President’s Message
By Jeffrey Marcus, MD

Hello Everyone,

Now that we are officially in autumn mode, I hope all of you can take a little time to dry out (from the rain) and enjoy the cooler weather. It’s beautiful out there, even during the crisp mornings.

We had another successful, well-attended Fall Conference in Milwaukee. Dr. John Schneider put together an excellent program on the important topic of violence. Aside from the clinical relevance of this topic, it’s hard to ignore the various social and political forces which swirl underneath the clinical/scientific material. This was most evident during the Saturday morning panel discussions.

Based upon last year’s success of the medical school mentoring program, we’re planning to launch another recruitment effort for willing medical students and WPA mentors. We have active psychiatry student interest groups at both UW and MCW, where a number of 1st year medical students have expressed an interest in our profession. For those who haven’t participated in the mentoring program, this is an excellent opportunity to introduce medical students to our profession, well-before their 3rd-year clerkships. You’ll be receiving further communication on this program in the near future.

A quick word about the state of the WPA: Based upon key quality measures, our organization is doing very well. Membership is stable (actually, slightly increased year-over-year) and our fiscal health remains sound. Our leadership team is bright, energetic, and highly committed to advancing our profession. We are delighted to continue working with Badger Bay, our outstanding management company. A heartfelt Thank You to Sally Winkelman and Eric Ostermann for all that they do to support our organization.

As always, the WPA welcomes member input on how we can best serve the Wisconsin psychiatric community. Please feel free to contact our office with your comments and suggestions.

All the best,

Jeff

Legislative Update
By Eric Jensen

For the most part, news from the State Legislature is about elections, elections, elections… Beneath the swirling circus of the Presidential election, all 99 State Assembly Representatives and 16 of 33 State Senators face re-election in November. Republicans control strong majorities in both the Assembly (63-36) and Senate (19-14). Most Wisconsin political watchers agree that while Democrats are likely to pick up a handful of seats in the Assembly and possibly gain in the Senate, both majorities will be difficult to overcome.

Meanwhile, last month, the Assembly Republican caucus released a lengthy document outlining their ideas for the 2017-18 session, entitled “Forward Agenda.” It covers many issue areas, all in large sweeping statements with little detail, but relative to mental health it contained the following statements:

The Department of Health Services says thousands of Wisconsinites are impacted by mental illness every year. A lack of access to needed community supports can result in those struggling with mental health concerns being placed in more costly out-of-home care, institutional settings, or even the correctional system. Assembly Republicans understand these environments can sometimes be more harmful to those struggling and will focus on measures to help increase access to early intervention.

We will look to improve access to important mental health resources by increasing the number of psychiatrists in our state, streamlining and cutting red tape to enable faster and more efficient treatment, and further reviewing any mental health barriers in our schools.

Assembly Republicans understand the importance psychologists can play in treating a mental illness. A next step in providing more access to these professionals would be for our state to consider a Psychology Interjurisdictional Compact (Psypact). This would allow for greater access to psychological services through electronic means, referred to as telepsychology.

Also, this week Rep. Ed Brooks (R-Reedsburg), who is locked in a difficult reelection battle, announced that he and two dozen other Assembly Republican representatives would look to introduce legislation next year to improve rural healthcare access. According to the Eau Claire Leader Telegram:

State Rep. Ed Brooks, R-Reedsburg wants to draft legislation aimed at bolstering an aging health care workforce by training more workers in specialties such as OB-GYN and mental health, Wisconsin Public Radio reported.

“We can leverage the doctors that we have by having other advance practitioners there,” Brooks said, regarding a predicted doctor shortage in Wisconsin.
Mentor Program Influences Student’s Commitment to Psychiatry

Shannon Friedbacher, a third year medical student at the Medical College of Wisconsin, knows that psychiatry is the field of medicine she will pursue after graduation. Part of her decision rests with the mentoring she has received from James Rutherford, MD, a community psychiatrist working with the Waukesha County Mental Health Department. The two were paired about a year ago through the Wisconsin Psychiatric Association’s Psych Mentor Program.

“Without a doubt, Doctor Rutherford has played a role in my decision to pursue a career in psychiatry, and to apply for psychiatric residency training,” says Friedbacher. “With the experience I’ve gained working alongside him, I know I too can really make a difference by serving patients in Wisconsin in need of mental healthcare.”

Shannon has been a resident of the greater Milwaukee community her entire life. Not only is she now more certain than ever about her decision to become a psychiatrist, but she is deeply committed to serving the psychiatric needs right here at home. The WPA mentor program has reinforced her desire to continue to train in Wisconsin and then to practice as a psychiatrist and serve the people of Wisconsin for the long haul.

The mentor program was designed to provide medical students with an opportunity to experience the specialty of psychiatry that they may not otherwise have an opportunity to experience in medical school.

