

PSYCHIATRIST

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Newsletter of the Southern California Psychiatric Society

President's Column

In Appreciation

Kathleen Moreno, M.D.



Since this is my last column, I would really like to give a big THANK YOU to all of our members who have made this year so successful and productive. It has been my privilege and pleasure to serve you as President of the Southern California Psychiatric Society during this past year. My term ends at the end of the annual meeting of the American Psychiatric Association this month, and Mary Ann Schaepper, MD will be your next President. We have gotten a lot accomplished this year and have engaged many new members, as well as, many long time inactive members.

I would like to thank all of our wonderful Councilors who appear on the letterhead but deserve repeating: Mary Ann Schaepper, MD; Marcy Forgey, MD; Larry Lawrence, MD; Amir Ettekal, MD; Magdi Mikhael, MD; Steve Solding, MD; Saba Syed, MD; Hanu Damerla, MD; Allen Mojos, MD; William Vollero, MD; Margarita Krasnova, MD; Joseph Simpson, MD; Robert Carvalho, MD; Laurie Casaus, MD; David Fogelson, MD; Michael Gales, MD; Eric Levander, MD; Samuel Miles, MD; Heather Silverman, MD; Arastou Aminzadeh, MD; Sophie Duriez, MD; David Ruecker, MD; Elizabeth Munzig, DO; Bruce Spring, MD; Robert Martin, MD; Robert Burchuk, MD; Ronald Thurston, MD; Lawrence Gross, MD and Roderick Shaner, MD.

In addition to our wonderful psychiatry colleagues, I would like to extend our sincere appreciation to the three people who are instrumental in running our organization: Executive Director, Mindi Thelen; Attorney, Daniel Willick and the Executive Director's Assistant and husband, Tim Thelen. They deserve a standing ovation!!

I would like to thank all of our dedicated Committee Chairs both those whom we call on as needed for their expertise and those who play an active and regular role in arranging professional events for our members. I would like to thank all of the members who participate on the various committees. There are a lot of psychiatrists that participate in this process, which makes our organization flourish. It also makes it so that participating is not that time consuming.

I tend to look at life as the glass half full instead of the glass half empty perhaps that is why my motto in psychiatry is, "Everybody gets better, it's often a matter of degree". As my mother would say, "I have to get out my grateful list" when things don't seem to be going her

(Continued on page 2)

way. I, too, look at my grateful list and it is quite long. I'm hoping your grateful list is a long one as well. I'm also careful to heed that, "the grass is always greener on the other side of the fence", when making decisions. Lately, I've been thinking a lot about when two people meet in time and need to be in the exact same place at the exact

In This Issue...	
Letter from the Editor	3
Installation and Awards Photo Album	5
Council Highlights	9
USC Retreat	12
APA News Release: Parity	15

same moment. For example, we have all had the experience of waiting for traffic to clear in order to make a left hand turn only to have to wait when the traffic has cleared for the pedestrian who has just started crossing the street or when we are in the market and need to buy an item only to have someone who is mulling over which one of the exact same item to buy but are “in our way” so we are unable to retrieve the item. Last month, I read an article while on vacation in Hawaii about two half-brothers who had never met but ran into each other on the beach in Oahu. One had moved there and was working as a hotel activities coordinator and while he was going to make a reservation for parasailing he ran into a family on the beach who was taking pictures of themselves. He asked them if they would like for him to take a picture of their family together and they accepted his offer. They got to talking and found out that they were from the same town and then came to find out that they had the same father. What are the chances?? It really is a small world.

By being involved in organized psychiatry we don't have to wait until that moment in time to meet one another, we have every opportunity to make that happen. My soon-to-be new role will be immediate past president, and as such; I will continue to participate actively in SCPS and hope to continue to meet fellow psychiatrists.

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Letter from the Editor

Ventura Walks the Walk

Colleen Copelan, M.D.



More than 800 people showed up for NAMI-Walk Ventura County at the Ventura Beach Promenade April 30th.

That may not seem like a big crowd for those of you who do NAMIWalk Los Ange-

les County which, by the way, will happen this year on October 1, on the Third Street Promenade in Santa Monica.

