

Texas Psychiatrist



The pandemic continues...

J. Clay Sawyer, M.D., DLFAPA, Chair, Texas Federation of Psychiatry



J. Clay Sawyer, MD, DLFAPA

As I feared in a previous column, the urge to return to normalcy and to revive the economy proved to be too much to attempt at the time. As a result, infections have increased, deaths due to the virus have increased, and the economy is still in an uncertain state; as a result, the United States now has 25% of the world's Covid-19 deaths despite having only 4% of the world's population.

So, what has all of this to do with psychiatry?

Plenty. As physicians, we are trained to deal with facts, not conjecture. We are trained to discern actual illness and to find effective remedies which withstand scientific evaluation. We are trained to discuss all of these entities with our patients, and to help them to make their own informed decisions about treatment itself.

We cannot effectively do so if we accept anything but the facts, and we certainly cannot treat effectively if we accept anecdotal suppositions rather than scientific evidence about treatment modalities. This is true of all medical specialties, not just psychiatry.

As psychiatrists, we have a special duty, and a special opportunity, to try to have a positive effect on this pandemic. We are still (to the best of my knowledge) the only medical specialty trained on a formal basis

to differentiate the functional from the organic. Our patients are going to need us to help them sort through the overwhelming morass of information now engulfing us all; and, because of our training as physicians, we are in a unique position to do so and to help them find effective treatment for any medical disorder which may arise, not just those medical disorders which are psychiatric in nature.

The Federation of Texas Psychiatry will be at the forefront of this effort in our legislative efforts to advocate for our patients—to advocate for the best treatment options, and to protect our patients from treatment approaches which not only may be ineffective, but which also may prove to be harmful. As physicians, we are in the best position to be effective advocates for our patients, and it is our responsibility to do so. We cannot let our patients down.

This is why the Federation was formed back in 2004. Prior to that time, we had several psychiatric organizations which acted independently, which had their own agendas, and which often failed to be effective because of a lack of cooperation among the organizations and because of the mixed messages received by legislators from the various organizations. All of that changed in 2004. As a result of bringing these organizations under one umbrella, and adding the

TMA and the TOMA as associate members, psychiatry in Texas developed something it had never had before: clout. Instead of speaking for, say, 1400 TSPP members when we visited legislators about psychiatric concerns, we now (as of 2004) had the voices of over 50,000 physicians backing us up on psychiatric issues. My own state senator at the time told me that forming the Federation was the smartest thing we could have done because, as he explained to me, legislators may not always remember all of the message, but they always remember the numbers.

And so we have had good successes in the years since 2004, and not just because of clout. We have continued to work to develop good relationships with our legislators, we have continued the hard work of educating our legislators about psychiatric issues, and we have stayed on message (e.g., advocating for our patients). Staying on message is of particular importance so as not to cloud and dilute our main goals when we do approach our legislators. By bringing together the member organizations of the Federation, we continue to present a simple, straightforward, unified approach to the important work of advocating for our patients.

We do this work not only during legislative sessions, but also in the intervening years as well. We work with the TMA in gen-

eral (and the TMA Interspecialty Society committee in particular) in a combined effort on behalf of all medical specialties as well as our own. We help the House of Medicine as they have helped us over the years, an effort which benefits us all in our quest for patient advocacy.

So, please support (by membership of course, and with volunteer work where you feel called) all of the organizations which comprise the Federation. This umbrella organization has proven itself time and again to be the most effective means yet of advocating for quality psychiatric care in Texas. The more active you are in our member organizations (including the TMA, the most influential medical organization of its kind in the country), the better our advocacy efforts will be for our patients, and the more likely that we as a group can eventually influence the outcome of the current pandemic. ■



Have you checked your mental health lately?

Debra Atkisson, M.D., DFAPA, Vice Chair Public Policy, Texas Federation of Psychiatry



Debra Atkisson, M.D., DFAPA

Five months ago we responded to Covid-19 by rapidly shifting our work practices as well as our personal practices. Many of us shifted to a telemedicine-based practice as well as changing the structure of how we functioned personally on a day to day basis. We have been called by media outlets to educate our communities about

the mental health effects of this pandemic. All of us have risen to meet this challenge for our patients, community, and families.

Psychiatrists are often the medical professionals who stabilize people in the aftermath of tragedy and loss caused by an event, an illness, or a loss. We are the people who others are reaching out to now; and we should anticipate that the numbers of people needing us are going to continue to increase. As this pandemic wears on with the stressors related to uncertainty, economic worries, and loss we will likely see an increase in the numbers of people struggling with depression and anxiety.

What about our fellow physicians who are working even longer hours than usual,

worrying about their own safety and exposure to Covid – 19, and fighting a battle against this disease that seems futile at times? As one physician said to me “I never would have thought that I could not comfort a dying patient.” But he could not due to the infectious nature of his patient and the limited amounts of PPE. And the other health care professionals on the front line are having the same difficulties. While we are working hard, we need to prepare for the wave that is coming.

