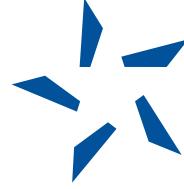


# Texas Psychiatrist



## Texas Psychiatry Is Enticing the Best Young Minds

What are we prepared to offer young professionals when they get here?

Melissa Stennett Deuter, MD, President, Texas Society of Psychiatric Physicians

Interest in psychiatry has risen drastically over the past decade. The brain is a sort of "final frontier" in medicine, and the best of the best in the profession are anxious to join our ranks in psychiatry's rapidly changing landscape. Medical students are joining psychiatry interest groups and competing for coveted psychiatry residency spots. Students and residents are applying to present posters at our conferences in record numbers, hoping to connect and develop longstanding relationships with mentors.

TSPP's future will belong to these young professionals, and it is vital that we invest in them to foster their active participation in organized psychiatry. We have an opportunity

to provide them with awareness that participation in organized medicine is vital to the profession.

Engaging these young professionals when they attend our TSPP conferences should be a mission that we all share. The future of psychiatry in the state and the nation will pass into their hands and when it does, we want them to feel ready for clinical work and for leadership. TSPP offers opportunities for experienced leaders to shape the priorities of the next generation of leaders.

Medical students and residents are hungry for our wisdom and guidance in all aspects of the profession. Just as they look to their attendings to teach them the clinical

ropes on rounds, they look to their society's leaders to teach them the ropes of psychiatric leadership and advocacy.

Members of TSPP can meet the need for student and resident mentorship by checking in with the learners who are presenting posters or attending CME sessions. Young professionals want to discuss their career plans and hear about the possibilities for career trajectories from experienced members of the specialty. We can invite students and residents along to committee meetings. We can talk to them about your own participation in organized psychiatry and the inherent rewards of the roles we have taken. We can show them the camaraderie that we share at our April 24-26, 2026



Melissa Stennett Deuter, MD

Spring Conference in Austin by inviting them into the conversation and introducing them around the table. Register online at: [www.txpsych.org/2026tsppspring](http://www.txpsych.org/2026tsppspring).

Psychiatry is bringing in the best and the brightest. Let's welcome them and guide them once they get here. ■

## Annual Membership Renewal Reminder

Annual membership renewal is underway, and we would like to thank the many members that have already remitted their dues. If you have not yet done so, please note that invoices for TSPP and TAP are available in your online member profile.

You can access your profile by logging in through the homepage at [www.txpsych.org](http://www.txpsych.org). Your username is the email address we have on file. If you have forgotten your login information, click "Forgot User" to have it resent.

While logged in, please take a moment to:

- **NEW!** Enable **Automatic Recurring Billing**, if desired, for current or future invoices
- Confirm that your contact and mailing information is current
- Explore your member dashboard and available resources
- Visit the member directory, an easy way to connect with colleagues and contact them directly through our secure portal

If you encounter any issues or need assistance, our office is available by phone or email and is happy to help ensure you are getting full use of the website's features.

### Important note for TSCAP members:

Dues for the Texas Society of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (TSCAP) are billed through the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP). You should receive your TSCAP invoice directly from AACAP. If you have not received it, or if you have questions, please feel free to contact our office.

Thank you for your continued membership and support of organized psychiatry in Texas. **Our voice is stronger together.**



## Connect, Learn, Mentor: Federation Mentorship Program

The Federation of Texas Psychiatry has launched a unified Mentorship Program open to members of the Texas Society of Psychiatric Physicians, the Texas Academy of Psychiatry, and the Texas Society of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. The program connects Resident-Fellow Members seeking professional guidance, career development support, or practice insight with experienced colleagues across Texas.

Members interested in serving as mentors are invited to participate across all three organizations. Separate forms are available for Resident-Fellow Members requesting a mentor and for members volunteering to serve as mentors, allowing the Federation to facilitate appropriate matches based on shared interests and availability. Links to both forms are included below.

<https://www.txpsych.org/resources/#mentor>

Find a Mentor:

<https://forms.gle/7jU4zdZETH8fS22e7>

Become a Mentor:

<https://forms.gle/s9V1Hsyxy41NRczv7>

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## TAP/TMB CME Webinar Upholding Professional Accountability

Wednesday, February 25th – 6:00pm CST

**VIRTUAL**  
Register Online:  
[www.txpsych.org/tap-tmb-webinar2026](http://www.txpsych.org/tap-tmb-webinar2026)

## TSPP Spring Conference and Scientific Program

*Contemporary Issues and Innovations in Psychiatric Practice*

April 24-26, 2026  
Austin, TX

**Early Bird Registration Now Open:**  
[www.txpsych.org/2026tsppspring](http://www.txpsych.org/2026tsppspring)



## TSCAP Annual Convention and Scientific Program

July 17-19, 2026

Moody Gardens Hotel – Galveston, TX

**Save the Date!**  
[www.txpsych.org/conferences-and-events](http://www.txpsych.org/conferences-and-events)



# Federation of Texas Psychiatry Update

Michael Arambula, M.D., Pharm.D., Chair, Federation of Texas Psychiatry

**W**ow. Another year. 2025 passed so quickly. You've probably heard from someone or another that time seems to pass more quickly as we age, due to a combination of factors like slowed neuronal processing and less novelty in our experiences over life, none of which sounds very good. Oh well. Whatever has been theorized about this virtual experience, I have many fond memories of what transpired last year, particularly our trip to Italy. Unbelievable history. Excellent cuisine. Endless excursions. It seemed as if we walked for a mile in the *Gallerie degli Uffizi* Museum in Florence, where the magnificent David resides. There, we also viewed an inordinate display of paintings, many devoted to the Feast of the Annunciation in March and even a couple believed to

be acheiropoieton paintings. Guess my memory is okay.

