



## President's Message

Dear RIPA members,

Happy Summer! I am so pleased to have an opportunity to tell you some of the wonderful things your RIPA board members have been actively working on and accomplishing in 2013. I was fortunate enough to attend the State Leadership Conference in March, along with our **Jack Hutson** and **Dr.'s Oppenheimer, Plante and Johnson**, and we all came back full of ideas for educating the public, advocating for psychology and working on the implementation of Healthcare Reform. We were also honored to have our own **Senator Whitehouse** recognized for his accomplishments on behalf of Psychology. Please keep your eyes out for a continuing education program on healthcare reform planned for October. While in Washington, we began working with the APA Education Directorate to plan an event honoring **Senator Reed** and **Dr. Peter Erikson** with the Musiker-Merenda award. It was wonderful to see so many of you at the event in April, which was attended by nearly 100 people, including several prior award recipients, including **Dr. Peter Merenda**. On the legislative, insurance and advocacy front, our board has been working to both monitor the implementation of healthcare reform and to advocate on our behalf with legislators and the Office of the Healthcare Commissioner. We have also been communicating and monitoring the actions of our local insurance companies, and working hard to assess their compliance with federal parity legislation. It was a proud day for Rhode Island when we finally passed marriage equality, and I hope most of you saw RIPA's statement of endorsement on behalf of marriage equality. All of our committees have been extremely active, and this issue of our newsletter is full of descriptions of their hard work and ways for you to become involved. Several of you have participated in the Red Cross trainings in disaster mental health, and I want to thank **Dr. Mary Moore** for her hard work organizing our Disaster Response Committee and for her volunteer efforts in the aftermath of the Boston Bombings. Please also join our **Dr. Ben Johnson** and our PEC committee in spreading the word about the benefits of exercise and keep your eyes out for our beautiful RIPA runs t-shirts as many of us run in several 5k races throughout the year. It is a wonderful time to be part of RIPA, and I am grateful to be working with such a dedicated, hard working and productive group. Please contact me, or any of our board members or committee chairs to learn ways to become more involved; you won't be disappointed!



Lisa Rocchio, Ph.D.  
RIPA President

## Disaster Response Network Update

By Mary C. Moore, Ph.D.

The DRN committee assisted Red Cross in implementing a disaster mental health training program in Rhode Island in April during which 20 new MH volunteers were trained. We are working with Red Cross to improve the volunteer experience and clarify roles and responsibilities. Several DRN members were able to respond to the Boston Marathon bombings, reporting back that it was a meaningful and worthwhile experience. The DRN committee is now working on preparing a presentation for first responders. As the DRN grows, there will be opportunities to volunteer in several capacities: direct response to state or national disasters, providing support to returning volunteers, instructor roles in teaching DMH and Psychological First Aid, and presenting seminars to first responders. New committee members are welcome.

## Early Career Psychologist Committee

By Jeffrey Hughes, Psy.D.

I am pleased to announce the establishment of RIPA's Early Career Committee! Early Career Psychologists (ECP's) are defined as less than 7 years post-licensure and graduate students. Please consider becoming a part of the ECP committee and/or upcoming listserv by contacting Dr. Hughes at [drjeffreyhughes@gmail.com](mailto:drjeffreyhughes@gmail.com). Please also consider forwarding this information to any colleagues who you know that meet the ECP criteria.

Going forward, this column will address questions and issues pertinent to ECP's. I look forward to RIPA being an even more enriching resource for Psychologists in the beginning phases of our careers.

## Colleague Assistance Committee Update

By Megan Spencer, Ph.D.

The colleague assistance committee has designed a survey assessing RI psychologists' perceptions and utilization of colleague assistance services. Please consider participating in the survey and sharing your thoughts with us! The survey takes only 5-10 minutes to complete. Results will be shared on the CAC webpage at the completion of the survey.

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/5N6DH7H>

Questions regarding the CAC or this survey can be directed to committee chair, Megan Spencer, Ph.D. at [megans80@hotmail.com](mailto:megans80@hotmail.com).



## Two RI Senators Win Awards for Psychology Advocacy

Senator Sheldon Whitehouse was awarded the 2013 Outstanding Leadership Award by the APA Practice Organization (APA-PO) for being a national advocate for mental health and the work of psychology. RIPA President Lisa Rocchio, PhD, Federal Advocacy Coordinator Wendy Plante, PhD, President-Elect Peter Oppenheimer, PhD, Public Education Chair Ben Johnson, PhD, and Executive Director Jack Hutson were on hand at the APA-PO State Leadership Conference in Washington, DC in March to watch Katherine Nordal make the award.