“The Covid-19 pandemic has alarming implications for individual and collective health and emotional and social functioning.” (B. Pfefferbaum, MD, JD and C. North, MD, MPE, NEJM 2020; 383:510-512, “Mental

Health and the Covid-19 Pandemic) We psychiatrists are not immune to the mental health impact just as we are not immune to the virus itself. As we take care of the many who turn to us we must be aware of the need to take care of ourselves. I encourage each of us to make the time to be mindful of our own mental health during this time and to reach out if we need help ourselves. ■

INSIDE

76th Legislative Update	2
Adapting in Unusual Times	4
Foundation 2020 Annual Fundraising Campaign Begins	2
Innovation in the Age of COVID	5
Special Message about 2021 Dues	3
TSCAP Webinar Comments	5
TSPP Webinar Comments	4
We are Living in Unprecedented Times	5



SAVE THE DATE BOX FOR TSPP CME VIRTUAL WEBINAR

“RISING TO THE CHALLENGE: PSYCHIATRY IN THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC”

NOVEMBER 14

Program and Registration Coming Soon!



Foundation 2020 Annual Fundraising Campaign Begins

J. Clay Sawyer, M.D., Chair, DLFAPA, Texas Foundation for Psychiatric Education and Research

Greetings to all—it is my hope that everyone has found a way of coping with all of the stresses brought on by the Covid-19 pandemic. Whether teaching residents and medical students, seeing patients (in person or otherwise) in private practice or medical center clinics, or completing important research at all levels of the field, the current situation has affected us all. Our work in all of these endeavors must go on and cannot wait; the same is true of the efforts of organized psychiatry to advocate for our patients and to ensure that our professional knowledge and skills are kept up to date.

That’s where the Foundation comes in. The Texas Foundation for Psychiatric Education and Research was formed in 1991 as a charitable ((501(c)(3)) organization committed to raising funds toward professional education for all physicians regarding psychiatry, toward the education of the public regarding psychiatric disorders and sources of help, and toward the support of research regarding psychiatric care, among others.

With regard to professional education, the Foundation plays a significant role in helping to support the CME programs of the active voting member organization of the Federation of Texas Psychiatry, the Texas Society of Psychiatric Physicians. Researching, organizing, and providing such programming is not an easy task; without the funding provided by the Foundation, these efforts would be made tremendously more difficult. The same is true regarding patient advocacy endeavors by the Federation on behalf of its member organizations – the Foundation takes seriously its mission of furthering effective patient advocacy and actively solicits, reviews and provides grant monies to TSPP Chapters who organize wor-

thy mental health activities and projects within their communities during Mental Illness Awareness Week, October 4-10. **Every psychiatrist in Texas benefits from these efforts by the Foundation.**

As you might suspect, my presentation of all of the above is leading to a specific purpose: **the announcement of our 2020 annual fundraising campaign.** None of the efforts and missions previously described comes easy or comes free; the ongoing need for continuing the Foundation’s support for all of these purposes (education, advocacy, and research) is real and cannot be short-changed if our Federation member organiza-

tions are to be able to realize continued success in keeping an informed and skilled cadre of physicians practicing psychiatry available to an ever more-informed general public whose need for our services will undoubtedly increase as the current pandemic wears on.

I thank you for reading this far. I also thank in advance everyone who will heed the call of our annual campaign and contribute mightily to this great and necessary responsibility. Please join us in this effort as soon as you can. To remit your donation electronically, please email tsppofc@aol.com and request a QuickBooks electronic invoice,



J. Clay Sawyer, MD, DLFAPA

specify the amount of donation you wish to make, and an invoice will be sent to your email address for you to click and pay! Additionally, you may clip the donation coupon in this issue of the Newsletter, or alternatively view the link on our webpage (<https://www.txpsych.org/foundation/>) ■

TEXAS FOUNDATION FOR PSYCHIATRIC EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

To Request an Electronic Invoice to Remit Your Foundation Donation, Email and specify the amount you wish to donate and an electronic invoice will be emailed to you.

I am pleased to support the Foundation with a contribution of:

☐ \$50

☐ \$100

☐ \$250

☐ \$500

☐ \$1000

☐ \$

☐ I am pleased to commit a pledge of \$ payable on (date)

☐ Check in the Amount of \$

Make Checks Payable to “Texas Foundation for Psychiatric Education and Research”

Please Charge \$ To My: ☐ VISA ☐ MasterCard

Credit Card #

Exp. Date:

3 Digit Code on Back of Card on Right of Signature Panel

Name of Cardholder (as it appears on card)

Signature

Zip Code where you receive your credit card statement

DONOR INFORMATION

Name

Address

Telephone ()

Contact me about a PLANNED GIFT.

☐ A Bequest

☐ A Gift of Insurance

☐ A Charitable Trust

Texas Foundation for Psychiatric Education and Research • 401 West 15th Street, Suite 675, Austin, Texas 78701.