Historically – and I'm referring to centuries – the new year emerged alongside the new farming season in mid-March; and years later, the Feast of the Annunciation marked the coming of the new year. Then came Julius Caesar, who ushered in the New Year date of January 1st, accordingly symbolic of their Roman God Janus, who had two faces: one looking forward and one looking back. Regardless of the transition, the New Year was a time for thanks and positive intentions.

This past year, amidst the backdrop of more attention being placed on the mental health of our population in this country, Psychiatry has become more prominent. Texas psychiatry residency programs fully

matched and will probably do so again this year. Our residency programs also benefited from the generosity of our Legislature who set aside resources to increase the utilization of telepsychiatry and to train future forensic psychiatrists in fellowship programs. There was also increased funding directed towards the modernization of our state psychiatric hospitals and community mental health programs in our State. The Child Psychiatric Access Program (CPAN) continues to provide mental health consultations for our youth. Indeed, this new year is a time to extend our appreciation to Governor Abbott's leadership and investment in mental health policy for Texas.

Historically, civilizations from across the world rang in the new year with rituals and celebrations and promises of change. We



Michael Arambula, M.D., Pharm.D.

all know how difficult it is to break a habit. Regardless, may I encourage my friends and colleagues that I see almost every year at our meetings, to do more of the same this year. The time I spend with all of you is what matters...what brings me back. And for those who haven't dropped by for a while, please come. Among friends and colleagues, moments in time become cherished memories, no matter how quickly time turns. ■



## Legislative and Election Updates for the New Year

Eric Woomer, Federation of Texas Psychiatry Public Policy Consultant

**T**he Capitol was quiet at year's end as a very active 2025 closed out with lawmakers mainly focused on the election cycle and the December 8th candidate filing deadline for the 2026 elections. The field is now set for this year's March primary – Voters will head to the polls on March 3rd, with early voting beginning February 17th. If there is a need for a runoff election, it would be held on May 26th.

There are a few statewide races being watched closely, given the newly drawn Texas congressional map and the number of retirements by incumbents: Texas' U.S. Senate seat; the race for Texas' Attorney General; and who will be the next Texas Comptroller. U.S. Senator John Cornyn has drawn challengers from both parties, including seven challengers from within his own party – the most well-known being Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton and U.S. Rep. Wesley Hunt. Also intriguing is the battle between two high profile democratic candidates: Texas State Rep. James Talarico who has raised an estimated \$13 million since entering the race and U.S. Rep. Jasmine Crockett, who has been an outspoken member of Congress from her first day in office.

Although Gov. Gregg Abbott and Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick have drawn challengers from both parties, the incumbents are likely to succeed as the GOP nominees for their respective offices as well as in November's general election.

The election for Texas' Attorney General is also heating up with a field of Republican candidates and multiple Democrat challengers. U.S. Rep. Chip Roy entered the race late in the year and will face off in the GOP primary against State Senators Mayes Middleton, who had to vacate his seat to run, and Joan Huffman, who is not up for re-election in the Senate and therefore retains her seat if she loses the race. Although there are three Democrat challengers on the primary ballot, well-known and long-serving State Sen. Nathan

Johnson is likely to be the nominee on the Democratic ticket come November.

Although former Texas State Senator Kelly Hancock is the current acting Comptroller, the race for this open

### All 150 Texas House seats are up for re-election but only sixteen seats are up in the Texas Senate. The Senate will for certain see five new faces when they convene in January 2027.

statewide seat is competitive, mainly from the Republican side as Hancock faces some well-known figures in the primary such as Christi Craddick, a current Railroad Commissioner and daughter of longtime State Rep. Tom Craddick, and conservative former Texas State Senator Don Huffines. In December, State Senator Sarah Eckhardt withdrew her candidacy for congress to enter the Comptroller's race.

Senate District 9 voters went to the polls in November to vote in a successor to Hancock, but no candidate received an outright majority. Therefore, a run-off election between the two top candidates, Democrat Taylor Rehmet and Republican Leigh Wambsganss, is set for January 31st. Whomever wins will serve the remaining term through the end of 2026, but the seat is on the 2026 ballot for a full four-year term as well.

All 150 Texas House seats are up for re-election but only sixteen seats are up in the Texas Senate. The Senate will for certain see five new faces when they convene in January 2027. For the House, the primary

narrative will be the impact of the 21 retirements from the lower chamber and how its composition will shape the 90th Legislative Session. With fourteen of the 21 retirements being Republicans, the outcome of these races will be a factor in whether Speaker Dustin Burrows can retain his leadership position over the body.

#### In and Around the Capitol

On Friday, January 9th, Speaker Burrows sent a letter to his Committee Chairs soliciting recommendations for interim charges for committees to study in anticipation of filing legislation in 2027. Lt. Governor Patrick will do the same in the Senate, but nothing has been released. While we don't anticipate interim charges to be released until after the March primary, this solicitation kicks off the season for the Legislature to tackle issues that were left undone during the regular and special sessions as well examine new policy areas – all in preparation for the 90th Legislature.