One out of every 1,000 Ventura County residents showed up for our NAMIWalk, including many support teams and one county supervisor.

The 2010 Census puts the Ventura County population at 823, 318 and

Los Angeles County at 9,818,605. That means---percentage-wise--- Los Angeles County would have to put nearly 10,000 people on the Promenade to match us!

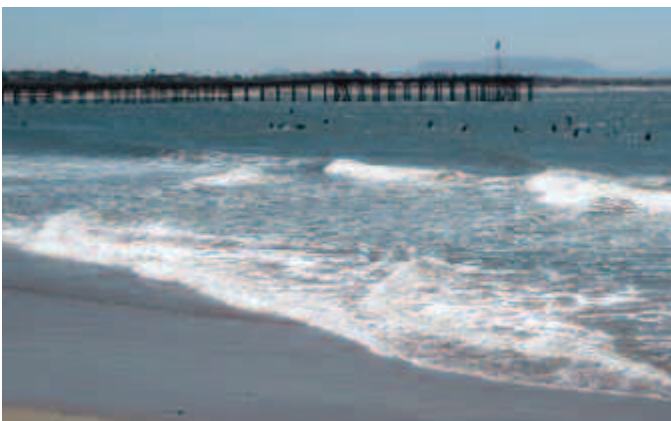
Step up to the challenge. Join Team SCPS for NAMIWalk Los Angeles County. Great T-shirt. Great cause. Great fun. cocopelan@aol.com



Gathering for the Walk.



Ventura County Supervisor, Linda Parks.



Ventura Pier with surfers.



Unofficial walk.



Official walk.

SCPS has a Walk Team for the Los Angeles NAMIWalk 2011, which will be held at the Third Street Promenade on October 1, 2011. You can join the team as a walker or make a donation to the team. We will also have cool team T-shirts!! (\$15.75)

To see the team page:

www.nami.org/namiwalks11/LOS/scps

At the team page you can join as a walker. To make a donation, you have to do it through a walker's page. So far, I am the only walker listed on the team page. My page is:

www.nami.org/namiwalks11/LOS/mindi

It would be great if we could have a robust team to support NAMI.

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2011 Installation and Awards Ceremony



Robert Burchuk, M.D., MCs the event and received a Distinguished Service Award.



M. Christina Benson, M.D. receives a Distinguished Service Award.



Irvin Godofsky, M.D. receives a Distinguished Service Award.



Michael Gitlin, M.D. receives the Outstanding Achievement Award.



Charles Grob, M.D. gave an interesting talk on his research using psilocybin to treat anxiety in end-stage cancer patients. He also showed a video.



Stanley Harris, M.D. received an Appreciation Award for his years of service as Chair of the Gay, Bi, Lesbian, Transgender Committee.



Ira Lesser, M.D. presented several awards.



Charles Grob, M.D. and Ira Lesser, M.D.



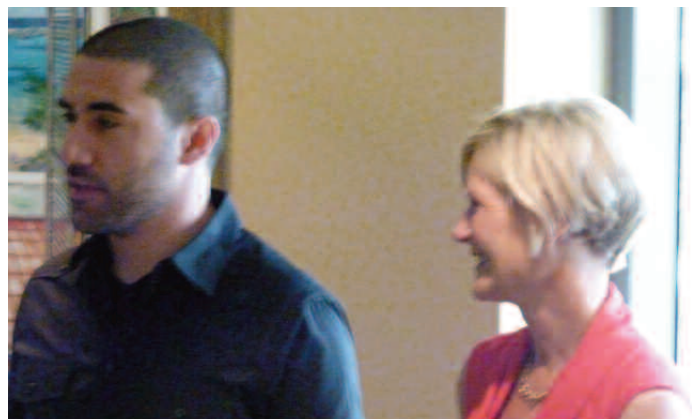
The attendees in rapt attention while Dr Grob shows a video of his research.



Kita Curry, Ph.D. received the Special Award for her years of dedication to the mental health field as CEO of Didi Hirsch.



Katrina DeBonis, M.D. receives PER's Outstanding Resident's Award.



Ara Anspikian receives SCPS' Outstanding Resident's Award.