Your contribution is tax deductible to the full extent of the law. Thank you for your support!



76th Legislative Update, August 2020

Eric Woomer, Federation of Texas Psychiatry Public Policy Consultant

Summers are typically a little slower for the Texas legislature, as lawmakers often travel or otherwise spend time with their families. But the COVID-19 crisis has impacted how legislators work and play, just like the rest of us, and Capitol veterans are trying to figure out how to prepare for the legislative session while staying safe and socially distancing.

To date, there are nearly five million total COVID-19 cases in the United States, with more than 160,000 deaths. In Texas, there is finally some good news: the number of Texans hospitalized due to the virus is on the decline, but more than 8,500 Texans are still receiving care in the hospital for the coronavirus as of August 5. That is 1,100 more than a week ago, and they occupy 15.5% of hospital beds. There were also more than 8,700 new cases reported on August 5, more than 7,500 Texans have died due to the virus.

The crisis has obviously impacted the state’s budget outlook. In July, Comptroller Glenn Hegar reduced his estimate for state funds available for general purpose spending by \$11.5 billion relative to his earlier fig-

ures. Factoring in the infusion of federal dollars through recent stimulus packages, the impact of this decline is a reduction of about \$7.5 billion overall – taking us from a current-biennium estimated surplus of almost \$3 billion to a shortfall of approaching \$5 billion. We have the tools in our budget toolkit to cover these losses in the FY 2020-2021 biennium (such as federal money, the state Rainy Day Fund, and a requested 5% reduction in agency budgets), but the FY22-23 outlook is volatile and there are many unknowns. Inevitably, one can expect further reductions in state spending to deal with the crisis

Looking at the Texas election landscape, with the ballots now set for the fall general election contest, the crucial political question is whether Democrats can capitalize on the historic circumstances facing the nation leading up to the 2020 elections? President Donald Trump’s disconnected response to the coronavirus pandemic, the U.S. economic collapse and the rise of the “Black Lives Matter” movement all leave the Democrats well-positioned to build upon the historic “Blue Wave” they enjoyed

in the 2018 midterm elections.

If the 2020 general election were held today, it is likely that President Trump would face defeat at the hand of the presumptive Democratic nominee Joe Biden. Trump’s declining approval rating, and a Democratic lead over Republicans in generic congressional polls spell big problems for the GOP in the fall. However, the election is obviously NOT being held today. There are nearly four months ahead before the November general election – a lifetime in politics – and it is very reasonable to assume that circumstances will evolve, and that President Trump can regain his footing and assist the party down ballot.

In July, Sen. Eddie Lucio (D-Brownsville) prevailed in his primary runoff, and Rep. Roland Gutierrez (D-San Antonio) will face Sen. Pete Flores (R-Pleasanton) in the fall, in a district drawn for a Democrat that Flores won in a special election in 2018. Former Travis Co. Judge Sarah Eckhardt (D-Austin) won the special election to replace retiring Sen. Kirk Watson (D-Austin) and has already been seated. All in all, in November, expect a possible one-seat gain



Eric Woomer

for the Democrats in the 31-member Texas Senate, bringing the partisan split to 18-13 Republican. Bear in mind that typically, nineteen votes are required in the Senate to pass legislation, meaning Republicans could lack the votes to advance certain conservative causes.

Speaker Dennis Bonnen (R-Angleton) will not be returning next session, which leaves the powerful leadership post open for the House of Representatives to fill when it returns in January. There are currently 10 Democratic-held seats that are meaningfully contested in the fall, all of

continued on page 3

SPECIAL MESSAGE TO ALL TSPP MEMBERS REGARDING YOUR TEXAS SOCIETY OF PSYCHIATRIC PHYSICIANS' 2021 DISCOUNTED MEMBERSHIP DUES

THANKYOU for being a member of TSPP! For the support of YOUR state professional medical specialty society for Psychiatry in Texas, for your participation in our new ‘virtual’ meetings and especially for your dedication to your patients during these difficult times. Together, with you, we will continue to evolve and overcome the COVID-19 obstacles that have been put in all of our paths. And as your partner, we will continue to strive to successfully meet and address your professional and educational needs, and, your legislative representation.

And, while we miss seeing each of you at our face to face meetings and providing opportunities for you to visit with your colleagues, your health and safety remain our top priority so we will look forward to ‘seeing’ you in our virtual meetings until such time as COVID no longer provides a threat to anyone.

