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**Mandatory Continuing Education:**

**Where Are We Now, and How Did We Get Here?**

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While New York State has long required continuing education for most professions, this has not been so for psychology. Currently New York remains one of only five states that does not have this requirement for psychologists to maintain their licenses, and that number is soon to be reduced to four, as is explained below with regard to New Jersey.

During his terms as president-elect and then president of NYSPA (2015-2016), Roy Aranda conducted a survey of NYSPA members in regard to mandatory CE. Of the respondents, 58% were in favor, with 42% against. Of the 42% against, a number of respondents pointed out that they take CE anyway, and they don't want to be mandated to do so. Others questioned the validity of required CE as a measure of competence.

The NYSPA Council of Representatives then voted to explore a framework for mandatory CE, with the task assigned to the newly formed CE Subcommittee within the Legislative Committee. Beginning in late 2016 and continuing during 2017, the CE Subcommittee, chaired by Lou Primavera and Rafael Javier, studied the issue, collected information from other states, and has now developed a framework that will be presented to Council for its approval in January 2018.

The proposed CE requirement is 36 hours across a three-year period, which includes three hours in ethics. This proposed requirement is very much in keeping with norms in other states across the country. There would be liberal options for CE, not only traditional workshops.

How did NYSPA get here, and why are we doing this to ourselves?

Aside from arguments about keeping up with one's field, there are four very real and very practical reasons, all of which end up at the capital and the New York State Legislature.

1. While most states have long required CE, during recent years almost all other outstanding states have enacted mandatory CE legislation. Thus it

wouldn't take much for the NYS Legislature to take note and then quickly take action. Under that scenario, the legislature would place requirements on psychologists with little if any input from NYSPA.

2. After the tragic shootings in Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, CT, the legislature quickly drafted and then immediately passed the SAFE Act, which was promptly signed by the governor. Without considering either the merits or shortcomings of the SAFE Act, it shows how quickly the legislature can react to a crisis. I'll connect the dots: With so much focus on mental health factors contributing to violence and mass shootings, most recently and tragically in Las Vegas and Sutherland Springs, TX, I wouldn't want the legislature to quickly impose its version of appropriate mandatory CE in response. One needs to look only across the Hudson River to New Jersey, where the legislature is in the process of enacting and implementing mandates in response to domestic violence in that state. Also note that it was the nurses who actually proposed the CE bill for psychology, to which psychology could not object and in addition lost control of the legislative process.
3. During the 2017 legislative session, the New York State Association of Neuropsychologists introduced their own CE bill for psychologists, with a proposed requirement of 60 hours in a three-year period, including nine hours in ethics. That contrasts significantly with NYSPA's proposal for 36 hours including three in ethics. While NYSPA is a much larger organization and represents all psychologists, and our proposal is much more likely to prevail in the legislature, sitting on the sidelines and doing nothing is not a viable option.
4. The NYS Legislature recently enacted mandatory CE for social workers. Can psychology be far behind?

By taking the initiative and being proactive, NYSPA is in a much stronger position to shape legislation that we believe is fair and reasonable, rather than running the risk of having some highly objectionable mandate forced upon us.

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