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APPA 2016 Spring Conference Wrap-up

Welcome new president, **Tarak Vasavada, MD**

Tarak Vasavada, MD, is a professor and regional chair of psychiatry at UAB Huntsville campus. He is also medical director of Behavior Services at Huntsville Hospital. After obtaining an MBBS and MD in Psychiatry from Baroda Medical College, India, Dr. Vasavada did his residency at SUNY Upstate Medical College Syracuse. He has won numerous teaching awards and is also a Distinguished Fellow of American Psychiatric Association. He served as president of Alabama Association of Indian Physician in 2009-2010. Later he served as regional director of AAPI SE central region. His areas of interest include Medical teaching, psychopharmacology, consultation psychiatry and serious mental illness and enjoys giving presentations on those topics.



Dr. Vasavada will serve as APPA president for 2016-2018. Other members of the executive council include:

- J. Luke Engeriser, MD, President-elect
- Godehard Oepen, MD, Secretary
- Mark Haygood, DO, Treasurer
- Sandra K. Parker, MD, Immediate Past President

Sandra Parker, MD, recognized for service as president of APPA

Dr. Parker completed her two-year term of service as president of APPA at the April 2016 meeting. Her dedication to mentoring the younger generation of psychiatrists and preparing them for participation in organized medicine has



*Not a member of
APA and APPA?*

Online application
improves the
membership process

A new online application is available on APPA's website. The application is a simple fillable PDF form that is easy to complete and outlines the benefits of APA and APPA membership for each membership category. **Use this link or refer it to your colleagues and encourage them to join!**

<http://alabamapsych.org/membership/>

Join Today!

SAVE THE DATE FOR
OUR FALL MEETING

October 8, 2016

Tuscaloosa
Embassy Suites

Members recognized for advanced membership status

Congratulations to the following members for achieving advanced membership status with the American Psychiatric Association and the Alabama Psychiatric Physicians Association.

Distinguished Life Fellow

Jacqueline Feldman, MD, Birmingham
Terry Elliot Passman, MD, Fairhope

Distinguished Fellow

Marisa A. Giggie, MD, Tuscaloosa
Nelson Handal, MD, Dothan
Sandra Parker, MD, Daphne
Bradley J. Sadler, MD, Mobile

Fellow

Leona J. Graham, MD, Dothan
Eddie Lee Huggins Jr., MD, Anniston
Clinton Martin, MD, Birmingham
Praveen Narahari, MD, Mobile
Mary Avery Strong, DO, Tuscaloosa
Eyob Hailu Tessema, MD, Dothan

Life Members

Emalyn Ann McDowell, MD, Dothan
David Dean, DO, Montgomery
Francis Cleveland, MD, PhD,
Birmingham

A special thank you to our Spring Meeting Exhibitors

Alkermes
Allergan

Alpha Genomix Laboratories
AltaPointe Health Systems
American Professional Agency, Inc.

Assurex
Behavioral Health Systems
Genomind Inc.

Ingenuity Health
Janssen Pharmaceuticals
Lundbeck

Managed Health Care
Administration
Merck

Otsuka
Professional Risk Management
Services, Inc

Shire
Southeast Addiction Technology
Transfer Center

Sunovion
The Doctors Company

Conference wrap-up continued

made an tremendous impact on our Association. As president, Dr. Parker worked tirelessly to ensure that students, residents and early career psychiatrists had the support and funds necessary to attend the spring and fall conferences, boosting participation of younger attendees over the years. Her exemplary leadership to these young professionals is admirable.

In addition to her current role as vice chair for the Department of Psychiatry at the University of South Alabama, Dr. Parker serves as chief medical officer for AltaPointe Health Systems. She is an adjunct faculty member in the USA College of Allied Health Professions, Department of Physician Assistant Studies, and in the USA College of Nursing.

Dr. Parker and her family do mission work in Ecuador and participate in the Big Brothers/Big Sisters program. Dr. Parker was presented with the American Psychiatric Association's 2012 Bruno Lima Award in Disaster Psychiatry for her continuing work with victims of Hurricane Katrina and the BP oil spill in the Gulf Coast region.

Congratulations to the winners of the Poster Abstracts



Blessing Falala, MD
First Place: Checklist Utilization to Standardize UAB Psychiatry Residency Training Call Ensures a Comprehensive Training Experience: A Quality Improvement Project.



Michael Falola, MD, MPH
Second Place: Clinical and Genetic Predictors of Antidepressant Treatment Response in STAR*D Cohort



Jun Liu, MD
Third Place: The Challenges of Treating a Huntington's Disease Patient with Undiagnosed Obsessive-compulsive Disorder

Read these and all abstracts that were submitted online at www.alabamapsych.org/abstracts.

David Harwood, MD, recognized for service

During the businesses session of the Spring Conference, the executive council recognized David Harwood, MD, with an Outstanding Achievement Award for his extraordinary psychiatric service and dedication to his patients, to Alabama and the psychiatric profession.

