

APA ADVOCACY

Washington Update

To view this email as a web page, click [here](#).

For more information and resources on COVID-19, visit [APA's webpage](#) for psychologists, health-care workers and the public.

APA Advocacy Washington Update is a newsletter that highlights how APA is working to advance the discipline and practice of psychology on Capitol Hill and beyond. Learn more about APA's [advocacy priorities](#) for 2020.

Using Psychology to Address Inequality



APA has [announced](#) a three-tiered plan to address the range of underlying problems this week's protests represent, from discrimination to racism, that have resulted in America's long-standing social, economic and political inequalities. APA plans to form partnerships with other organizations and stakeholders, as well as tap into the broad expertise of members, to broadly communicate the applications of psychological science to real-world bias, reduce police violence against African Americans, and make a long-term commitment to addressing systemic and institutional racism. The association is urging psychologists to share their thoughts and recommendations for using the power of psychology to address the "pandemic of racism," both in the short and long term.

To share your thoughts and recommendations, [submit them online](#).

Calling for Extension of Telehealth Policies After COVID-19 Emergency

APA joined the [Mental Health Liaison Group](#) (MHLG) in a letter to the administration urging that the telehealth flexibilities provided during the public health emergency—including services provided in a patient's home and by audio-only phone—be retained for a year-long transition period to determine what temporary benefits should be made permanent. The MHLG is a coalition of over 70 national organizations committed to strengthening America's access to mental and behavioral health care, of which APA is a long-standing, active member.

APA provided input and helped build lawmaker support for a [letter](#) led by Reps. Tom Emmer (R-Minn.) and Paul Tonko (D-N.Y.) to Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Majority Leader Mitch McConnell requesting that Congress consider extending the telehealth services provided during the COVID-19 pandemic for mental and behavioral health care. Thirty other bipartisan members joined the [letter](#).

APA is committed to advancing telehealth policies to ensure psychologists can provide timely mental and behavioral health care to existing and new patients beyond the pandemic.

For more information, contact Laurel Stine, JD, at lstine@apa.org.

Cultivating Congressional Relationships with State Psychological Associations

APA's advocacy relies on partnering with state psychological associations to strengthen the impact of our efforts. In May, APA [Advocacy Coordinating Committee](#) member and [Missouri Psychological Association](#) CEO Chuck Hollister, PhD and Missouri Federal Advocacy Coordinator, Paul Korte, PhD, [wrote](#) to Rep. Jason Smith (R-Mo.) about the need for extended use of audio-only telehealth for Missourians. In Washington, APA echoed their message during conversations with Rep. Jason Smith (R-Mo.) and his staff about the need to retain new telehealth services post COVID-19. Hollister had additional communication directly with the congressional office about the benefits of telehealth services, including audio-only by phone, for Missourians and to support widespread availability of telehealth services, continuity of patient care and efforts to avoid a telehealth services "cliff" when the public health emergency period ends. As a result of their coordinated efforts, both APA and the Missouri Psychological Association received a positive response from the congressman's office indicating Rep. Smith's continued support for phone telehealth.

For more information, contact Laurel Stine, JD, at lstine@apa.org.

Bolstering Support for Students with Disabilities in Response to COVID-19

APA [joined](#) 28 other organizations in calling on Congress to increase support for students with disabilities in the next COVID-19 emergency relief bill. The letter requests an additional \$12.5 billion in funding for Parts B, C and D of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). To address the shortage of fully prepared special educators, which has been further exacerbated by the pandemic, \$300 million would go directly toward the Personnel Development section of IDEA Part D, to support increased training of special education personnel.

For more information, contact Kenneth Polishchuk at kpolishcuk@apa.org or Ben Vonachen at bvonachen@apa.org.

Responding to the Behavioral Health Crisis Caused by the Pandemic

APA, the National Alliance on Mental Illness and the National Council for Behavioral Health in conjunction with the Congressional Mental Health Caucus, co-chaired by Rep. Grace Napolitano (D-Calif.) and Rep. John Katko (R-N.Y.), held a virtual briefing to discuss the state of behavioral health. The briefing covered challenges facing providers and people with behavioral health disorders, and opportunities for Congress to support increased access to care. APA's Stephen Gillaspay, PhD, senior director of health care financing, provided a well-received presentation on telehealth services. He was joined by Vitka Eisen, president and CEO of HealthRIGHT 360, who discussed the state of behavioral health organizations, and Andrew Sperling, director of legislative affairs at the National Alliance on Mental Illness, who spoke of the challenges facing people with mental

illness residing in congregate housing.

For more information, contact Laurel Stine, JD, at lstine@apa.org.

Supporting Nursing Home Legislation

APA supported the [Nursing Home COVID-19 Protection and Prevention Act](#) (S. 3768) introduced on May 19. The legislation provides \$20 billion in emergency funding for staffing, testing and more. It also requires the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to develop guidance on cohorting best practices, including how to safeguard residents' rights. Finally, it instructs HHS to collect and publish data on COVID-19 cases and deaths in nursing homes and intermediate care facilities. APA's advocacy office worked with [Sen. Bob Casey's](#) (D-Pa.) office to add language in the reporting of nursing home deaths section of the legislation to assure that race, ethnicity, age, sex and gender are included in the reporting.

For more information, contact Serena Davila at sdavila@apa.org.

Join APA's Psychology Advocacy Network

Stay updated on legislative issues impacting psychology and receive action alerts directly to your inbox. [Sign up](#).



© APA Services, Inc.

750 First Street, NE, Washington, DC 20002

APA Services, Inc. is a legally separate companion organization to the American Psychological Association (APA). APA Services, Inc. supports advocacy and psychologists' economic and marketplace interests in ways that APA cannot. For more information, visit apaservices.org.