connects** 845-364-3444.

COUNTY RESOURCES

Emergency Housing

Daytime: 845-364-3150 **After Hours:** 845-638-5400

Department of Mental Health

Main Number: 845-364-2378

Assisted Outpatient Treatment: 845-364-3691. For individuals with a history of mental illness and noncompliance with treatment/medications who may benefit from court ordered outpatient treatment.

Single Point of Access - Adult SPOA: 845-364-2399. For adults with serious mental illness who need case management or housing.

Child and Adolescent SPOA: 845-364-2275. For children with serious emotional disturbance who need case management services.

Veterans Service Agency

845-638-5244

For assistance in obtaining and maintaining veteran's benefits.

OTHER RESOURCES

Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities Services: Hudson Valley Developmental Disabilities Regional Office, Community Support Team: 845-947-6390.

ACCES-VR (Vocational Rehabilitation): Assisting individuals with disabilities to achieve and maintain employment and to support independent living. 845-426-5410.

Helping Hands for the Homeless of Rockland: 845-356-0100

Partnership for Safe Youth: 845-405-4180

This list is not all inclusive. To find out about additional services go to the **RCDMH Website:** <http://rocklandgov.com/departments/mental-health/>

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