The Sunset Commission has begun its formal review process of the state agencies scheduled for reauthorization in 2027. This cycle is particularly daunting because all the state's health care enterprise agencies are being reviewed – including the Health & Human Services Commission (HHSC), the Department of State Health Services (DSHS), and the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS), as well as the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) and the Juvenile Justice Department (TJJD). There are a handful of vacant seats on the Sunset Commission which need to be filled by Speaker Burrows and Lt. Governor Patrick before the Commission can begin formal meetings. Now that each agency has submitted their self-evaluation reports, Sunset staff have begun meeting with stakeholders in preparation for their staff report and recommendations to the Legislature. A formal schedule of Sunset hearings should be released shortly, which gives stakeholders further opportunity for



Eric Woomer

input and influence in the outcome of the final Sunset recommendations.

HHSC has a new Executive Commissioner, Stephanie Muth, after former EC Cecile Young retired at the end of the year. Muth was the previous commissioner for DFPS as well as the state Medicaid Director, and brings to the agency decades of experience both inside the health and human services enterprise as well as around the Capitol.

On January 2nd, the Texas Medical Board published new draft rules around Ketamine therapy. Such treatments fall under office-based anesthesia rules and require that physicians prescribing for psychiatric indications must have successfully completed training in mental health treatment and the use of ketamine for psychiatric conditions. The proposed rules can be reviewed via the January 2nd publication of the Texas Register at [www.sos.texas.gov](http://www.sos.texas.gov)

As a reminder, the Mental Health Loan Repayment Program was funded this biennium at \$28 million, maintaining the funding level from the previous biennium. The Program encourages qualified mental health professionals to serve patients in designated shortage areas, state hospitals, public schools, or through mental health authorities. The Legislature also increased the reimbursement for psychiatrists to \$180,000 over three years. Applications are open through July 31, 2026. More information can be found on the Program's website: <https://www.hhloans.com/mental-health-professionals-loan-repayment-program/>

As always, we appreciate the opportunity to represent your interests at the state Capitol, and wish everyone a healthy and prosperous 2026! ■



# Congratulations to 2026 APA Fellows!

Melissa Gail Inga Eshelman, MD, DLFAPA, Chair of the TSPP Distinguished Fellowship Committee

Congratulations to the newly recognized 2026 Distinguished Fellows and Fellows of the APA from our TSPP Membership!

## 2026 Distinguished Fellows (DFAPA)

**Bobby Nix, MD**

**Maria Zapata Vega, MD**

Distinguished Fellowship is awarded to outstanding psychiatrists who have made significant contributions to the psychiatric profession in at least five of the following areas: administration, teaching, scientific and scholarly publications, volunteering in mental health and medical activities of social significance, community involvement, as well as for clinical excellence. Distinguished Fellow is the highest membership honor the APA bestows upon members.

If you are considering applying for Distinguished Fellowship status, please review the DFAPA requirements at <https://www.psychiatry.org/membership/honorary-fellowship/dfapa> and then contact your Chapter Representative to the TSPP Distinguished Fellowship Committee to discuss your interest. Chapter reps are listed here: <https://www.txpsych.org/tspp/apa/>

## 2026 Fellows (FAPA)

Akinwande Akintola, MD  
Alcides Amador, MD  
Sarah Baker, MD  
Manjunath Balaram, MD  
Denise Baughn, MD  
Lessley Chiriboga, MD  
Matthew Edwards, MD  
Manasa Enja, MD  
Lief Fenno, MD  
Constance George, MD  
Adenike Ishola, MD  
Madhuri Jakkam Setty, MD  
Jacob Kannarkat, MD  
Katherine Kerr, MD  
Rohini Mehta, MD  
Olaniyi Olayinka, MD  
Cynthia Playfair, MD  
Michael Rayel, MD  
Samantha Symons, MD  
Monika Thangada, MD  
Dana Valdez, MD  
Rocksheng Zhong, MD

Being named a Fellow is an honorary designation to recognize APA members who have

demonstrated allegiance to their profession and commitment to the on-going work of the Association. There is a 30-day review period for the district branch to offer comments about the Fellowship candidate. Approval by the APA Membership Committee takes place in the fall, and approval by the APA Board of Trustees takes place in December. For eligibility criteria and to apply, go to <https://www.psychiatry.org/join-apa/become-a-fellow/fellow-of-the-apa>. APA will begin accepting online applications in mid-February. Fellow applications must be submitted by September 1.

If you don't have a local chapter representative, contact TSPP via email at [TSPP@txpsych.org](mailto:TSPP@txpsych.org), and one of the Distinguished Fellowship Committee members will be designated to serve as your advisor. A member of the Distinguished Fellowship committee can review eligibility requirements and the information needed for the Nomination Form. By mid-February each year, APA will notify TSPP of the opening of the application process and provide access to the APA portal. TSPP will then be able to direct qualified members to the APA portal to



**Melissa Gail Inga Eshelman, MD, DLFAPA**

complete their applications online and upload letters of recommendation. TSPP will review all fully completed applications at the Spring 2026 Meeting in April to decide whether to nominate the member to APA for Distinguished Fellow status. Distinguished Fellowship nominations must be submitted by TSPP to APA by July 1. The APA Membership Committee reviews the nomination in the fall and the APA Board of Trustees makes their final determination in December.