TSPP Membership Dues. In 2001 TSPP voted to implement its’ first membership dues increase from the \$340.00 dues rate established pre-1999, to a rate of \$395.00 beginning in 2002. RFM dues remained at the same low annual rate of \$50.00. And, despite the significant decline in revenue due to our inability to conduct live meetings and generate exhibitor/sponsor revenue because of the COVID-19 pandemic and the increased expenses encountered in

2021 TSPP DUES CATEGORY	DISCOUNT Reduced Rate if paid before November 1, 2020	REGULAR Rate if paid after November 1, 2020	LATE Rate if paid after February 15, 2021
General Member/Fellow/Distinguished Fellow	\$381.18	\$395.00	\$414.75
Life @ 2/3 (1st 5 years of Life Member)	\$254.76	\$264.00	\$277.20
Life @ 1/3 (2nd 5 years of Life Member)	\$125.45	\$130.00	\$136.50
Resident-Fellow Member	\$48.25	\$50.00	\$52.50

arranging and producing virtual meetings, TSPP remains committed to keeping your dues at the lowest amount possible, for as long as conceivably possible, without jeopardizing any of your membership benefits and representation.

TSPP Discounted Dues. TSPP is pleased to once again, 20 years later, inform our members that we will not be increasing the TSPP membership dues rate for 2021.

And in addition, recognizing the difficult times that we are all experiencing, TSPP will again extend a 3.5% prompt pay discount to all member classifications who remit their TSPP membership dues payment BEFORE NOVEMBER 1. Your 2021 APA membership dues will be billed separately beginning in September, with your APA dues payment due before March 31, 2021.

APA and TSPP Dues Billing. Currently, APA has a dual membership requirement and loss of membership in one organization will result in loss of membership in the other organization. APA does not bill for

your TSPP membership dues and TSPP dues are not included with the APA dues shown on the APA website or in your APA dues statement. Each organization bills independent of one another, reducing the members’ initial dues burden of remitting one large payment for both organizations’ dues at one time.

TSPP 2020 Applicants for Membership. For new RFM applicants for membership entering residency in July, TSPP is offering a 50% discount in their 2020 membership dues and will provide a \$100 First-Year Discount for their 2021 membership dues. Applicants for all other membership classifications will also receive a 50% discount in their 2020 TSPP membership dues. So please encourage your colleagues to consider applying for membership this year to build your professional voice in Texas Psychiatry and participate in TSPP’s activities with you!

ADDITIONAL DUES INFORMATION: In our attempt to protect our members and staff from unnecessary exposure to

Covid-19, your 2021 TSPP prompt pay dues statements will be sent out electronically by email August 31. You may safely remit your dues payment using the QuickBooks Online link attached to the email and receive the prompt pay discount! A paper invoice will be mailed September 30 to those who did not remit their TSPP membership dues electronically. 5% Late Fees will be added if payment is not received by February 15, 2021.

IMPORTANT – If your APA dues statement reflects a different dues category than what is shown on your TSPP dues statement AND/OR if the APA dues statement reflects dues for TSPP (Texas) please immediately contact the TSPP office by email, tsppofc@aol.com or telephone 512-478-0605 and leave a message for a return call. Do NOT remit your payment. We will personally collect your TSPP (Texas) membership dues, confirm your member category and notify the APA on your behalf to reissue a corrected statement. ■

76th Legislative Update, August 2020

continued from page 2

which were held by Republicans in 2017. Republicans will be defending at least thirteen seats, and some watchers predict as many as five or six losses among those, if not more. The current partisan split in the 150-member Texas House is 83 Republicans and 67 Democrats, meaning that it will take a nine-seat gain by the Democrats in November for the House to flip. While not probable, this is very possible – particularly if the Dallas Morning News poll from mid-July is accurate, showing a 52%-48% Democratic advantage in a generic state House ballot.

The policy question on everyone’s mind at the state capitol is, how will the business of the session be conducted? The Texas Legislature considers thousands of bills and passes fewer than one in four of them during a normal 140-day regular session. The Legislature only meets in odd-numbered years, unless a governor calls a 30-day special session to work out an issue that just can’t wait – such as legislative and congressional redistricting. Apart from the budget and redistricting, most everything else could – and may be – postponed until the coronavirus is truly under control.

To gauge how to proceed, surveys have been sent out to lawmakers for input on how to move forward. Currently, the Texas Capitol currently remains closed but plans are to be open for session with additional safety measures in place to include health screening at the entrance. Access will be limited, and meetings with members and staff is likely to be by appointment only. Hearings will be mod-

ified, and the number of staff allowed in the chamber will be reduced. Witnesses will probably be staged in an alternate location and called in small groups.

In any circumstances, there will likely be significant budget pressure, a desire among legislators to minimize the number of bills that are filed and/or passed, reductions in staff, more structure for hearings and floor debate, and too many other possibilities to itemize. There are a tremendous number of variables, and everything is conjecture at the moment, but the rumors you hear regularly include the legislature meeting in

January, 2021 for a short window (long enough to elect a new speaker and pass any needed new rules) and then not meeting again until the 60th day, when bills can first be heard, and/or passing a one-year budget and punting the second year of the budget to a special session that will need to be called regardless to deal with redistricting.