Dr. Harwood is a graduate of Emory University School of Medicine and is a Distinguished Fellow of the APA. He serves as managing partner of Montgomery Psychiatry & Associates.

The APPA executive council wishes him well on his upcoming retirement and move to Texas.



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The importance of termination in the treatment relationship

Contributed by Donna Vanderpool, MBA, JD, Vice President of Risk Management, PRMS

Termination issues and questions consistently represent the second most frequent topic discussed on our Risk Management Consultation Service (RMCS). To put this into perspective, in 2015 our RMCS handled more than 3,500 issues called in by our insured psychiatrists. Termination was the second most frequent topic, with information requests topping the list and treatment questions coming in at the third spot. In fact, in 2015, 10% of the RMCS calls involved termination. But not all termination calls started out as that; frequently the psychiatrist was calling to discuss a non-adherent patient situation which then segued into a discussion about whether the psychiatrist can treat a patient when there's no agreement on the treatment plan.

From a professional liability perspective, it is well established in law that once a physician initiates a treatment relationship, you need to continue treating – and are liable as if you are treating – until the relationship has been properly terminated. While there could be some slight variance between states, the termination process consists of the following:

- **Giving reasonable notice/time to find alternative treatment**
 - o States may have a shorter time requirement, but generally 30 days' notice is required
 - o The follow-up letter should not be the first notice to the patient; it is best to discuss the need for termination with the patient, if possible
 - o This notice period, during which the patient can find a new psychiatrist, defeats an allegation of abandonment
- **Educating on treatment recommendations**
 - o Such recommendations might address cautioning against the abrupt discontinuation of medication, reminder of driving restrictions, urging the patient to find a new psychiatrist ASAP, etc.

- **Assisting with finding alternative treatment**
 - o The specific name of a provider willing to take on the patient is generally not required
 - o This can be a referral resource, such as the patient's managed care insurance company or a hospital referral desk
 - The APA has a ["Find a Psychiatrist"](#) online directory
- **Offering to provide records, as requested by the patient**
- **Sending a follow-up letter**
 - o If the need for termination was discussed with the patient, there's no need to repeat it in the letter; instead, you can say "As we have discussed, I am terminating our treatment relationship ..."
 - o Send the letter
 - Both certified (if required by your licensing board) and regular first class mail (so the patient actually receives the letter) or
 - Delivery confirmation (offered by the postal service)

If the patient terminates with you, we still suggest sending a letter to confirm that you are no longer treating. Similarly, we recommend that you consider sending a letter when the patient's termination is evident by not coming in for appointments.

The terminating psychiatrist needs to continue to meet the patient's clinical needs during the termination period. If you prescribe during the termination period, consider only prescribing through the termination date.

Remember that if at any time during the termination period the patient goes into crisis (imminently suicidal / imminently homicidal), and the patient is hospitalized, you can transfer care directly to the hospital, and then no notice is required. We suggest you confirm your transfer of care in writing (such as a fax) after letting the attending psychiatrist know that you are not available to the patient upon discharge.

Given our experience with the variety of termination issues that psychiatrists face, we've written a comprehensive article ["Termination of the Physician-Patient"](#)

New Sunshine Act data available for review until May 15

Physicians have until May 15 to review data reported to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) on payments from pharmaceutical and medical device manufacturers for 2015. Reporting of this information is required under the Physician Payment Sunshine Act (PPSA), part of the Affordable Care Act. All disputes must be resolved directly with manufacturers by May 30. Manufacturers are responsible for reporting the corrected data to CMS.

Public access to the 2015 payment data begins on June 30. See APA Sunshine Act resources.

If you plan to review your data, test your [CMS Enterprise Portal](#) (EIDM) logon credentials beforehand; accounts that have not been accessed recently are locked; if your account has been locked, see [Frequently Asked Questions for EIDM Users](#). If you have not yet registered on the Open Payments portal, see [Resources](#) that APA has posted on its website. 

[Relationship](#)" which includes several model termination letters.

I hope you find this information useful – taking a bit of time to formally terminate care with patients can go a long way in minimizing your professional liability risk.

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APPA Spring Conference Welcome Reception - Great food and fun!

Beautiful scenery and fantastic weather set the stage for our Friday night Welcome reception on the Grand Lawn. Great food and family friendly games were enjoyed by all.



Pictured above and on the left, APPA members and guests enjoy spending time together at the reception.



The Grand Sandestin provided a lovely backdrop for the buffet on the Grand Lawn.



Kids of all ages enjoyed the variety of outdoor games available at the Welcome Reception.



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Alabama Psychiatric
Physicians Association
19 S. Jackson Street |
Montgomery, AL 36104
(334) 954-2500
Fax (334) 269-5200
www.alabamapsych.org

Tarak Vasavada, MD,
Publisher
Jennifer Hayes,
Executive Editor
Charlotte H. Morris,
Senior Editor

Articles or advertisements should be sent to Charlotte H. Morris, at cmorris@alamedical.org two weeks in advance of printing.

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