Both the newly elected FAPA and DFAPA nominees will be recognized during the Convocation of Distinguished Fellows during the 2026 APA Annual Meeting in San Francisco in May. Please extend your congratulations to these outstanding Texas psychiatrists! ■



## Where Texas Psychiatry Meets

Phillip Balfanz, MD, MBA, President of the Texas Academy of Psychiatry

In a professional environment marked by rapid change, competing demands, and increasing complexity, it is fair to ask what role an organization like the Texas Academy of Psychiatry (TAP) should play. TAP's purpose is not to duplicate the work of other organizations, nor to compete for attention, but to offer a distinct, Texas-centered space for education, dialogue, and professional development.

Unlike national organizations, TAP is shaped entirely by the needs and perspectives of Texas psychiatrists. That independence allows us to address emerging issues as they arise—whether clinical, educa-

tional, or professional—without external directives. It also gives us the flexibility to experiment with new formats and topics that may not yet have a home elsewhere.

Education remains a central part of that mission. TAP continues to offer CME webinars, including upcoming sessions led by members of the Federation of Texas Psychiatry. These programs reflect the practical expertise already present in our state and provide an opportunity for peer-to-peer learning directly relevant to Texas practice.

As psychiatry continues to evolve, we also recognize the growing influence of arti-

ficial intelligence in clinical decision-making. We must be informed about the evolving landscape as Utah is piloting a program for AI to refill certain medications independent of a physician's autonomously direct input. These tools hold promise, but they also raise important questions about judgment, ethics, and implementation.

Ultimately, TAP's value will be determined by whether it remains functional, accessible, and responsive to its members. That requires ongoing input from psychiatrists at every career stage—those in training, mid-career physicians navigating change, and senior colleagues



**Phillip Balfanz, MD, MBA**

with perspective to share.

If you are looking for a professional home that is flexible, Texas-focused, and open to thoughtful engagement, TAP welcomes your participation. ■



## TSCAP Updates and Opportunities to Get Involved

Joseph Shotwell, MD, President, Texas Society of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

On the final day of 2025, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) issued a Fourth Temporary Extension of the COVID-19 Telemedicine Flexibilities for the Prescription of Controlled Medications. This extension preserves COVID-era prescribing flexibilities, including the ability to prescribe a Schedule II-V controlled medication via audio-video telemedicine encounter without the requirement of an in-person medical evaluation, through December 31, 2026. For more information on this extension, please view the DEA press release: <https://www.dea.gov/press-releases/2025/12/31/dea-extends-telemedicine-flexibilities-ensure-continued-access-care>. Over the course of the upcoming year, the DEA intends to finalize permanent regulations governing the prescribing of controlled substances through telemedicine. Be

on the lookout for communication from the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry regarding any proposed regulatory changes. Additionally, be sure to exercise your right to comment on proposed changes that will likely impact the way you practice telepsychiatry moving forward.

As we commence the new year, our Texas Society of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Program Committee is diligently planning our 2026 annual convention, which will be held from July 17th to 19th, 2026, at the Moody Gardens Convention Center in Galveston, Texas. This event presents an exceptional opportunity to accumulate up to eight (8) AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™ for Continuing Medical Education, with two of the hours designated for medical ethics. Additionally, it provides a platform for networking with

your peers in the field of child psychiatry across the state. Be on the lookout for TSCAP communications next month and register early to take advantage of the early bird registration rates.

For those seeking to enhance their engagement with the TSCAP organization, we invite you to consider joining one of its committees: the Program Committee, Constitution and Bylaws Committee, Government Affairs Committee, or the Disaster and Trauma Committee. Furthermore, TSCAP leadership approved the establishment of a Resident/Fellow Member Committee this past year to further foster trainee involvement within the organization. Detailed descriptions of these committees are available on the TSCAP website at <https://www.txpsych.org/tscap>.



**Joseph Shotwell, MD**

Individuals interested in committee participation are kindly requested to complete the TSCAP Committee Preference form located on the website.

Enhanced trainee participation in TSCAP has revealed a pressing need for mentorship within the TSCAP organization. If you are a child psychiatrist who is interested in mentoring trainees or a trainee who seeks mentorship from a TSCAP member, we strongly encourage you to contact us at [TSCAP@txpsych.org](mailto:TSCAP@txpsych.org). ■

## IN MEMORIAM

### Allan David Axelrad, MD

May 25, 1943 - January 13, 2026

**A**llan David Axelrad, MD, 82, passed away surrounded by the love of his life of 42 years, Carolyn, his children and grandchildren on Tuesday, January 13, 2026, in Houston, Texas. David was born in Houston on May 25, 1943, to the late Jack Harry and Sylvia Axelrad. He was the third of four children. His parents and older brothers, Moise and Sam, preceded him in death.

David graduated from San Jacinto High School and attended Vanderbilt University where he was president of his fraternity, Alpha Epsilon Pi. He attended the University of Houston graduate school, receiving a master's in biology/physiology. He continued his studies at the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston, graduating magna cum laude in 1970. He was elected into the Alpha Omega Alpha Honorary Medical Society in 1969. He entered his residency for psychiatry at the University of California, Davis and completed the program in 1974. He ultimately received licenses to practice medicine in California and Texas.

In 1974, while serving his country, he was appointed chief of one of the inpatient services at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C. He transferred to Fort Ord, California as Chief of Mental Hygiene and provided medical direction and psychiatric treatment for military personnel suffering post-traumatic stress disorder from service in the Vietnam War. He served in the United States Army Medical Department, achieving the rank of major before being honorably discharged from service to his country.