On a sad note, Lou Goodman, CEO of the Texas Medical Association for more than 22 years, passed away recently after a long illness. “Lou Goodman is one of the primary reasons that the Texas Medical Association is the premier state medical

association in the United States,” TMA President Diana Fite, MD, said. “He was a brilliant and highly effective and innovative executive director, and he was well respected and appreciated by the TMA members who were fortunate to work directly with him.”

As always, it is our pleasure to be your voice at the Texas state capitol. Please feel free to reach out with any questions, comments or concerns that you may have. We look forward to continuing to serve the interests of Texas psychiatrists and your patients in the 2021 legislative session. ■

PRACTICING TELEPSYCHIATRY?

As the practice of psychiatry intersects more with technology through the use of telemedicine, you can count on PRMS® to protect your practice. Our psychiatric professional liability policy includes coverage for telepsychiatry at no additional cost, as well as many other preeminent program benefits including:

- A national program with comprehensive coverage that protects you when licensed to treat patients in other states
- A nationwide defense network comprised of attorneys experienced in psychiatric litigation throughout the country
- A Risk Management Consultation Service helpline which allows you to speak directly with our knowledgeable team about all of your telepsychiatry-related questions (and all other topics)
- Access to hundreds of risk management resources from our in-house team of experts

JUSTIN POPE, JD
ASSOCIATE RISK MANAGER



When selecting a partner to protect you and your practice, consider the program that puts psychiatrists first. Contact us today.

More than an insurance policy
(800) 245-3333 | PRMS.com/Telepsychiatry | 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.



Adapting in Unusual Times

Timothy K. Wolff, MD, DLFAPA, President, Texas Society of Psychiatry Physicians



Timothy K. Wolff, MD, DLFAPA

As summer will slowly give way to autumn, we continue to journey in very unusual times. The TSPP membership is faced with a capricious pandemic and is stirred by the anti-racism movement. We need to adapt to meet the challenges of our times.

The pandemic defies predictability, is wreaking havoc on fall planning, continues to change the way we do business, and tests our routine. We have to deal with separation from family, friends, and patients. Nationally, we are forced to examine the uncomfortable conflicts between personal freedom, the need to support financially one's family and self, and population protection. The cloud of concerns hovers over all of us. Such concerns may touch our personal lives suddenly. Many of us have had family and friends who have been sick or died. These losses serve to remind us that life is fragile and precious.

For psychiatrists, virtual visits continue to expand the ability to make connections—and the effect of these changes will outlast the pandemic. The virtual visit cannot completely replace the in-person delivery of care, but is quite better than alternatives or no care at all. On a positive note, for some clinics and people with mobility or distance challenges, the virtual method is allowing for more access to care than previously achieved.

The anti-racism movement also is affecting us deeply. A societal movement is

necessitating a response and a change. Historically, we have experienced the impetus for change in subtle as well as dramatic ways. At this time, change is being demanded on the streets, in houses of worship, in lawmaking, and between family, friends, and neighbors. While there has been some sharp polarization, there are some fundamental issues for us all to examine. From the start of our training as psychiatrists, we are challenged to question our inherent biases. I would contend that the anti-racism movement is challenging us to look deeper at biases and institutional issues such as resource allocation. As we look inward—are there ways to improve ourselves, try to eliminate problematic bias, and advocate better?

Advocacy remains a constant part of the TSPP. We are now moving toward election season and opportunities for connections are present, albeit different. The in-person handshake and discussion with elected officials will likely yield to safer, electronic contact. Now is the time to make the connections with legislators and governmental office holders who are keenly interested in what constituents/voters have to say. Our government affairs team will liaison with the Federation and other professional and advocacy organizations to work on issues and get our positions heard. One such issue is on parity; perhaps simple in concept, but very challenging to have implemented.

I would also like to mention the loss of

two of our past leaders: Irvin Cohen on September 7, 2019 and Larry Tripp on June 4, 2020. Irv Cohen practiced psychiatry in Houston, was instrumental in the development of the medication chlordiazepoxide (Librium) and others in the 1950's, served as president of the TSPP in 1971, and subsequently was Speaker of the APA Assembly. Larry Tripp practiced psychiatry in Dallas, worked at Timberlawn, then Baylor University Medical Center, was a clinical professor at UT Southwestern, and held a number of administrative positions, including president of the TSPP in 1994. Our colleagues who love classical music remember Larry as a member of the Dallas Symphony Chorus. I knew both of them and appreciated their thoughtful mentorship. We have lost others as well, and I plan to have a brief remembrance of members of the TSPP at the fall meeting. We are carrying the torch that those before us held so proudly.

Carrying the torch also means to refine the organization and bolster membership. Within the organization, we will be considering the implications of the changing times and ways to capitalize on them. I look to utilize a strategic planning team as part of the Finance Committee to help us keep ahead of these rapidly changing times.