Shannon admits that while she has been fortunate to have great faculty preceptors and instructors, being paired with community psychiatrists not affiliated with medical school offers her a different perspective and a new dynamic. “With faculty, there is always a need to be on guard,” she says. “But that’s not the case in the mentor program.”

Doctor Rutherford concurs. “The nebulous nature of what the life of a psychiatrist might be like is diminished through this program. Students learn not only about patient care outside of the academic setting, but also have an opportunity to really get to know their mentors,” he said.

Shannon didn’t always know she wanted to go into psychiatry. However, she realized early on that she wanted to attend medical school, despite taking the nontraditional path of starting out in manufacturing sales career. Now in medical school, she is being introduced to many different medical specialties through her rotations, but the exposure to any one specialty is limited.

Programs like the WPA Mentor Program offer students with a much deeper understanding of a specialty, in this case psychiatry.

Working in the community setting highlights the prevalence of mental health issues in society. Primary care providers including family physicians and pediatricians are increasingly faced with managing not just the physical, but the mental health of their patients. Doctor Rutherford stresses that responsible integration of care with psychiatrists is important.

In his role with Waukesha County, Doctor Rutherford has seen steps being taken to enhance integrated care for the benefit of patients. One example is the County’s implementation of a new crisis intervention program to meet an increased need for services. He praised Waukesha County Executive Paul Farrow for being a friend of mental health. “He understands the concerns, the issues and the needs of patients suffering from mental illness,” says Rutherford.

In her time shadowing Dr. Rutherford, Shannon has witnessed the commitment of local government to mental health, and by seeing that support system within the community is another clear sign that psychiatry is the right career for her. “Psychiatry excites me,” she says. “It is a specialty that provides me the high probability of an interesting and stimulating career, not to mention career longevity.”

Shannon states that she has thoroughly enjoyed her time working alongside Doctor Rutherford, and is grateful for the exposure to the field of psychiatry that the mentor program has offered. “I look forward to a day when I can pay it forward and serve as a WPA mentor myself.”

Save the Date: WPA 2017 Annual Conference

Obessed! Helping Patients Navigate an Anxious World

Join the Wisconsin Psychiatric Association for its 2017 Annual Conference, March 30-April 1, 2017 at The American Club in Kohler.

As psychiatrists, we know that obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) affects countless individuals of all ages, races and genders in our community. The 2017 Annual Conference will provide an in-depth look at the disorder, and will cover a variety of topics including: Epidemiology & Diagnosis of OCD; Evidence Based Treatment for Children and Adolescents; The Physiology of OCD; OCD Medication Updates. Sessions will also cover a range of OCD-related conditions including skin picking and hoarding.

The final half-day of the conference will provide educational updates on anxiety disorders, including: Anxiety and Sleep; Anxiety and the Medically Ill; and Controversies in Anxiety Treatment.

WPA will again host the popular Resident Clinical Vignette Competition during the conference, when two selected residents from each of Wisconsin’s Residency Programs will present their unique cases. Attendees will have an opportunity not only to support the residents in this event, but to participate in the case discussions through moderated Q&A sessions.

Make plans now and join us in the spring in Kohler! Online registration is now open at www.TheWPA.org/events. Overnight guest rooms may be booked in advance by calling The American Club at 1-855-209-5679. Please be sure to request the Wisconsin Psychiatric Association room block (reservation #82H21I). The cut-off date to receive the WPA group rate of $169 is March 7, 2017.
WPA and APA Team Up for Milwaukee Chapter Event

The WPA Milwaukee Chapter hosted a meet & greet at Miller Park on October 11th. Nearly 30 members attended the event, as did several staffers from the American Psychiatric Association, including Ariel Gonzalez, Chief of Government Affairs. Ariel serves as the senior legislative professional in developing, lobbying and representing the APA's positions and objectives. He directs the legislative issues of importance to members and spent time at the event talking one-on-one with WPA members about the political landscape of psychiatry.

Also present were Amanda Chesley and Stephanie Auditore. Amanda serves as the Midwest Regional Field Director in the APA's State Government Affairs Office. She regularly participates in WPA Executive Council meetings and works in collaboration with WPA's lobbyist to keep members apprised of legislative issues affecting the practice of psychiatry in other Midwest states. Stephanie is the APA's Director of Membership and worked closely with Milwaukee County Behavioral Health as they were considering Group Membership in the organization. The Group Membership program is available to any health system, government entity, group practice, or other group to engage more psychiatrists in the organization, thus enhancing the collective voice of physicians, psychiatrists in particular, on legislative issues, and provides additional value and access to APA expertise and leadership.

All three APA representatives participated in Grand Rounds the following morning at the Medical College of Wisconsin. Access to APA leaders is a benefit of attaining the esteemed Platinum Level of the APA's 100% Club, whereby 100% of all residents in any given program maintain membership in the APA and WPA for five or more consecutive years. WPA joins APA in offering our congratulations and sincere appreciation to the MCW Psychiatric Residency Program for this achievement.