David had a long and distinguished career, receiving board certifications from the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology, the American Board of Forensic Psychiatry, the American Academy of Pain Management, along with many other prestigious achievements over the course of his long career. He was appointed by the Honorable Jerry Brown, Governor of California, to the Division of Medical Quality of the California Board of Medical Examiners. After his return to Texas, David was also appointed to the Texas Medical Board by the Honorable Ann Richards, where he served with distinction from 1994 to 2000. At the time of his service, he was the only physician privileged to receive



**David had a long and distinguished career, receiving board certifications from the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology, the American Board of Forensic Psychiatry, the American Academy of Pain Management, along with many other prestigious achievements...**

appointments to two state medical boards.

David held numerous academic and teaching positions during his career, including appointments at the University of California - Davis, Baylor University, the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston and the University of Houston Law Center, as well as the Houston - Galveston Psychoanalytic Institute. He was a past president of the Texas Society of Psychiatric Physicians and served as a representative from the Texas Society of Psychiatric Physicians to the Assembly of the American Psychiatric Association. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Award by the Texas Society of Psychiatric

Physicians in 2007. In 2021, he was awarded the Spencer Bayles Membership Award by the Texas Society of Psychiatric Physicians. He also received the John R. Bush Leadership Excellence Award from the Federation of Texas Psychiatry in 2022. He was an emeritus fellow in the American College of Psychiatry. He served in many roles for the National Pain Foundation, ultimately serving as its president. His contributions have been highlighted in multiple publications and textbooks. In addition to his academic, professional, and state regulatory appointments, he served numerous professional societies, often achieving leadership positions, including the American

Medical Association, the American Academy of Pain Medicine, the Texas Medical Association, and the American Psychiatric Association, among many others. David's professional, academic, and charitable work touched the lives of many people struggling with mental health issues and traumatic brain injury. David was committed to helping others using the expertise he acquired through his training and experience impacting many lives for the better.

David's dedication to his career was only matched by the devotion he had for his family. He adored his wife, Carolyn, who was also his childhood sweetheart. Together they raised four children, all of whom cherished him and are so blessed and grateful for his love, his gentle guidance, and his steady, constant presence in each of their lives. He and Carolyn were blessed with seven wonderful grandchildren who brought them so much love and joy. Through their shared love of all things Galveston, Astros baseball, Texans football, years of spring training adventures, and special family traditions, the bond that David created with his family and extended family was his greatest legacy.

David was a spiritual man, guided by his faith, his love of Judaism, his belief in G-d, and his unwavering conviction in the goodness of humanity.

David is survived by his family, who love him so much and will miss him dearly. He is survived by his beloved wife, Carolyn Freedman Axelrad, and his children, Lauri, Elyse, Jonathan and his wife, Julie, and Erin, and his grandchildren, Ryan, Evan, Ethan, Ari, Max, Morgan and his wife, Lisette, and Eliza. He is also survived by his siblings, Sandra Axelrad Boccaro, Charlotte Axelrad, and Buster and Karen Freedman, and many nieces, nephews, cousins, extended family, trusted colleagues and lifelong friends who felt like family. David never met a stranger and extended his hand of friendship and love with ease and grace.

The family is very grateful for the unparalleled care he received from his physicians and nursing staff at Houston Methodist Hospital and the DaVita Dialysis Center.

Donations in David's memory may be made to Congregation Shma Koleinu, [www.cskhouston.com](http://www.cskhouston.com), Congregation Beth Yeshurun, [www.bethyeshurun.org](http://www.bethyeshurun.org), or a charity of your choice. ■

## Telehealth Reimbursement Parity: Monitoring a Potential Emerging Issue

Telehealth has become an essential tool in psychiatric care, particularly for improving access for children, adolescents, and patients in rural or underserved areas. In Texas, health plans are currently required to cover services delivered via telehealth when the same service is covered in person, and reimbursement for psychiatric services has largely remained comparable across modalities.

However, there is growing concern

nationally that this may change.

In other states, insurers have begun using newer telehealth-specific billing codes that reimburse at lower rates than comparable in-person services. While this does not appear to be a widespread issue in Texas at this time, these codes are already available and could be adopted by Texas payers in the future.

The clinical work performed by psychiatrists via telehealth is the same as that performed in person. Lower reimburse-

ment for telehealth services could discourage clinicians from offering virtual care, potentially reducing access and disproportionately affecting patients who rely on telepsychiatry.

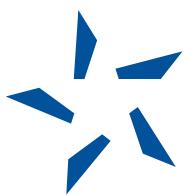
At this stage, our goal is to monitor payer behavior closely and ensure we are aware of any early signs of reimbursement erosion so that appropriate advocacy can occur if needed.

If you are already experiencing lower reimbursement for telehealth services—

particularly through the use of new or telehealth-specific codes—please contact us. Real-world examples are critical for assessing the scope of this issue and determining next steps.

