



SCPS Newsletter - SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA PSYCHIATRIST
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<https://www.socalpsych.org/southern-california-psychiatrist-january-2025/>



SCPS Council is here to support our members and their patients affected by the current fires. As a reminder, the SCPS website links to several APA resources regarding disasters. Additionally, SCPS is here to help. Please reach out to us with any needs you might have, or further suggestions on how we might assist you and your patients.

<https://www.socalpsych.org/disaster-mental-health-relief-committee/>



President's Column: A New Year, A Renewed Commitment Amidst Adversity

by Galya Rees, MD

Dear SCPS members,

As we enter 2025, I had planned to reflect on our achievements and aspirations for the year ahead. However, the devastating fires sweeping through Southern California have reshaped the start of this year for so many of us. My heart goes out to all of you who have been affected by this crisis.

I know that some of our members have lost their homes or have family members who have suffered similar losses. Others are facing the uncertainty of evacuations, while many are generously opening their homes to friends, colleagues, and loved ones in need. The recovery process will take time, and the emotional toll of these experiences will linger—for us and for our patients.

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Mental Health Diversion in California

by Reba K. Bindra, MD and Emily T. Wood, MD

2 Reasons this topic is important for all psychiatrists (not just forensic specialists):



1. Your patients are interacting with the legal system.

1 in 5 of those adults with moderate to severe mental illness and/or substance use disorders are arrested annually – compared to 1 in 100 adults without. The odds are that *your patients* are interacting with the legal system.

Understanding the nature of these interactions within the legal framework can help you better assess your patients' needs, develop a strong therapeutic alliance, and work collaboratively on their treatment plans.

2. You are on the front lines of the social justice issue of our time.

Arguably, the disproportionate mass incarceration and disenfranchisement of Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) and individuals with mental illness for non-violent crimes is the number one social justice issue facing Americans (climate change being the arguable contender). Over the last 60 years, the US, including California, has divested in care for the seriously mentally ill, and entities charged with protecting some of the most vulnerable adults in our society have abdicated their authority to provide care and treatment. At the same time, we have heavily invested in law enforcement and, in many ways, US jails have become the de facto safety net for the seriously mentally ill. Across US jails, the rate of detainees with current serious mental illness continues to increase and has been estimated at 14.5% of males and 31% of females with the vast majority being detained on non-violent/misdemeanor charges. Furthermore, just as BIPOC are disproportionately incarcerated at higher rates in the US, individuals with serious mental illness in jails are disproportionately BIPOC.

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Class Action Lawsuit Against the Maker of Prominent Cannabis Vape Products

by Timothy Pylko, MD

As a psychiatrist who has been treating patients on an outpatient, inpatient and residential level of care for the past 38 years I have become alarmed by the increasing presentation of acute psychotic episodes associated with cannabis use. Whether these emergencies are from cannabis induced psychosis or an exacerbation of an underlying psychotic spectrum disorder or psychosis vulnerability, it is clear to me that we are in a public health crisis that is particularly affecting adolescents and young adults in California since the legalization of recreational cannabis use in 2016 by the “Control, Regulate and Tax Adult Use of Marijuana Act”. Certainly in my view decriminalizing cannabis use has been far more beneficial to society but as highlighted in the title of the Act it implied a certain level of regulation and control. It also mandated that like alcohol, the legal age of cannabis use in California was 21. In reality the State has not provided adequate oversight of cannabis use especially with the proliferation of cannabis products driven by private enterprise. Vaping cannabis has escalated especially amongst adolescents and young adults. THC concentrates that not only contain delta 9 THC but may also have delta 8 and delta 10 THC average concentrations in some preparations around 54-69% and can be as high as 95%. It should be noted average THC concentrations in marijuana from 20-30 years ago was 2-3%. What we are seeing now is a very different drug experience.

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Welcome New SCPS Members!

Cathy Banh, MD – Resident-Fellow Member

and

Jimmy Bazy, MD – Resident-Fellow Member

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November Council Highlights by Gillian Friedman, MD

Council Highlights
November 14, 2024
Zoom Meeting 7-9 pm

1. CALL TO ORDER – 7:04 P.M. Dr. Rees

Assembly Report – Dr. Red

1. Highlighted leadership and productive actions of recent Assembly meeting. Extensive notes from Assembly in Dropbox as attachments, including process of Assembly, and progress of action paper to Joint Reference Committee (JRC), which decides what Action Papers are ready to go to the board and what needs more information/more re-writing/send to committee for assistance. Highlights: 1) bidirectional communication between district branch (DB) and APA; 2) Opportunities/process to put forth members to APA leadership (APA committee) roles.
2. 6 Action papers came from Area 6, 4 passed. 3 Action Papers from SCPS. Stimulant paper (authored by Dr. Wood) passed easily. Resident representation paper was debated on floor – ultimately was passed. Dr. Red encourages members to write Action Papers (next deadline March 20) and to come to Assembly Reps. Dr. Red briefly explained process of Action Papers coming to Assembly.
3. Paper to be published regarding Action Papers, why outcome occurred, why some are stalled.
4. Area 6 had 100% of participants give to the PAC.

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SCPS Life Member Contributions

SCPS would like to thank the following dues-exempt members for their generous and gracious contributions made during 2024. These contributions are appreciated and well used.

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George L. Mallory Diversity, Culture and Social Justice Award Guidelines

Please see the following guidelines to apply for the George L. Mallory Diversity, Culture and Social Justice Award.

Award Description: The Diversity and Culture committee is very excited to announce the George L. Mallory Diversity, Culture and Social Justice Award. This award recognizes a Southern California psychiatrist for their exceptional contribution to advocacy, teaching, research and/or leadership aimed at countering structural racism and advancing our understanding of culture and diversity in psychiatry.

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SCPS

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