Payment Reform Update

The Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2015 (MACRA) changes the way psychiatrists and other physicians working with Medicare patients will be paid. Some reporting requirements begin as early as January 1, 2017.

What Is The Goal?
To reimburse care based on quality and value rather than the number of services you provide.

What If I Don’t Comply?
Refusing to comply could result in automatic penalties and missing out on possible incentives.

How Can I Get Ready To Comply?
You’ll need to select a payment path. Rather than continuing a fee-for-service model of reimbursement, MACRA introduces two new payment paths - MIPS and APMs:

MIPS - Merit-Based Incentive Payment System
- MIPS combines portions of three preexisting quality programs: meaningful use (MU), the Physician Quality Reporting System (PQRS) and the Value-Based Payment Modifier (VBM). MIPS also adds a new category of Clinical Practice Improvement Activities.
- Providers receive payment adjustments based on measures of quality, resource use, advancing care information (EHR use) and clinical practice improvement.

APMs - Alternative Payment Models*
- APMs include Accountable Care Organizations, Bundled Payments and Medical Homes. Participating in an advanced APM can exempt you from MIPS, and can lead to more favorable financial incentives, including a potential 5% lump sum bonus payment.
- *There is currently no APM specifically for behavioral health.
- Providers receive payment adjustments based on measures of quality, resource use, advancing care information (EHR use) and clinical practice improvement.
- Choosing an APM requires you to meet quality, financial risk and payer/revenue mix measurements.

How Will This Change My Practice?
An increased focus on quality will require you to track and manage patient information in a new way and coordinate care with other providers. See the reverse for how APA can help you prepare.

APA Help Is on the Way
APA is developing a web-based toolkit, webinar series and other resources to help psychiatrists understand the new MACRA Quality Payment Programs (MIPS & APMs), being finalized under the 2017 Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) Final Rule.

To break down these new policies, APA will post new and updated materials on our Payment Reform Resource Site - psychiatry.org/MACRA. PsychNews and other APA communications will alert you as new items become available.

Call for Mentors

Interested in serving as a mentor to a medical student? Sign up today! Visit www.TheWPA.org/mentorprogram and look for the Mentor sign up link. WPA will pair interested students with practicing psychiatrists. Questions? Contact WPA@badgerbayco.
USDA Roundtable Highlights Opioid Epidemic in Rural Wisconsin

WPA member Michael Miller, MD, Medical Director of the Herrington Recovery Center at Rogers Memorial Hospital, recently joined US Senator Tammy Baldwin at a US Department of Agriculture roundtable discussion on the opioid epidemic in rural Wisconsin.

The event, sponsored by the White House Rural Council, was held on October 14 in Arlington, Wisconsin. Dr. Miller was the only physician participant in the roundtable, which included representatives from the Columbia County Department of Health and Human Services, the County Board of Supervisors, representatives from the law enforcement community, and lead staff members from the legislative and executive branches from Wisconsin state government.

Patty Edelburg, Executive Director for the USDA Farm Service Agency in Wisconsin, kicked off the event. Other participants included Jeff Eschmeyer, a senior policy analyst at the USDA who discussed the White House Rural Council’s role in advancing awareness of what is being done at the local and regional level to deal with the opioid and heroin crisis.

Participants had an opportunity to discuss approaches, programs and resources that are working well and that should be replicated across the country.

Local officials highlighted a new Medication Assisted Treatment Coordinator position for Columbia County, which is housed in the County Department of Health and Human Services and is funded through a grant initiated by the sheriff’s department. Local examples of collaboration amongst medical services, public health, human services and the criminal justice system show great promise. Sauk County has received a federal grant that funds long-acting injectable naltrexone therapy (an opioid receptor blocker) for individuals just before they leave a span of incarceration in a local jail or prison so that overdose risk after return to the community is minimized.

Senator Tammy Baldwin highlighted the impact of the opioid epidemic in Wisconsin, and discussed Congressional efforts that have been taken in dealing with the opioid and heroin crisis. She was a cosponsor of the recently passed CARA bill (Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act of 2016), which was supported by the APA. Unfortunately, appropriations were not included in the final version of this policy legislation brought to the floor for vote. Sen. Baldwin stressed the importance that much more needs to be done to curb the crisis.

Call for Nominations for 2017 Executive Council

The WPA Nominating Committee is now accepting nominations of any member in good standing interested in serving a two-year term on the 2017-2019 WPA Executive Council. Terms of office begin at the close of business of the 2017 Annual Meeting of the APA, May 24, 2017, and shall continue through successors have been elected or appointed.

Open seats include President-Elect, Secretary, Treasurer, six (6) Councilor-at-Large positions, and two (2) Assembly Representatives. Please submit your nominations no later than January 10, 2017 by visiting www.TheWPA.org/nominations or emailing WPA@badgerbay.co