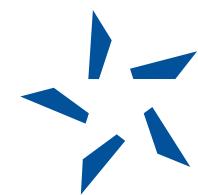
Please report any concerns to:  
[txpsychiatry@txpsych.org](mailto:txpsychiatry@txpsych.org)

Thank you for helping us stay informed and prepared to advocate effectively on behalf of psychiatric practice and patient access in Texas. ■



# TSPP Spring Committee Meetings and Continuing Medical Education Program

April 24-26, 2026 • The Westin Austin at The Domain



**Register Online: [www.txpsych.org/2026tsppspring](http://www.txpsych.org/2026tsppspring)**

## “Contemporary Issues and Innovations in Psychiatric Practice”

Register early and plan to attend the 2026 committee meetings and Spring CME Program of the Texas Society of Psychiatric Physicians on April 24-26, 2026 at The Westin at The Domain, 11301 Domain Drive, Austin, TX 78758. Early bird registration ends February 28th. Register online: [www.txpsych.org/2026tsppspring](http://www.txpsych.org/2026tsppspring)

### Meeting Highlights

- **Spring CME Program** – 5 AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™
- **TSPP Committee Meetings** – Open to all members, including Residents and Fellows in Training
- **Networking Opportunities** – Connect with peers from across Texas
- **Exhibit Hall** – Explore opportunities with industry partners
- **Government Affairs Committee & Luncheon Program**
- **Complimentary Refreshments** for registered attendees
- **Executive Council Meeting & Officer Installation** for the 2026-27 term

### Hotel Reservations

TSPP has negotiated a discounted group rate at **\$199++ per night** for conference attendees and sponsors, available until March 31st. Visit [www.txpsych.org/2026tsppspring](http://www.txpsych.org/2026tsppspring) for the discounted booking link.

*Booking a room within the TSPP room block is an important way to support TSPP and helps to keep the overall meeting registration fee and costs as low as possible. Please help us by booking your room at the hotel hosting the meeting and within the TSPP room block.*

### Meeting Location / Information

Join the Texas Society of Psychiatric Physicians for the 2026 TSPP Spring Committee Meetings and CME Program, taking place April 24-26, 2026 at The Westin at The Domain.

Earn 5 AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™ while connecting with colleagues, learning from experts, and enjoying all that Austin has to offer.

We're returning to The Westin Austin at The Domain, situated in one of Austin's most dynamic neighborhoods. Enjoy the hotel's onsite restaurant, 24-hour Fitness Studio, and outdoor pool. The surrounding Domain area boasts upscale shopping, diverse dining, and exciting nightlife options such as Gloria's Latin Cuisine, iPic Theaters, Topgolf, and Punch Bowl Social.

### SPONSOR & EXHIBITOR INFORMATION

Exhibits will be open throughout the day on Saturday to provide you with information designed to enhance your practice and improve the optimal delivery of medical care to your patients. Various Sponsorship opportunities are available as well including the Resident-Fellow Mixer, Luncheon, Dinner Reception and more. Know someone interested in Sponsoring? Visit [www.txpsych.org/https-2026tsppspring-sponsors-exhibitors-to-view-our-prospectus](http://www.txpsych.org/https-2026tsppspring-sponsors-exhibitors-to-view-our-prospectus).

### POSTER SESSION ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

Medical Students, Residents and Fellows in Training who are members of APA/TSPP, AACAP/TSCAP or TAP are invited to submit an abstract to present/ display a poster on Saturday, April 25th. Please visit [www.txpsych.org/2026tsppspring](http://www.txpsych.org/2026tsppspring) to submit an abstract.

**Submission Deadline: March 15th**

Email [events@txpsych.org](mailto:events@txpsych.org) with questions



The Westin Austin at The Domain

## PROGRAM SCHEDULE

### Friday, April 24

4:00 pm – 8:30 pm  
5:00 pm – 6:00 pm  
  
6:00 pm- 7:30 pm  
6:00 pm – 7:30 pm  
7:30 pm – 9:00 pm  
8:00 pm – 9:30 pm

Registration  
Texas Academy of Psychiatry  
Board of Trustees Meeting  
Chapter Leadership Forum Meeting  
TSCAP Executive Committee  
Federation Delegate Assembly Meeting  
Resident Fellow Mixer

### Saturday, April 25

7:00 am – 7:00 pm  
7:00 am – 8:15 am  
  
7:00 am – 8:00 am  
7:30 am – 9:30 am  
8:00 am – 7:00 pm  
8:30 am – 10:00 am

Registration  
Foundation Board of Directors  
Breakfast Meeting  
Exhibit Hall & Poster Presentation Set Up  
Continental Breakfast  
Exhibits & Posters

### COUNCIL ON LEADERSHIP MEETINGS

- Ethics Committee
- Distinguished Fellowship Committee
- Finance Committee
- Professional Practice Management Committee
- CME Committee
- Resident-Fellow Training Section

Refreshment Break with Exhibitors and Poster Session

### COUNCILS ON SERVICE & EDUCATION MEETINGS

- Academic Psychiatry Committee
- Children & Adolescents Committee
- Forensic Psychiatry Committee
- Public Mental Health Services Committee

Refreshment Break and Door Prize Drawings with Exhibitors and Poster Session

Lunch Program (and Government Affairs Council on Advocacy Meeting)

### SCIENTIFIC PROGRAM: “Contemporary Issues and Innovations in Psychiatric Practice”

Refreshment Break and Door Prize Drawings with Exhibitors and Poster Session

Dinner Reception

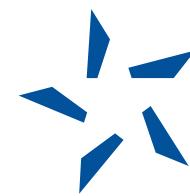
### Sunday, April 26

8:30 am – 11:30 am  
9:00 am – 11:00 am

Registration  
Executive Council Breakfast Meeting



# TSPP Spring Committee Meetings and Continuing Medical Education Program



April 24-26, 2026 • The Westin Austin at The Domain

**Register Online: [www.txpsych.org/2026tsppspring](http://www.txpsych.org/2026tsppspring)**

## “Contemporary Issues and Innovations in Psychiatric Practice”

5 AMA PRA Category 1 Credit(s)™

with 1.5 of the Hours designated for Medical Ethics/Professional Responsibility

### Prescribing for Mood Disorders During Pregnancy and the Post-Partum Period

(maximum 1.5 credit hours)

Jeffrey Newport, MD

**Objectives:** The learning objectives for this activity have been designed to address clinician competence. Upon conclusion of the activity participants should be able to:

- Summarize current evidence on the risks and benefits of commonly used psychotropics in pregnancy and postpartum (antidepressants, mood stabilizers, antipsychotics).
- Apply a structured risk-benefit framework when counseling pregnant patients and collaborating with obstetric providers.
- Identify medications or situations that require urgent consultation with a perinatal psychiatry specialist.
- Describe key considerations for prescribing during lactation, including when breastfeeding is compatible with treatment.