On April 19 at the Waterman Grille in Providence, over 85 psychologists - clinicians, educators, and researchers - raised their glasses to the two winners of RIPA's Musika-Merenda Award for outstanding contributions to psychology and mental health in RI. Senator Jack Reed was honored by RIPA and the APA Education Directorate for his advocacy, including his efforts on behalf of suicide prevention, psychology education, and mental health parity. Peter Erickson, PhD, a longtime RIPA member who has held many leadership positions in the organization was also honored with the award for his leadership on legislative and insurance issues at the state level.

The three honorees demonstrate a commitment to the inclusion of psychologists in health care and to making mental health accessible to everyone. For more information on joining, contact Wendy Plante at [wendy\\_plante@brown.edu](mailto:wendy_plante@brown.edu) or Peter Oppenheimer at [pmopp@fopsych.com](mailto:pmopp@fopsych.com).



(l-r) Dr. Wendy Plante, Dr. Justin Nash, Dr. Peter Erickson, Senator Jack Reed, Dr. Lisa Rocchio, Dr. Peter Oppenheimer



(l-r) Jack Hutson, Dr. Wendy Plante, Dr. Katherine Nordal, Jennifer DeAngelis, Dr. Donald Bersoff, Dr. Lisa Rocchio, Dr. Peter Oppenheimer



**RIPA BOARD**

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**- Committee Chairs -**

Megan Spencer, Ph.D. Colleague Assistance Committee

Ryan Haggarty, Ph.D. Communications

Clifford I. Gordon, Ed.D. Continuing Education

Mary Moore, Ph.D. Disaster Response Network

Leslie A. Feil, Ph.D. Ethics

Peter Erickson, Ph.D. Insurance

Peter Oppenheimer, Ph.D. Legislative

Karen Gieske, Ph.D. Membership

Ben Johnson, Ph.D. Public Education Coordinator

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Jack Hutson - Executive Director

**Legislative Committee Update**  
By Peter M. Oppenheimer, Ph.D.

The Legislative Committee has provided testimony on five bills in the past three weeks. Links to the bills and our testimony are posted on our page of the RIPA website: <http://www.ripsych.org/legislative-committee>

We have had hearings in the House (H5613) and Senate (S200) on our rate parity bill. This bill will update Rhode Island's COVERAGE FOR MENTAL ILLNESS AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE law to require insurance companies reimburse for mental health and substance abuse services on the same basis as they pay for medical services. We view that this is required under the federal mental health parity law (Paul Wellstone and Pete Domenici Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008). Currently some of the insurance companies use completely different and arbitrary rate systems. One local company appears to use a variation of the RBRVS scale, but they appear to also vary from the scale and to reimburse different medical specialties and mental health at different percentages of the scale. All of them do not reimburse for mental health and substance abuse as well as they do for some medical services. We appreciate the support of the Rhode Island Medical Society, The Rhode Island Psychiatric Society, the Rhode Island Nurses Association, and the Rhode Island Council of Community Mental Health Organizations (RICCMHO). We are also pleased that the Office of the Insurance Commissioner has affirmed that the federal parity law applies. However, it is not clear how it applies. This issue has been raised nationally and in other states without a clear resolution. We are also pleased to learn that the Office of the Insurance Commissioner is investigating the complaint the Coalition of Mental Health Professional of Rhode Island (COMHPRI) filed in October about Blue Cross' rate schedule of July 2012. We are told they are in the process of investigating the complaint. It is OHIC's policy not to comment on the content of the com-

plaint until they complete their investigation. It appears the current schedule (January 2013) is less compliant than the July 2012 schedule.

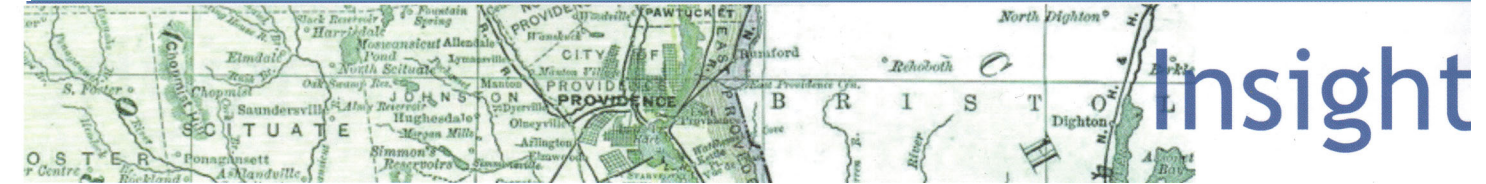
We testified regarding S540- THE RHODE ISLAND HEALTH CARE REFORM ACT OF 2013. This bill would create a pilot study of Patient Center Medical Homes and require the Office of the Insurance Commissioner to provide regulatory oversight on a number of issues involved in health care reform. We advocated for the meaningful inclusion of behavioral and mental health professionals in PCMHs and that OHIC provide regular reports as to whether the insurance companies are complying with federal parity or not.