Mary Ann Schaepper, M.D. presents the Media Award to Maranatha Hay for her documentary on "Bosotholand."



Rod Shaner, M.D. received a President's Commendation Award.



Dave Ruecker, M.D. received a President's Commendation Award.



Mindi Thelen received a President's Commendation Award.



And, last, but definitely not least: Dr Schaepper presents the President's Certificate to Kathleen Moreno, M.D., for her tireless service to SCPS.

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Council Highlights

April 14, 2011

Marcy Forgey, M.D., *Secretary*



The April Executive Council Meeting at Billingsley's was called to order by Dr. Kathleen Moreno at 7:05pm. Dr. Yara Salmon, the Teller, presented the recent election results to the Council.

Congratulations to the following members who were recently elected to the offices below for next term!

President-Elect: Larry Lawrence, MD

Treasurer-Elect: Marcy Forgey, MD

Secretary: Anita Red, MD

Early Career Psychiatrist Representative: Erik Cheung, MD

Member-in-training Representatives: Lauren Agarwal, MD and Elizabeth Munzig, DO

Dr. Salmon, who is also the Chair of the Women's Committee, expressed her appreciation to the Council for the funding granted for the Women's Committee High Teas. She noted that both high teas were very, very successful with women psychiatrists expressing their satisfaction and happiness with the opportunity to make personal and professional connections. Dr. Moreno thanked Dr. Salmon for being such an enthusiastic and productive Committee Chair.

Dr. Moreno reported that she did receive a call back from California DMH regarding the letter that was sent along with NAMI in October, regarding funding for prevention of serious mental illnesses. California DMH sent their apologies for the delayed response, but noted that DMH would like to be sure that we know that they are listening to our concerns and would be happy to hear about any other concerns going forward.

Dr. Moreno announced that the Awards and Installation Ceremony agenda was complete and asked for members to forward any ideas for agenda items for the SCPS/NAMI Joint meeting on June 2. She also announced that SCPS has the opportunity to apply for another APA recruitment grant. The \$15,000 grant application is due on July 1. Dr. Moreno would like to ask Dr. Liz Galton, who had worked on the previous application, to work on it again and Dr. Roderick Shaner generously offered to assist in this project as well.

Dr. David Ruecker presented the Website Committee's proposal for a recruitment video for our website. The video would feature several Council members and Committee Chairs, as well as clips from our meetings, and graphics from the APA/CPA/SCPS websites. The Council voted to allot \$600 toward this project, which would be developed by Ms. Mindi and Mr. Tim Thelen during the summer.

Dr. Moreno enthusiastically announced that Dr. Mary Ann Schaepper had been chosen for the APA Disaster Psychiatry Fellowship, which would take place during the APA meeting in Hawaii. Congratulations, Dr. Schaepper!

The Council voted to enact a policy regarding the hiring of temporary administrative assistants. Expenses over \$600 must be approved by the Council and expenses between \$200-600 must be approved by the President and the Treasurer. Expenses under \$200 will be at the discretion of Ms. Thelen.

Dr. Schaepper reported on the CPA Spring Council meeting in Santa Clara. She explained that since CPA dues income has decreased (as is true across the country), CPA has made budget cuts such as having its June meeting via teleconference. The CPA Council approved an extension of the contract for legislative advocate Jim Gross until the end of December. Dr. Bruce Hirschfield attended on behalf of the APA Board of Trustees. Dr. Mindi Young, CPA Legislative Representative, is running for Recorder. Dr. Schaepper noted that there is an

action paper that has been submitted which would require APA to return money to struggling district branches. She announced that a federal court ruled against imposing the Red Flag rule on attorneys, a ruling that would by extension, apply to physicians. Regulators had interpreted law to say that professionals who do not collect fees at time of service are really creditors and must therefore adhere to the same onerous rules as all other lenders. She also noted that CPA has an Early Career Psychiatrist contact list and listserv going. PsycSign also continues to be active.

