



SCPS Newsletter - SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA PSYCHIATRIST

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<https://www.socalpsych.org/southern-california-psychiatrist-november-2025/>



President's Column: Uniting for Impact *by Patrick Kelly, MD*

October has been an eventful month in the field of psychiatry!

Earlier this year, I reflected on the breadth of our field—the many subspecialties and numerous local, regional, and national organizations dedicated to supporting psychiatrists and their patients. We achieve more when we work together than when we travel separately. Yet I'm often struck by how many of our organizations pursue similar endeavors without always being aware of one another's efforts.

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Psychiatrists Added Moral Injury to DSM-5-TR: Are We Now Experiencing it Ourselves? *by Gillian Friedman, MD*

Moral Distress and Moral Injury are concepts that have grown in the past few decades from research and clinical treatment of

trauma-related disorders in veterans, to recognition that they may occur in other scenarios. The key component of moral distress is psychological harm that goes beyond witnessing a traumatic event – it arises from witnessing, committing, or being subject to actions that violate one’s moral code. With moral injury this moral distress occurs to the extent of challenging one’s entire understanding of good and evil, or goodness of oneself, others, or important institutions. Notable recent research into conceptualization, assessment, and clinical impact of moral distress and moral injury has been done by the Human Flourishing Program at Harvard University’s T. H. Chan School of Public Health.

With the publication of DSM-5-TR, the unique psychological harm that can come from moral distress and moral injury are recognized by the American Psychiatric Association as a separate focus influencing psychological health.

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Nitrous Oxide Misuse: A Re-Emerging Neuropsychiatric Concern

by Bobbie Alcanzo, MD

Recreational nitrous oxide use has become an increasingly important topic of both clinical and public health concern. Originally popularized in the 19th century within medical and dental settings for its anesthetic and analgesic properties, nitrous oxide has since found broad application beyond healthcare in the food, automotive, and electronics industries. This has made it far more accessible to the public. In recreational contexts, it is commonly misused for its euphoric, anxiolytic, and dissociative effects. The most frequent mode of misuse is through whipped cream chargers, colloquially known as “whippets,” which are legal and inexpensive. This widespread availability in vape shops, grocery and convenience stores, and gas stations has contributed to its growing popularity among younger individuals.



Reflections from Camarillo

by Joseph Vlaskovits, MD

"...They are closing what is generally acknowledged as the premier institution in the world for the developmentally disabled and the mentally ill. And it's going to take some hard lessons before people realize that this retrenchment and lowering of priorities for the mentally ill was a very serious blunder...These people are going to be lined up in our emergency rooms, they're going to wind up in our jails. It means there's going to be much more vagrancy. And it means there's going to be an extraordinary increase in the burden on families. It means we're going back to the 19th century, before we had state hospitals..."

– The late Robert P. Liberman, M.D. quoted on the closure of the Camarillo State Hospital in the L.A. Times on February 17, 1997.

Following its closure, an extraordinary effort by local leaders eventually turned the Cam State campus into California State University Channel Islands (CSUCI).

Those events took place around the time I started medical school, and once I was in practice, I only had a couple of brief opportunities to speak with the renown Dr. Liberman, whose efforts in rehabilitating people with severe and persistent mental illness is legendary.

The closure of Cam State, as he correctly predicted, continues to reverberate today.

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The SCPS Private Practice Committee Presents:

A Virtual Presentation and Important Updates from CMA

ONLINE: Tuesday, December 2nd at 7:30pm

Featuring our presenters:
Jeff Nguyen
Rachel Proud, MPH

Moderated by Matthew Goldenberg, DO



**In Loving Memory of Dr. Simon "Steve"
Maurice Soldinger**

May 7, 1951 - October 11, 2025

Passed away peacefully in Tarzana, California.

Dr. Simon “Steve” Maurice Soldinger lived a life defined by compassion, curiosity, and a deep understanding of the human spirit. A highly respected psychiatrist, Steve dedicated his career to helping others find healing, balance, and hope.

He was deeply involved with the American Psychiatric Association, the Southern California Psychiatric Society, and the American College of Psychiatrists — organizations through which he actively pursued medical collaboration and the exchange of cutting-edge knowledge in psychiatry. His commitment to these associations reflected his lifelong belief in the importance of progress, integrity, and scientific advancement within the field of mental health.

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APA Federal Advocacy Conference

October 6th and 7th, 2025

This year at the APA Federal Advocacy Conference the focus was on supporting bills to increase telehealth, collaborative care models, and funding residency spots to meet the need of the psychiatrist shortage. We visited offices and met with staff of: Reps Ted Lieu, Mark Takano, Lou Correa, and Senators Adam Schiff and Eric Padilla.

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George L. Mallory Diversity, Culture and Social Justice Award

Please see the following guidelines to apply for the George L. Mallory Diversity, Culture and Social Justice Award. Please send materials to socalpsychiatric@gmail.com

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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September Council Highlights

by Roderick Shaner

The September Council meeting took place on September 11, 2025, from 7-9 PM.

I. President's Report

a. New Federal Issues Taskforce: Recognizing the growing number of federal challenges in psychiatry, Dr. Kelly proposed a new task force to tackle them. Council members agreed, and volunteers were invited to join.

b. Special elections and appointments: Laura Halpin was nominated and ratified as a candidate for SCPS President-Elect. Several key appointments were made, including Assembly Rep (Dr. Justin Nguyen), DMURR (Dr. Miles Reyes), D+C Chair (Dr. Austin Nguy), Disaster Committee co-chair (Dr. Amy Woods), South LA Councilor (Dr. Emily Wood), and Women's Committee Chair (Dr. Misty Richards).

c. New AI Committee: A fresh committee was launched to explore AI's impact on psychiatry, chaired by Dr. Tim Pylko. Members with interest or expertise were encouraged to join.

d. Response to the MAHA Report: Concerns were raised about the Make America Health Agenda (MAHA) promoted by Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. Dr. Wood presented a draft letter calling for his removal, citing harmful proposals. After discussion, the Council voted to finalize and publish the letter.

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SCPS

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