The TSPP remains vibrant. We are always looking to expand membership. So I remind the current members to remain committed—we need you; for those contemplating to join—come on in, you will not regret it;

and for those keeping your distance—where else can you get an organization so dedicated to your profession, patients, and state issues? We also look forward to our virtual fall meeting, building on the success of the virtual spring meeting. In addition to the fine Continuing Medical Education, we will be gearing up our virtual committee meetings—which in an obvious way, will be easier to attend. Dr. Leah Kolar, chair of the Resident-Fellow Section Committee, has already been working on innovative ways to get her committee members and others involved.

In conclusion, we are confronted with an unpredictable pandemic, a national focus on anti-racist issues, and an upcoming election day that will be very important both for the state and nation. We recognize difficulties ahead, but also opportunities. We will adapt. We carry on atop the shoulder of our institutional predecessors. I call for you to be a part of the TSPP and embrace the future with us. ■

Success!

Comments From TSPP's First Virtual CME Webinar – May 16

I actually loved the virtual format better than a meeting. I was much more comfortable in my living room than in an uncomfortable chair in a cold hotel room. I would not have driven to Austin for this meeting, but participating from home was wonderful. The speakers and topics were the best I have ever heard. Keep it up. Even when we can meet again, please offer the choice of virtual for those of us who don't want the trouble and expense of travel.

The presenters were excellent! Very well run Zoom meeting. I hope for more.

The virtual format was excellent. Even if you have live conference next year, I suggest you stream it online as well. For people like me it is most convenient. Really I felt as if I was listening to the speaker live.

I think we should consider one virtual meeting and one in-person meeting per year.

This was great, I learned a lot of stuff I did not know before (and I thought I knew a fair amount)

Very good program given the short notice you had to make this an online experience.

Thank you for a wonderful conference that was safe and timely.

Great format. I really do enjoy on line learning. No travel and no hotel stays.

I have attended TSPP Conferences since the 1980's. Surprisingly, this was probably one of the best

Excellent transition to virtual with short notice. As usual, top speakers

I really enjoyed the Nutrition and Opiate lectures. They were really well put together and interesting.

I applaud Dr. Melissa Eshelman and Debbie Giarratano's hard work and initiative in bringing about, under the trying and difficult circumstances of the current pandemic, TSPP's first-ever virtual CME program. The program was a resounding success!

The virtual meeting went very smoothly, and I was much more engaged than I thought I would be

Love the zoom format and hope this is will be a permanent long-term option way of joining future meetings.

Technically better than virtual annual meeting of APA, still some technical glitches. We are getting better

The best TSPP CME to date. Excellent technology, speakers, organization of talks, quality of talks. TSPP rose to the occasion and put on a superb conference in troubling times

This worked very well! I was pleased with the virtual set up both for the scientific programs and the committee meetings. The only thing missing was the close networking but that would definitely not be worth the risk surrounding the pandemic. Well done.

Zoom online CME worked well. Thanks for offering it and being flexible this year!

I just moved from Boston and it felt good to be part of a good educational program in Texas

Very good conference. The program content and the quality of the speakers exceeded my expectations.

Thank you. This was an excellent program and it exceeded my expectations.

This was an outstanding CME-great presentations!!! Only a few minor technological issues. I am disappointed the spring meeting had to be canceled because of the COVID-19 pandemic, but thank you for the time and energy it must have taken to have this CME webinar available!!!

I learned a lot of new and clinically useful information. The only reason I answered not seeking more information right now is because so much was already provided!

It was a wonderful conference! Hats off to TSPP/TAP, to administration, especially Debbie. Under the current circumstance of the pandemic, to hold our first virtual conference and not cancel is a testament to TSPP's commitment. I am honored to be a member of this organization. Thank you for allowing is the opportunity to learn and grow together, and for a few hours to "be" with each other and connect. Appreciate it very much.

I think the format of this virtual CME event was outstanding. I felt more comfortable listening and learning at home. My attention span was better than when I have attended events in the traditional format at a meeting venue.

This was an excellent conference!

GREAT MEETING, VERY VALUABLE INFO AND OPPORTUNITY FOR QUESTIONS, ON-LINE FORMAT WAS EXCELLENT.



Innovation in the Age of COVID

Melissa S. DeFilippis, MD, President, Texas Society of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry



Melissa S. DeFilippis, MD

I write this as I work from home, something that I know is a new normal for many of my fellow TSCAP and TSPP members. The COVID-19 pandemic has changed many things this year, including the way we deliver mental health care to our patients. We have been forced to be innovative in ways that have stretched most of us out of our technological comfort zones. While there have been challenges, many of our patients have also benefitted from this shift. I have had multiple parents tell me how they hope the telehealth services will continue once the pandemic health crisis abates, as the convenience this affords has been welcome in their busy lives. The recent virtual TSCAP meeting was just one great example of our ability to rise to the occasion. Kudos to Dr. Susan Wynne, Debbie Giarratano, and the numerous others who helped make this such a success!

Still, we cannot ignore the devastating impact this pandemic has had on so many of the children we treat and their families.