### Thyroid Disorders – What every Psychiatrist Should Know

(maximum 1 credit hour)

Sowmya Boddhula, MD

**Objectives:** The learning objectives for this activity have been designed to address clinician competence. Upon conclusion of the activity participants should be able to:

- Identify common endocrine disorders.
- Know when to refer to an endocrinologist.
- Be cognizant of how endocrine disorders may exacerbate/contribute to psychiatric symptoms.

### Ethics: AI in Psychiatric Practice: Training, Documentation, and Medico-Legal Risk

(maximum 1.5 credit hours)

Vid Babber, MD

**Objectives:** The learning objectives for this activity have been designed to address clinician competence. Upon conclusion of the activity participants should be able to:

- Describe current or emerging uses of artificial intelligence (AI), relevant to psychiatric practice, such as note writing, decision support, chatbots (AI therapy).
- Identify key medico-legal and ethical risks of utilizing AI in documentation and clinical care, including confidentiality, informed consent, accuracy of records.
- Develop a framework for evaluating AI tools used by patients (apps, online therapy bots) and in deciding whether/how to incorporate AI into clinical workflow.
- Formulate practice policies/safeguards (clinical or personal) to mitigate risk when using AI tools.

### Mindfulness in Practice: Everyday Tools for Healing, Presence, and Connection

(maximum 1 credit hour)

Manizeh Mirza-Gruber, MD

**Objectives:** The learning objectives for this activity have been designed to address clinician competence. Upon conclusion of the activity participants should be able to:

- Identify and practice key elements of several mindfulness-based teachings and practices.
- Apply simple practices of formal and informal mindfulness into their daily life for themselves and others and experience its many mind-body healing benefits.
- Connect more mindfully in thought, word, and action both personally and professionally.

#### CME Program Goal / Target Audience

This live activity has been designed in a format consisting of case study presentations, lectures and direct discussion to provide its primary target audience of Psychiatrists, as well as other specialties of medicine, with the most up-to-date, evidence-based data that can be translated into clinical practice. Information and data will address new developments in treatments and new directions in research to address the professional practice gaps of the learners and advance the physicians' competence and effective use of targeted skills so that they may develop

strategies to apply the knowledge, skills and judgement of the information presented in the educational activity into their practice. The learning objectives for this activity have been designed to address clinician competence.

#### NEEDS ASSESSMENT

TSPP has incorporated into this CME activity the relevant educational needs concerning competence that underline the professional practice gaps of our participants.

#### ACCREDITATION STATEMENT

The Texas Society of Psychiatric Physicians is accredited by the Texas

Medical Association to provide continuing medical education for physicians.

#### CREDIT STATEMENT

The Texas Society of Psychiatric Physicians designates this Live Activity for a maximum of five (5) AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™. Physicians should claim only the credit commensurate with the extent of their participation in this activity.

#### ETHICS DESIGNATION STATEMENT

The presentation entitled “AI in Psychiatric Practice: Training, Documentation, and Medico-Legal Risk” has been designated by the Texas Society of Psychiatric Physicians for

one and half (1.5) hours of education in medical ethics and/or professional responsibility.

#### FACULTY AND PLANNER DISCLOSURE POLICY

The Texas Society of Psychiatric Physicians will disclose to participants the existence of any relevant financial relationships between faculty members, TSPP staff, and members who planned, authored, contributed to, and/or reviewed the content of this activity, and any commercial interest discussed in this educational activity. Disclosure will occur through written communication in the syllabus/handout material.

## FEDERAL UPDATE

### Telemedicine Prescribing Flexibilities Extended Through 2026

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) have announced a fourth extension of federal telemedicine prescribing flexibilities, originally implemented during the COVID-19 public health emergency. These flexibilities are now in effect through December 31, 2026.

Under the extension, clinicians may continue to prescribe Schedule II-V controlled substances via telemedicine without a prior in-person visit, preventing a potential “telemedicine cliff” while permanent federal regulations, including a Special Registration pathway

under the Ryan Haight Act, are finalized.

For psychiatry, this extension preserves access to care for patients who rely on telemedicine, particularly in rural and underserved communities.

#### Important for Texas Psychiatrists

Federal flexibility does not override Texas law or Texas Medical Board (TMB) rules. Psychiatrists should continue to ensure compliance with:

- Texas PMP checks when prescribing opioids, benzodiazepines, barbiturates, or carisoprodol (with limited statutory exceptions).

- Electronic prescribing requirements for controlled substances, unless an exception or waiver applies.
- Additional restrictions on telemedicine prescribing for chronic pain under TMB Rule 174.5.
- Full standard-of-care requirements, which must be equivalent to in-person care.

This extension maintains the current federal framework and does not change existing state or federal compliance obligations. We will continue to monitor developments and share updates as permanent rules are issued.