Dr. Larry Lawrence presented the Treasurer's and Membership Committee Reports. The Council voted to approve the Treasurer's report and our 2010 tax return. Current membership level was 1009. The Council voted to approve the following new members:

MIT Members:

John Jimenez, MD (SGV/ELA)
Kohl Mayberry, DO (IN)

General Members:

Joseph Lee, MD (SoBay)
Jennifer Ferrer, MD (IN)
Mehera Halliwell, MD (SFV)

Dr. Michael Gales presented a Program Committee proposal on how to address the provision of CME by SCPS to outside organizations. Differential billing according to level of affiliation was presented. The Council voted to move forward with plans to offer the provision of CME to the next outside organization that presents itself and to charge any organization outside SCPS. Of course, all programs will be planned by the SCPS Program Committee and all requirements for accreditation will be followed. Decisions on the future of such a procedure will be determined based on the outcome of this trial run. Dr. Gales also announced that the Psychopharm meeting was significantly more lucrative than last year's meeting.

A meeting on Psychiatry, Professionalism, and the Internet is being planned for the fall! Topics will include electronic media, social networking, confidentiality, and boundaries. Further details to follow at a later date, so watch for more information!

In the Public Psychiatry Report, Dr. Shaner reported that it is a time dominated with integration of health and mental health, which impacts the SCPS community. Many fee-for-service psychiatrists have expressed concern about the changes in Medi-Cal in which many patients will be defaulted into managed care organizations in June and may receive their mental health care there. The Medi-Cal mental health carveout remains so psychiatrists may still be able to keep these patients, but all psychiatrists should be aware that the managed care organizations will be interested in keeping mental health in primary care to reduce overall costs, despite the mental health carveout.

With regards to LPS changes, Dr. Shaner reported that the The Round Table meeting at Dr. Helen Wolf's home went well, with many different groups attending. One issue raised was that LPS authorization from county to county is vastly different. He suggested that perhaps SCPS should take some role in the regularization of practice so that the patients are not differentiated by county in terms of care received. Dr. Thurston noted that there is another complication in services across counties, which is that of authorization of meds for a child in foster care from another county.

In the Legislative Report, Dr. Ronald Thurston provided additional information on the CPA Council Meeting, over which he presided. Dr. Thurston reported that the dues situation is not as dire as they thought at the beginning of the meeting, since debit/credit card payments are providing small amounts of income throughout the year instead of in one lump sum. He commented that the decision to do a teleconference for the June Council meeting was to protect against the shortfall, of which the total was not certain. He also explained that The Government Affairs Committee has eliminated one meeting per year and that CPA has raised its dues by \$35 to address budgetary issues.

In terms of scope of practice, Dr. Thurston noted that the most serious psychology prescribing bills are in Hawaii and Oregon. Dr. Mindi Young has been networking with other states on this issue. A group called "Psychologists Opposed to Prescribing Privileges" put out a paper arguing against increasing their scope of practice. He explained that there will be a reception between Assembly Members and Hawaiian legislators in Hawaii, which will be an opportunity to discuss such concerns.

Dr. Thurston also provided details on the CMA Legislative Day, April 4. Five hundred doctors attended, including SCPS members Drs. Heather Silverman and Maria Lymberis. Governor Brown and Lieutenant Governor Newsom (who had been endorsed by CMA) spoke to the group. The CMA priority is MICRA (the Medical Injury Compensation Reform Act), which would keep down malpractice costs. Another priority bill is one which would ban corporations from hiring MDs.

Dr. Thurston also explained that there is proposed legislation which would make Keyhea decisions a more rational process. Keyhea is the means by which inmates may receive medication involuntarily. Currently, this is not a coherent process with tremendous administrator burden and delays in the administration of treatment due to delays in hearings.

In other new business, Ms. Thelen is planning to put a brief history of the founding and development of SCPS on the website. Watch for it in the future!

Dr. Larry Gross reported on the PER fundraising event. He was thrilled to report that \$10,000 was raised! He expressed appreciation to the Council for their support on behalf of Dr. Lymberis.

Drs. Thurston and Colleen Copelan were recognized as the first purchasers of our SCPS NAMI Walk T-shirt, which are available for \$15.75 each.

Dr. Moreno thanked the Council for its time and adjourned the meeting at 9:26pm.

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Dear Dr Moreno,

I wanted to extend my heartfelt thanks from the LAC+USC Psychiatry residency program and the residents of this program for SCPS' generous contribution to our recent retreat.