This last spring, we saw our young patients struggle academically with distance-learning. Access to their teachers was severely limited, as was access to accommodations, tutoring, and other special education interventions. The pandemic also highlighted food-insecurities in our communities with the loss of free meals through schools. Some of our patients struggled with the lack of structure and routine, and many behavioral problems worsened during their time out of school. Children and teens with depression have been more isolated from their peers. The social supports that they typically would get in the schools from teachers, counselors, or friends are no longer as accessible. Parents must juggle work schedules, home-schooling, and child-care. They are now having to weigh the risks of exposure to COVID-19 with the financial and academic risks that come with distance-learning when deciding whether to send their children back to school in the fall. While we will never have the perfect solutions to all these challenges,

child psychiatrists are uniquely suited to help children and their families navigate through this difficult time. For physicians looking for COVID resources, aacap.org has an impressive amount of helpful information for psychiatrists and the patients and families they treat.

I feel very fortunate to be a member of TSCAP/AACAP and TSPP during these trying times, and to have the support of the Federation of Texas Psychiatry. Their advocacy work supported the passing of SB 11, which formed the Texas Child Mental Health Care Consortium (TCMHCC). The funding received for this program provides us with a great opportunity to expand access to quality mental health care for children in Texas through a variety of programs. Two of these programs provide innovative solutions through telepsychiatry in schools (TCHAT) and telephonic consultation with child psychiatrists for primary care providers seeing children with mental health needs (CPAN). These programs are timely given the constraints that

COVID has introduced. I have never been more grateful for my membership in these organizations and for the advocacy work the Federation provides on behalf of our patients. Our strength as an organization comes from the cumulative knowledge, empathy, and advocacy of our members, and our patients will continue to benefit from this. I look forward to seeing what the next year brings, and I am humbled to serve as TSCAP's president as we continue to work towards improving mental health care for the children of Texas. ■



We are Living in Unprecedented Times

Susan Wynne, MD, FAPA, Past President, Texas Society of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry



Susan Wynne, MD, FAPA

We are living in unprecedented times. COVID-19 has ravaged much of the country. Most recently, Texas, California and Florida have high infection rates and high death rates from this most unwelcome virus. It is in this environment that the Texas Society of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (TSCAP) Virtual CME Program was planned and implemented. While we planned on having this take place in Galveston in person, high rates of COVID-19 in Texas resulted in a virtual program. All of us have made changes in our day-to-day lives and especially, in our professional lives.

I never would have considered seeing patients via telemedicine prior to this global pandemic. Face-to-face, in person relationship with patients is very important to me, as I feel this type of contact is therapeutic. Prior to COVID-19, I felt it was essential to see patients in person. Due to health concerns of seeing patients in person, my outpatient psychiatry practice is presently being conducted entirely via telemedicine. I have evaluated new patients, as well as existing patients using this means of clinical communication. In some ways, telemedicine is more efficient and takes less time. Patients do not have to travel for appointments and find it a convenient way to communicate. Also, this allows me glimpses into patients' homes and interactions with family members, which can be valuable in understanding their issues. I may continue to offer telemedicine as an option, even after this global pandemic has abated.

I was looking forward to the TSCAP CME Program and Convention in July 2020 in Galveston at Moody Gardens. I thrive on meeting with colleagues and networking, which is just as important as obtaining CME and expanding knowledge in Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. Moody Gardens is such a fun venue, with the pool with waterfall, the different Pyramids, great food and a wonderful view of the ocean. I have a favorite seafood restaurant in Galveston,

and I enjoy walking along the beach. In April, following COVID's impact on travel and safety, Ms. Debbie Giarratano, Executive Director and CME Director researched platforms to present the CME meeting in a virtual format and developed reporting documents to continue to fulfill the accreditation criteria and offer CME credit to attendees. Texas Society of Psychiatric Physicians (TSPP) offered the first virtual CME meeting in May 2020 with success, with Melissa Eshelman, MD, who was President of TSPP and Andrew Harper, MD, TSPP CME Co-Chair. TSPP contracted with experienced IT professionals to assist with the recorded speaker presentations and facilitate the production of the Zoom meeting on May 16. TSPP's meeting received overwhelmingly positive comments, with 138 persons enrolled and offering five CME hours. Building on this, on July 18, TSCAP presented their first virtual CME meeting with six hours of CME, with one of the hours accredited for Ethics. I moderated this event. The majority of speakers again pre-recorded their lectures, and were all available for live Q & A after their lectures. Some presenters even continued to answer questions live via Zoom chat after their Q & A sessions ended. We had close to 100 persons register for this premier TSCAP virtual CME meeting and feedback from this meeting has again been overwhelmingly positive. I look forward to future TSPP and TSCAP CME meetings, whether they are presented virtually or in person. It is helpful to have the option of virtual meetings for CME and for committee meetings. We have learned from the two recent CME virtual meetings and have plans to build on this success to continue to address the members' educational needs, facilitate interaction with one another in our sheltered environment and build on our organizations' camaraderie and collegiality within the organization.

