Hello MPA Members!

I know that the past couple of months have been filled with uncertainty, but even in the midst of uncertainty, it is important that we keep pushing forward. I want to thank each and every one of you for the work that you continue to do to help others during this pandemic. We know that mental health has been, is, and will continue to be of great importance, especially in times such as these. The executive committee of the Mississippi Psychological Association has continued to and will continue to address any concerns that you all may have during this time, and we have compiled information to help you all navigate this unprecedented circumstance. Please keep an eye on the listserv as we continue to send out information on topics such as updates related to the practice of psychology during COVID-19, telehealth, billing, coping strategies, etc. You can also find a summary of this information on the MPA website. Myself and the EC started this year with many great ideas and goals to continue to push our guild forward, and don’t worry, we still have that momentum, but have just shifted some of our priorities to make sure that our members are getting what you all need during this time.

We will continue to work together to manage the COVID-19 pandemic, and will also continue lead MPA effectively. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,
Kristen J. Alston, PhD
MPA President 2020
Executive Director’s Message

by Amy Wilson

Well, what a Spring it has been thus far! I am so impressed to see how quickly Psychologists are adjusting and responding the COVID-19 crisis. Your Executive Committee has worked diligently to keep you informed. You as professionals are always focused on the mental well-being of others. Please take time for self-care as you serve your patients. Please note there are multiple resources for psychologists and the public on our website – www.mpassoc.org

If there is ANYTHING I can do to assist you, please email – mpa@mpassoc.org or call 601-372-7755. I am working remotely at times but try to check phone messages daily. In order to serve you better, please complete the survey below.

Stay safe and healthy!

Amy

COVID-19 Resources

As the world has changed amidst the COVID-19 outbreak, so has your practice and work life. We are updating the website with new information that may be helpful to psychologists as it becomes available. Click here to view many helpful resources.
Convention Update

by Ethel Hetrick, Ph.D., Immediate Past President

Although we are all dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic, MPA is proceeding with plans for the 71st Annual Convention scheduled for September 23–25, 2020 at the Hollywood Casino in Bay St. Louis. The submission deadline for presentations is Sunday, May 31, 2020. The theme for this year's convention is PSYCHOLOGY: ON THE CUTTING EDGE. Besides researched-based presentations of current topics, seminars/panel presentations involving such topics as “the practice of psychology in the COVID-19 “new normal” are welcome.

Call for Proposals

If you are interested in presenting at the MPA Annual Convention, please see the information and applications below.

Please note the following deadlines:
• Submission Deadline is Sunday, May 31, 2020. After review, the CE committee may request additional information for sessions that may qualify for CE Credit.
• Student Deadline is Tuesday, June 30, 2020. Please pass this information along to your students and faculty.

We look forward to reviewing your information!

Call for Proposals Forms:
• Call for Proposals & Submission Guidelines
• CE Workshop/Presentation/Symposium Submission Form
• Non-CE Presentation/Symposium/Panel Discussion Submission Form
• Poster Submission Form

Student Information:
• Student Poster & Data Blitz Submission Form
Practice Leadership Conference

by Mallory Malkin, Ph.D., MPA President-Elect & Emily Thomas Johnson, Ph.D., MPA Federal Advocacy Coordinator

As President-Elect for the Mississippi Psychological Association (MPA) I attended the 2020 Practice Leadership Conference (PLC): Maximizing the Impact of State and Federal Advocacy held in Washington D.C from March 7th-10th, 2020. Dr. Emily Johnson also attended as our Federal Advocacy Coordinator (FAC).

The Practice Leadership Conference’s (PLC) focus was on bringing together psychologists from all of the state, provincial, and territorial psychological associations (SPTAs) across the United States and Canada. PLC was a wonderful chance for SPTA leaders to network and discuss issues of professional relevance.

PLC was an excellent networking opportunity for me as a new President-Elect. I was able to represent MPA and meet with President-Elects and Presidents of SPTAs across the nation. The main take home message that I learned from these discussions: All SPTAs face similar issues, even those of a larger size. Membership retention and attraction, engagement of membership, and advocacy efforts were all noted as common challenges across the board for SPTAs. As a smaller sized SPTA I think, MPA does a commendable job in trying to encourage and rouse not only early career professionals to join MPA, but also revitalizing current members to maintain their commitment to the guild.

In addition to the formal and informal networking opportunities, I was able to attend Plenary and Workshop sessions, as well as be a part of Capitol Hill Visits with Emily. The Political Plenary session, focused on the “2020 Political Landscape,” and was hosted by Charlie Cook, Political Analyst for the National Journal. Mr. Cook presented a non-partisan analysis of the current political climate and how this may affect the American Psychological Association (APA), as well as state organizations in the coming years.

I was also afforded the opportunity to attend two workshops, which focused on PSYPACT and RxP. The PSYPACT workshop discussed the practice of telepsychology and the interjurisdictional compact as it relates to delivery of services, as well as insurance coverage and legal considerations in practice. The RxP workshop concentrated on state level strategies and successes in seeking coverage for prescribing psychologists’ services. The RxP workshop discussed a multitude of benefits, strategies, and challenges faced in the attainment of prescription privileges for licensed psychologists.

Overall, PLC is a jam-packed few days, but it is a worthwhile trip for organizational leaders.
I mirror Mallory’s sentiments related to PLC 2020. This was my fifth trip to PLC as your Federal Advocacy Coordinator. Each year we have different opportunities to receive more applicable training related to SPTA organization and advocacy. We also get to work with APA staff in getting the message out related to the vitalness of supporting psychological practice, research and training at the federal level.

This PLC, I attended two workshops on expanding access to care and healthcare finance. We received information related to the initiatives across the USA to get psychological supervised trainee services reimbursed. APA has prioritized the need for funding and reimbursement advocacy for these services. APA has data that psychologists stay where they train. Therefore, if our training centers can get reimbursement for trainees, we are likely to grow workforce within the state. Although Mississippi does not currently, 25 states and DC are currently allowing for Medicaid reimbursement of psychological trainees. This gives me hope that we can continue to work with Medicaid in Mississippi to match what other states are doing. Medicare does not reimburse for their services in any location. Their reasoning is that administration feels that this is already funded through GPE. However, Mississippi has no GPE funded program and the program is inadequately funded. This funding was one of the areas we were able to push for in our Capitol Hill meetings.

On the Tuesday of PLC, we met with the offices of both Senators and all but one of our state representatives. Senator Hyde-Smith met with me in person related to our concerns. In addition to discussing GPE funding, we discussed the proposed upcoming 7% cut to Medicare payments for psychological services in 2021 and how these would harm our practice. We again requested that the physician oversight requirement for psychologists’ services with Medicare beneficiaries be removed. Recently, I have received follow-up information that APA has added the fight for audio-only telehealth services for Medicare beneficiaries to their discussions with Congressional offices as an area of dire need.

While the amount of training and advocacy opportunities included with PLC are worthwhile, as Mallory noted, it is an intense three days. We welcome any of our members who are interested to join us next year as we all need to continue to be the voice of Psychology.
Of the 308 Licensed Psychologists living in Mississippi (as of January 2019), 106 are members.

Membership with MPA is more beneficial now than ever before. Invite your colleagues to join and help us advocate for mental and behavioral health benefits at the state and national level! Help all psychologists in Mississippi stay connected and updated on new, relevant changes to psychological practices. Let's make the voice of psychology even stronger in our great state!