The retreat was an all-day retreat held at the Los Angeles Arboretum. The Arboretum was especially beautiful that day: the recent rain had made the grass green, the flowers bloom, and the air clear--revealing the San Gabriel Mountains. Peacocks roamed the grounds.

The activities of the day included play (a scavenger hunt), team-building exercises (residents breaking into small groups to discuss which events in their lives led to choosing psychiatry as a field), and work (a presentation by an outside ER physician who lost his license, now in recovery for marijuana and sexual addiction). I think all participants (residents and faculty) finished the day feeling inspired by our colleagues and with renewed dedication for the importance of the work we do as psychiatrists.

As will all public organizations, our medical center and residency program have experienced substantial financial cut-backs this year. Your organization made it possible for us to provide on-site food for residents' breakfast and lunch, which made the residents feel cared for, and reduced their distraction from the day's activities. At the retreat, Dr Munzig spoke of the importance of the SCPS in the professional lives of psychiatry residents and psychiatrist in Los Angeles, and this message was well-received. We will continue to speak about the importance of SCPS and all organized psychiatry at retreats and in our daily work with them.

Thank you to all at SCPS for your generosity.

Sincerely,

Erica Shoemaker, M.D.

Assistant Professor of Clinical Psychiatry

(Photos from retreat on next page)



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Study of New York Parity Law Provides Lessons for Implementation of Federal Law Consumers Indicate Need for Improved Communication from Health Plans

ARLINGTON, Va. (March 30, 2011) – A study of consumer experiences after implementation of the New York State mental health parity law in 2007 found many consumers uninformed about the change in mental health care benefits. Barriers to access to mental health benefits and high-quality services identified in a qualitative study of consumers' experience in New York may provide lessons for implementation of the federal mental health parity legislation, passed in 2008.

The study, reported in a column in the April issue of *Psychiatric Services*, a journal of the American Psychiatric Association, found that few employees had accurate knowledge of the state's parity law provisions. Most had been informed of their insurance coverage benefits before the state parity law in 2007 but were not aware of the extended coverage as a result of the law.

Researchers at the National Alliance on Mental Illness of New York City (NAMI-NYC Metro) conducted telephone interviews with 54 employed individuals with private insurance coverage by phone, including 32 adults with mental illness and 22 parents of children with mental illness. Researchers identified recurrent themes among the responses, including:

- ~ Unclear or incomplete information in health plans' written and verbal communication;
- ~ Difficulty getting information on mental health benefits compared to general medical/surgical benefits;
- ~ Difficulty finding a high-quality mental health care provider in health plan network;
- ~ More aggressive management of mental health care benefits than medical-surgical benefits; and
- ~ Problems with health plan provider lists, e.g., including providers no longer accepting the insurance and long waits for appointments.

"After a decade-long fight to end the discriminatory design and administration of mental health benefits, our study underscores the need for comprehensive education programs and effective oversight to ensure access to quality mental health treatment," said Wendy Brennan, executive director of NAMI-NYC Metro.

Forty-nine states have passed mental health care parity legislation. The state laws vary in the size of companies covered, the range of diagnosis covered, and the mandated level of mental health coverage. The New York law, effective in 2007, requires all companies that issue health insurance to provide a minimum mental health benefit to all members and requires that cost-sharing requirements for mental health benefits be the same as general medical-surgical coverage.

Findings "indicate an urgent need for benefits education and monitoring of health plan communications on a federal level," according to the study authors. The authors also pointed to the broader issue of the shortage of mental health providers, especially for children, as an area of concern nationally.

The study was led by Vera Oziransky, M.P.H., former director of research and advocacy at NAMI-NYC Metro.

The American Psychiatric Association is a national medical specialty society whose physician members specialize in the diagnosis, treatment, prevention, and research of mental illnesses including substance use disorders. Visit the APA at www.psych.org and www.HealthyMinds.org.

The National Alliance on Mental Illness of New York City Metro is a grassroots organization that provides support, education and advocacy for families and individuals of all ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds who live with mental illness. For more information, visit www.naminycmetro.org.

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