# TSPP Spring Committee Meetings & Scientific Program Registration

April 24-26, 2026 • The Westin Austin at The Domain

**Register Online: [www.txpsych.org/2026tsppspring](http://www.txpsych.org/2026tsppspring)**

Registration Item	Early Bird through March 15th	Pricing as of March 16th
<b>Saturday Lunch</b>	\$40	\$50
<b>Saturday Dinner Reception</b>		
TSPP/TSCAP/TAP Member	\$55	\$60
Non-Member Physician	\$95	\$100
TSPP/TSCAP/TAP Trainee/Student	\$45	\$50
Non-Member Trainee/Student	\$55	\$60
Guest/Allied Health Professional	\$85	\$85
<b>CME Scientific Program</b>		
<i>Includes online program syllabus, complimentary continental breakfast, and AM/PM refreshment breaks</i>		
TSPP/TSCAP/TAP Member	\$175	\$195
Non-Member Physician	\$225	\$245
TSPP/TSCAP/TAP Trainee/RFM/Medical Student*	\$35	\$45
<i>*If your training director or APD registers for the scientific program, your scientific program fee is waived.</i>		
Non-Member Trainee/RFM/Medical Student	\$45	\$55
Allied Health Professional	\$165	\$175
Spouse/Guest (No CME Credit)	\$165	\$175
Poster Presenter	\$0	\$0
<i>If you're approved to present a poster, your registration fee for the Scientific Program is waived.</i>		
<b>CME Printed Syllabus Order</b>		
Black/White	\$105	\$125
Color	\$125	\$155

## TSPP Committee Meeting RSVP

If you are only able to attend committee meetings and not stay for the CME portion of the conference, please email [TSPP@txpsych.org](mailto:TSPP@txpsych.org) to RSVP.

**CANCELLATION POLICY:** In the event of cancellation, a full refund will be made if written notice is received in the TSPP office by March 31, 2026, less a 25% processing charge. NO REFUNDS will be given after March 31, 2026.

 If you require any special assistance to fully participate in this conference, please contact TSPP at (512) 222-6865 by March 31st.

## Thank You for Attending the TSPP 69th Annual Convention and Scientific Program

November 6-9, 2025 • The Westin Irving at Las Colinas • Irving, Texas

**"Enhancing Psychiatric Practice: Evidence-Based Tools for Metabolic, Behavioral, and Sleep Health"**



**Distinguished Service Award**  
Michael Arambula, MD, PharmD  
San Antonio



**Psychiatric Excellence Award**  
Melissa Gail Inga Eshelman, MD  
Austin



**Psychiatric Excellence Award**  
Constance George, MD  
Austin



**Special Service Award**  
State Representative  
Toni Rose



**Spencer Bayles Outstanding Member of the Year**  
J. Clay Sawyer, MD - Waco



Karen Dineen Wagner, MD, PhD

## FEDERATION OF TEXAS PSYCHIATRY JOHN R. BUSH LEADERSHIP EXCELLENCE AWARD

The John R. Bush Award, instituted in 2016, was created to acknowledge those exceptional psychiatrists who have demonstrated unwavering dedication to providing outstanding leadership. This commitment extends over a substantial period, and their efforts have significantly contributed to the advancement of the highest standards in psychiatric practice and the delivery of top-quality care for our patients. Through her exceptional leadership in organized psychiatry, she has made a remarkable impact on our field.

## Special Thanks to Sponsors & Exhibitors

### PLATINUM

Teva Pharmaceuticals  
Texas Foundation for Psychiatric Education and Research

### GOLD

Teva Medical Affairs

### SILVER

American Professional Agency

### EXHIBITORS

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# A Pictorial Recap of the 2025 TSPP Convention



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

The TEXAS PSYCHIATRIST is published 5 times a year. 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.

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Federation Executive Committee

**EDITORS**

Dieter Burkhardt  
Annette Mitrosz

**Federation of Texas Psychiatry**  
401 West 15th Street, Suite 675  
Austin, Texas 78701  
(512) 222-6865  
TXpsychiatry@txpsych.org (E-mail)  
<http://www.txpsych.org> (website)

## 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 [txpsych.org/careers](http://txpsych.org/careers). The Federation's **JOB BANK** could be just what you have been looking for.

## CALENDAR OF MEETINGS

Visit [www.txpsych.org/conferences-and-events](http://www.txpsych.org/conferences-and-events) for up-to-date information on upcoming events and CME webinars for TSPP, TSCAP and TAP

### FEBRUARY

**18-22** ACP Annual Meeting  
Bonita Springs, FL  
[www.acpsych.org/meetings-and-news/annual-meeting/future-annual-meetings](http://www.acpsych.org/meetings-and-news/annual-meeting/future-annual-meetings)

**25** TAP/TMB CME Webinar  
Virtual  
Register Online: [www.txpsych.org/tap-tmb-webinar2026](http://www.txpsych.org/tap-tmb-webinar2026)

### APRIL

**16-18** TexMed  
Corpus Christi, TX  
[https://www.texmed.org/TexMed/](http://www.texmed.org/TexMed/)

### April 24-26 TSPP Spring Conference

The Westin at The Domain, Austin



Register Online: [www.txpsych.org/2026tsppspring](http://www.txpsych.org/2026tsppspring)

### MAY

**16-20** APA Annual Meeting  
San Francisco, CA

### JULY

**17-19** TSCAP Annual Convention  
Moody Gardens Hotel, Galveston  
*Save the Date!*