Vacations have been curtailed or cancelled, due to COVID-19. Air travel concerns have limited plans, as most people do

not feel safe sitting on planes for hours with others. My husband and I were planning on flying to Mississippi this summer to visit my oldest daughter and her significant other. They live in a small town, with quaint, one-of-a-kind shops and restaurants. I was looking forward to strolling along the main street, shopping in the stores and eating most meals out. We ended up driving to Mississippi, bringing food to eat along the way and eating all meals at my daughter's home during our stay and minimizing our contact with others. We achieved our goal of spending time with my daughter and her significant other, while minimizing our chances of exposure to COVID-19. While I did not meet my daughter's friends during this trip, I look forward to doing this at a future visit.

It was my pleasure to serve as President

of Texas Society of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. I thank you for this opportunity. I sincerely hope that you, your patients, your colleagues and your families get through this pandemic with minimal negative consequences. ■

TSCAP First CME Webinar, Another Success!

Tremendous job!!! Very high caliber/high quality objective CME

Thank you all so much for making this work in a new format!

Debbie G. and Susan Wynne did a fantastic job of organizing and hosting event; price was good.

The WEBINAR Virtual format is a very effective way to give TSCAP members the opportunity to earn CME and to stay connected.

Excellent webinar! Missed the beach, but a very nice learning opportunity. :)

As a medical student, I found all of these topics easy to understand and I greatly appreciated that!

This was a terrific conference.

Excellent conference! So glad TSCAP was able to arrange this virtual platform. Appreciate all the hard work that went into planning.

It was an excellent CME Program. Topic, quality of audio & video were all excellent.

It was helpful to see the video of the presenter talking along with the screen share ...

This year's program was excellent. High quality presenters, interesting topics, useful information that I will take with me and use in my practice. I also felt the virtual format did not take anything away from the program. Thank you!

Well done on line program but miss the live meeting – does not seem like summer!

Particularly enjoyed and found useful the speakers' question/discussion periods.

We've got you covered.

For over 40 years, we have provided psychiatrists with exceptional protection and personalized service. We offer comprehensive insurance coverage and superior risk management support through an "A" rated carrier. In addition to superior protection, our clients receive individual attention, underwriting expertise, and, where approved by states, premium discounts.

Endorsed by the American Psychiatric Association, our Professional Liability Program Provides:

- Risk Management Hotline 24/7 should an emergency arise
- Insuring Company rated "A" (Excellent) by A.M. Best
- Telepsychiatry, ECT Coverage & Forensic Psychiatric Services are included
- Many discounts, including Claims-Free, New Business & No Surcharge for Claims (subject to state approval)
- Interest-free quarterly payments/credit cards accepted



Visit us at apamalpractice.com or call 877.740.1777 to learn more.



American Professional Agency, Inc.

L E A D E R S I N P S Y C H I A T R I C M E D I C A L L I A B I L I T Y I N S U R A N C E

PSRT STD
U.S. Postage
PAID
AUSTIN, TX
Permit No. 1323

Federation of Texas Psychiatry
401 West 15th Street, Suite 675
Austin, Texas 78701

The TEXAS PSYCHIATRIST is published 5 times a year in February, April, June, August, and October. Members of Federation member organizations are encouraged to submit articles for possible publication. Deadline for submitting copy to the Federation Executive Office is the first day of the publication month. Copy must be edited, acceptable for publication.

Display advertising is available and publication is determined on a case by case basis by the Editorial Board. The Editorial Board reserves the sole right to accept or reject any submitted advertising copy.

EDITORIAL BOARD

Federation Executive Committee

MANAGING EDITOR

Debbie Giarratano

Federation of Texas Psychiatry

401 West 15th Street, Suite 675
Austin, Texas 78701

(512) 478-0605 / (512) 478-5223 (FAX)
TxPsychiatry@aol.com (E-mail)
<http://www.txpsych.org> (website)

CALENDAR OF MEETINGS

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, to protect the health and safety of our members and guests attending our meetings, TSPP / TSCAP / TAP have decided to hold all remaining 2020 meetings virtually, and will not meet in person

OCTOBER

12-24 American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry 67th Annual Meeting

Due to ongoing COVID-19 restrictions, and in an abundance of caution for the safety of attendees, presenters, and staff, AACAP's 2020 Annual Meeting will be held in a virtual atmosphere.

NOVEMBER

14 Texas Society of Psychiatric Physicians VIRTUAL CME WEBINAR

"Rising to the Challenge: Psychiatry in the COVID-19 Pandemic" Program and Registration Coming Soon!

JOB BANK

Whether you are looking for career opportunities or you are recruiting to fill a position in your organization, you will want to check out the Federation's **JOB BANK** on its website at www.txpsych.org. The Federation's JOB BANK could be just what you have been looking for.