Introduction
Welcome to the Texas Psychological Association’s (TPA) quarterly report. The information contained within is intended to provide a brief snapshot of the advocacy efforts conducted by TPA during each three-month period.

Regulatory Advocacy
Behavioral Health Executive Council
In response to the Texas State Board of Social Worker Examiners (TSBSWE) and the Texas Behavioral Health Executive Council (BHEC) accepting language from the Governor that removes protections against discrimination for sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression from the Social Work Code of Conduct, TPA’s Board and two Local Area Societies (Capital Area Psychological Association and Sam Houston Area Psychological Association) affiliated with TPA submitted a letter to BHEC expressing outrage with the recent actions of the state regulatory boards. 2020 TPA President Dr. Megan Mooney also commented at BHEC’s October 27 quarterly meeting regarding the rule change to the Social Work Code of Conduct.

Following the meeting, BHEC requested an Attorney General Opinion on its authority to adopt codes of conduct for the professions it oversees. However, the other codes of conduct have already been adopted and are not in question. Concerned with a potential overreaching response from the Attorney General, in January TPA and the other impacted professional associations collectively submitted a response brief to the Attorney General for consideration.

Texas State Board of Examiners of Psychologists
TPA submitted written comments at TSBEP’s November meeting, continuing to express concerns with the proposed requirement that all applicants for licensure as a psychological associate or psychologist take and pass the EPPP-2 prior being granted a license. This followed remarks at TSBEP’s Town Hall on the same subject. We have previously identified our concerns with the EPPP-2 in the validity and reliability of the exam, as well as to its logistical practicability.

TSBEP voted not to proceed with the EPPP-2 due to concerns about the validity of the exam and the potential for cultural bias based upon the EPPP. TSBEP cited the need for more data and they will revisit the exam at their February meeting if sufficient data is available.

Also at the November meeting, TSBEP adopted changes to Rule 465.2, allowing for remote or electronic supervision to be synchronous audio-visual. TPA’s BHEC/TSBEP Committee worked extensively on this issue during the previous quarter, and successfully worked with TSBEP to adopt an improved rule, protecting against concerns that supervision could be predominantly conducted asynchronously.

In December, Governor Abbott announced new appointments to the Texas State Board of Examiners of Psychologists (TSBEP): Drs. Jamie Becker, Jeanette Deas Calhoun, and Sangeeta Singg. Current public member John Bielamowicz is now the Presiding Member of TSBEP.

Texas Health and Human Services
The telehealth expansions for audio-only Medicaid services have been extended again. TPA continues to work with other stakeholder groups to ensure that providers continue to be reimbursed for these services throughout the remainder of the pandemic.

Legislative Advocacy
TPA’s legislative advocacy will be reported in the next report. More information on TPA’s current advocacy efforts can be found at https://www.texaspsyc.org/page/Advocacy.

If you have any questions about the information contained within this report, please email Jessica Magee at jessica@texaspsyc.org.