We also testified regarding S0649 CONFIDENTIALITY OF HEALTH CARE COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION. This bill would require providers to release medical records within 10 days at no cost. We testified to the complexity of releasing mental health records (such as the need to redact PHI pertaining to collateral family members) and the implications of the short time frame (no 10 day or longer vacations for us).

Finally, we submitted testimony on S38-Marriage Equality. We provided information based on psychological research. More than 400 people signed up to testify that evening. The state house was a circus for several hours. I gave up waiting about midnight. **Kudos to Steven Barreto for staying to about 4:00 AM to do his testimony.** Thanks to **Mary Moore** for drafting our testimony.

RIPA's Healthcare Task Force  
The Task Force continues to meet to work on issues relevant to health care reform at both the state and federal

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**Ethics Corner**

In October, Eric Harris, Ed.D., J.D. presented a CEU entitled Adventures on the Electronic Frontier: Ethics and Risk Management in the Electronic Age. The purpose of Dr. Harris' s presentation was to identify issues that practitioners should consider before creating an "electronic professional presence". He discussed how electronic communications are already part of the profession and possible ways they will continue to be utilized within the profession. His presentation focused on the various things that could go wrong in telepsychology. Among relevant things to consider, he suggested it was important to have a good working knowledge of the ethics code and legal standards, evaluate your competence to perform (intellectual competence, technical competence, and emotional competence), keep knowledge up to date, avoid professional isolation, identify high risk patients and high risk situations, provide informed consent, and develop good record-keep practices and strategies.

As with standard clinical work, Dr. Harris pointed out it is important in telecommunications to take reasonable steps to protect others from harm. While competence to perform therapy is an issue to consider with in person therapy, with telepsychology, it is also important to be knowledgeable and competent in the technology itself. Dr. Harris identified several questions to ask oneself before engaging in telepsychology as part of risk management decision making:

"Is it effective?, Is it permissible?, Are there standards that can provide guidance?, How does one develop competence?, Is it reimbursable?, What risks does it present to the client/patient?, What risks does it present to the provider?, What are the proposed benefits of the intervention?, Is a referral for in-person services an equal or preferable option?". Although research doesn't show any difference between therapy in person and telepsychology, practitioners should consider the limitations of efficacy and effectiveness in telepsychology. Clinicians should inform clients of any limitations of using technology, security measures in place and the limits to confidentiality specific to the type of technology utilized, plan for managing technical problems, protocol for emergencies, and known differences between electronic and in-person communication. It also important for clinicians to be aware of the federal and state regulatory issues involved in telepsychology.

Dr. Harris encourages clinicians to ask if they are willing to take the risk and to always be thinking "What could go wrong?". Documentation and consultation are considered important tools in protecting the clinician from any risk. The CEU presentation was very useful in identifying numerous considerations clinicians should consider when engaging in electronic communications and therapies.

Submitted by  
Jennifer Anthony, Ph.D.  
RIPA Ethics Committee

*Legislative Committee Update continued*

levels. In addition to our legislative efforts, we have met with Elena Nicella of HHS to discuss the state's Medicaid program and how psychologists participate in it. We continue to monitor as many health care reform meetings as we can get to. Task Force member, **Bill Macaux, Ph.D., MBA**, gave an excellent interview to the New England Psychologist. You can read his comments in the current issue (April, 2013): <http://www.nepsy.com/articles/leading-stories/task-force-member-discusses-health-care-reform-efforts/>

**RIPA CONTINUING EDUCATION PROGRAMING 2013-2014**

**Friday, September 27, 2013**  
**Treating Complex Trauma: A Sequenced, Relationship-Based Approach**  
*Christine A. Courtois, Ph.D., ABPP (6 CE Credits)*

**Friday, October 25, 2013**  
**Healthcare Reform in Rhode Island: Critical Issues for Psychologists**  
*Katherine Nordal, Ph.D. (6 CE Credits)*

**Friday, December 6, 2013**  
**"Kids Do Well If They Can: An Empirically Supported Alternative to Conventional Clinical Approaches to Behaviorally Challenging Youth"**  
*David A. Whelan, Psy.D. (4 CE Credits)*

**Friday, March 21, 2014**  
**"Motivational Interviewing: The Basics and Beyond"**  
*Thomas E. Broffman, Ph.D., LICSW, LCDP, LCDS, CEAP (6 CE Credits)*

**Friday, May 2, 2014**  
**"Hot Topics in Ethics and Risk Management in Psychological Practice"**  
*Jeffrey N. Younggren, Ph.D., ABPP (6 CE Credits)*

**Friday, June 6, 2014**  
**"An Introduction to Behavioral Health Interventions for Cardiac Patients"**  
*Ellen A. Dornelas, Ph.D. (6 CE Credits)*