

Southern California

PSYCHIATRIST

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SCPS Newsletter - SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA PSYCHIATRIST

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<https://www.socalpsych.org/southern-california-psychiatrist-february-2026/>



President's Column

by Patrick Kelly, MD

February has long been a time to celebrate diversity—most notably through Black History Month. This year, that celebration arrives against a backdrop of events that makes its themes feel less like a commemoration of progress, and more like a call to action of the most urgent necessity. Our guest editor and Minority and Underrepresented Representative (MURR), Dr. Austin Nguy, along with our Deputy MURR, Dr. Miles Reyes, have assembled a collection of voices for the annual Diversity and Culture issue that speaks powerfully to this moment. As I read through these articles, I found myself moved by both the pain and the resilience contained within these pages. They do more than honor history—they illuminate our present with striking clarity.

We are living through a time of profound instability for many in our communities. The rescinding of “Protected Areas” policies has transformed hospitals and clinics from sanctuaries into danger zones. Our undocumented patients—and indeed, many documented immigrants living in mixed-status families—now navigate an impossible calculus: seek the mental health care they desperately need, or protect themselves and their families from forces that seem to grow more aggressive by the day. The fear is not abstract. As Dr. Suren Najaryan writes in his moving reflection on immigration and psychosis, we are witnessing firsthand how this political stress compounds the pre-existing trauma that brings so many of our patients to our doors in the first place.

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Letter from the Guest Editor

by Austin Nguy, MD

I would like to welcome everyone to this year's newsletter for Black History month. This is a month to celebrate the achievements of African Americans and to acknowledge the ongoing fight against inequality and injustice. In reflection, I am inspired by giving space and messaging to emphasize the struggles of the people especially those who are marginalized and targeted.

In this edition we have dedicated several articles on intersections between Black History month and our current immigration crackdown by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). Leading from the heart, my heart goes out to the black and brown separated families, the children, those incarcerated without due process. I say a prayer for those we have lost because they chose not to be bystanders. Renee Nicole Good who was 37 years old, a mother and poet, killed by ICE agent while in her car. Alex Pretti, a 37-year-old ICU nurse who saved those who served us, as Minneapolis VA. Their memories are not in vain.

We are in Minneapolis. Like in all cities around America, this is an attack on our very own communities.

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Administrative Medical Director wanted

You will be the majority shareholder of a Professional Corporation of Psychiatry in Southern California. You will supervise Physician Assistants and practice clinically if you desire.
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(213) 308-0102
ssamalin@gmail.com



Charles R. Drew, MD: A Legacy Not Forgotten

by Jason Barrett, MD and Kathryn Murray, MD

Dr. Charles Richard Drew, a world- renowned innovator, educator, advocator, and surgeon, was born in 1904 and grew up in Washington, DC. Though he grew up during a time where there was significant racial segregation, his educational opportunities and physical abilities afforded him an athletic scholarship to attend Amherst College in Massachusetts where he shined as an athlete, graduating in 1926.

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Quiet Stories In Our History

by Adrienne Carter, MD

As we begin Black History Month, I am reminded of my grandfather. He entered the Oakland Fire Department in the 1950s, at a time when the fire service was openly segregated and overwhelmingly staffed by white men. The few Black firefighters were assigned exclusively to a single station in West Oakland regardless of seniority or experience. If he was ever briefly assigned a shift elsewhere, my grandfather was not allowed to cook alongside his white counterparts. He was required to bring his own dishes, prepare his meals separately, and even bring his own bedsheets for 24-hour shifts. These were not isolated incidents or misunderstandings, but routine and accepted practices. They were unmistakable reminders of the injustice he faced despite his sworn oath to save lives.

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Reflecting on Immigration, Trauma and Psychosis

by Suren Najaryan, MD

“Go back to where you came from!” An eerily ubiquitous phrase during the turn of the century when my family immigrated to the United States. This slogan, and the sentiment of unbelonging that it represents, have unfortunately become centered once again in our current political climate. Despite the complex demographics of immigrants living in the United States and their disparate journeys, anti-immigration rhetoric posits a monolithic portrayal of the quintessential immigrant—missing the nuance, and hardships, of immigration.

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Vital Signs and Visas: The Impact of U.S. Immigrant Policies on Physicians and Patients

by Vanessa Markgraf, MD

“They tried to bury us, but they didn’t know we were seeds.” Originally popularized throughout Mexico during protests in 2014, this Zapatista slogan has since been adopted by activists around the globe. Most recently, this call to action has been used in protests supporting immigration rights, which reached a record high in 2025 according to data collected by Armed Conflict Location & Event Data (ACLED). The impetus for mounting activist activity occurred on January 20, 2025, when the U.S. Department of Homeland Security rescinded policies designating hospitals and clinics as “safe zones” for undocumented patients. With federal agents now equipped with the authority to operate in these spaces, we have seen the largest interface between medical providers and immigrant enforcement in modern history.

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My Hippocratic Oath - A Reminder

by Gilberto Luna Bojalil, MD

I swear by whatsoever I hold most dear

That I will remember that there is art to medicine as well as science

And that warmth, sympathy, and understanding may at times outweigh all else

6 years ago, as a pre-medical student, I used to shadow clinicians at various AltaMed healthcare clinics around Los Angeles serving predominantly Hispanic communities. Whenever the issue of missed appointments would come up, some patients (usually reassured by the interview being conducted in Spanish) would find the courage to share that they felt too scared to come to the clinic because of their immigration status. As a student, the only thing I could do was be a set of ears for these patients. I would listen to and validate their concerns, and I would reassure them that their doctor's office was a safe space, that their information was safe with us, and that medical care in the United States was thankfully set up in a way that protected those seeking healthcare.

Now, as a psychiatry resident, I find that this is no longer the case. I can no longer make such promises. Feeling increasingly helpless and less empowered than ever in my role as a healer, I have found it helpful to reflect on the oath I took when beginning my journey in medicine.

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SCPS Election 2026 - Candidate Statements

Deadlines for Nominations by Petition: February 24, 2026

In this special section, the candidates nominated for your representation discuss their views.

Please read the statements carefully before voting.

Ballots will be mailed on or around March 9th.

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December Council Highlights

by Roderick Shaner

Meeting Date: December 11, 2025

Next Meeting: January 8, 2026, 7:00 PM (Zoom)

President's Report – Dr. Kelly

- **CSAP/SYASL Extension:** Kelly notified Council of the Executive Committee decision to extend through 2026 the SCPS Contract with CSAP/SYASL. Council members expressed satisfaction with CSAP/SYASL performance during 2025 and ratified the decision
- **SCPS Installation and Awards Event on Sunday, May 3, 2026 – NCP** Dr. Kelly announced the scheduling of the annual SCPS Installation event on Sunday, May 3, 2026, at the New Center for Psychoanalysis, noting that in the absence of monthly in person Council meetings, this program has become an important opportunity for Council members to meet socially.

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