



AMERICAN
PSYCHOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION

PUBLIC INTEREST
GOVERNMENT RELATIONS OFFICE (**PI-GRO**)

Annual Report 2011



www.apa.org/about/gr/pi

As part of APA's Public Interest (PI) Directorate, the Government Relations Office (GRO) advocates at the federal level to apply psychology to the fundamental problems of human welfare and the promotion of equitable and just treatment of all segments of society.

PI-GRO regularly works with the APA membership to help ensure the success of its advocacy efforts and to enhance the ability of the field to advocate on key issues. PI-GRO relies on member experts to assist in the development and dissemination of educational and advocacy materials that are shared with Congress and the executive branch. In addition, PI-GRO provides APA members with a variety of public policy and advocacy opportunities, including:

- Federal advocacy trainings and Capitol Hill visits
- Congressional Fellowship Program
- Public Interest Graduate Student Policy Internship
- Public Policy Advocacy Network

What follows is a brief summary of PI-GRO accomplishments over the last year. To learn more about these initiatives, please visit [PI-GRO's website](#) and consider joining the [Public Policy Advocacy Network](#).

MEET OUR STAFF:

Diane Elmore, PhD, MPH

Associate Executive Director
Co-Director, APA Congressional Fellowship

Kerry Bolger, PhD

Senior Legislative and Federal Affairs Officer
Co-Director, APA Congressional Fellowship

Krysta Jones, MA

Senior Legislative and Federal Affairs Officer

Leo Rennie, MPA

Senior Legislative and Federal Affairs Officer

Stefanie Reeves, MA, CAE

Senior Legislative and Federal Affairs Officer

Ben Vonachen

Senior Legislative Assistant

Micah Haskell-Hoehl

Senior Policy Associate
Administrator, APA Congressional Fellowship



James S. Jackson, PhD, and Patricia A. Areán, PhD, at a briefing in honor of Older Americans' Mental Health Week.

AGING

- In November 2011, invited to present a talk entitled "Promoting the Integration of Mental and Behavioral Health in Primary Care Through Public Policy" before the National Coalition on Mental Health and Aging.
- In May 2011, in honor of Older Americans' Mental Health Week, cohosted a congressional briefing with the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force on health disparities among diverse older Americans.
- In March 2011, worked with Sen. Susan Collins (R-ME) and Sen. Barbara Mikulski (D-MD) to support the successful reintroduction of the Positive Aging Act ([S. 525](#)), which would integrate mental health services into primary care and community-based settings for older adults.
- Continued advocacy in support of funding for the Lifespan Respite Care Act ([P.L. 109-442](#)), which provides for the development of life span respite programs at the state and local levels.
- Served as cochair of the Public Policy Committee of the Eldercare Workforce Alliance to guide federal advocacy efforts in support of key geriatric education and training initiatives and the promotion of interdisciplinary team health care.

CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILIES

- In October 2011, moderated a panel on domestic violence and children at the annual Rosalynn Carter Symposium on Mental Health Policy, which included key federal agency leaders, researchers, clinicians, and advocates.
- Promoted efforts to make evidence-based social and emotional learning programs available in schools by issuing an APA letter of support for the Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning Act of 2011 ([H.R. 2437](#)) introduced by Rep. Judy Biggert (R-IL).
- Secured the participation of APA member Abigail Gewirtz, PhD, who spoke about child trauma issues at a May 2011 congressional briefing in honor of National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day.
- Since February 2011, spearheaded an advocacy campaign aimed at stopping proposed cuts to the National Child Traumatic Stress Network, which included coordinating coalition letters, a Capitol Hill day for child trauma professionals, an action alert encouraging grassroots advocacy, and a webinar advocacy training.
- Continued outreach efforts to provide science-based information and recommendations to Congress, federal agencies, and the White House to inform policies and programs to prevent bullying and victimization of youth in schools and communities.



Abigail Gewirtz, PhD, at National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day.



APA staff member Stefanie Reeves, MA, CAE, presents at the Inequity to Equity Conference.

INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

- In October 2011, coordinated a symposium entitled “Using Public Policy to Promote the Health and Well-Being of Women With Disabilities” at the *Inequity to Equity: Promoting Health and Wellness of Women with Disabilities Conference*.
- Worked to prepare comments and recommendations to the Senate regarding the upcoming reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act (P.L. 105-220).
- In May 2011, submitted a statement for the record to the National Council on Disability on key disability issues in the federal budget for FY 2012.
- Continued joint efforts with Education GRO to convene a working group to develop recommendations for the reauthorization of the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (P.L. 108-446).
- Continued to serve as a member of the Consortium for Citizens With Disabilities, including as a member of the group’s Education Task Force.



Participating in Capitol Hill meetings in support of APA’s efforts around NHAS were (from left) Eugene Farber, PhD; Bob Bongiovanni, MA; Leo Rennie, MPA; and Scyatta Wallace, PhD.

INDIVIDUALS LIVING WITH HIV/AIDS

- In October 2011, joined a diverse group of organizations in sending a letter calling on the president and members of Congress to reject efforts to reimpose the ban on the use of federal funds for syringe exchange programs through the FY 2012 appropriations process.
- At the 2011 National HIV Prevention Conference, organized a meeting for APA staff and governance to discuss combined biomedical and behavioral approaches to optimize HIV prevention and psychology’s contribution to the National HIV/AIDS Strategy (NHAS) implementation with the director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Division on HIV/AIDS Prevention.
- In June 2011, participated in a Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) strategy meeting on the priority uses of proposed FY 2012 new resources to support NHAS implementation.
- In March 2011, participated in a special HHS Community Consultation, in which HHS officials invited leaders from national lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender organizations to consider HIV prevention in the context of health promotion and equity.
- In February 2011, lauded the president’s FY 2012 proposed budget for HIV/AIDS programs and participated in meetings on federal HIV/AIDS spending issues at the Office of Management and Budget and the White House Office on National AIDS Policy.



President Obama signs the repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell."

LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, AND TRANSGENDER PERSONS

- In November 2011, endorsed a national coalition letter urging President Obama to publicly and formally support the Student Non-Discrimination Act (H.R. 998/S. 555), which would prohibit discrimination and harassment in public schools on the basis of a student's actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity.
- In August 2011, met with staff of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Extramural Research to advocate for NIH to expand and enhance its research focus on LGBT populations.
- In May 2011, sent a letter of support to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights related to their briefing on enforcing civil rights laws in cases of bullying, harassment, and violence in schools.
- In May 2011, developed and disseminated an action alert to APA members urging them to contact Congress in support of the introduction of the Employment Non-Discrimination Act.
- In March 2011, submitted a statement for the record to the House Armed Services Committee in support of the implementation of policies and procedures associated with the repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell."

RACIAL AND ETHNIC MINORITIES

- Secured the participation of Rep. Grace Napolitano (D-CA) as the keynote speaker and Krystal Kaai of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus at the Committee on Ethnic Minority Affairs Legislative Breakfast at the 2011 APA convention.
- In July 2011, conducted an advocacy training and Capitol Hill day for 22 participants in APA's Psychology Summer Institute, held by the Minority Fellowship Program (MFP), which included visits to 10 congressional offices.
- Secured the testimony of APA member Pamela Deters, PhD, at a May 2011 hearing before the U.S. House Appropriations Subcommittee on the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies, where she addressed priorities for the Indian Health Service budget on behalf of the Friends of Indian Health Coalition.
- Worked with psychologist Stephanie Fryberg, PhD, in preparation for her testimony on American Indian mascots at a May 2011 hearing before the U.S. Senate Indian Affairs Committee.
- Along with Education GRO, spearheaded activities of the Mental Health Workforce Coalition, which advocates for common legislative and funding goals for organizations funded to administer the MFP.



Pamela Deters, PhD, testifying before Congress.



Richard Price, PhD, at APA's "The Power of Work" briefing.

SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS

- In October 2011, sent a letter to Rep. Alcee Hastings (D-FL) in support of the reintroduction of his legislation, the National Commission on Employment and Economic Security Act ([H.R. 3493](#)), which would establish a commission to study the psychological effects of economic insecurity.
- In October 2011, hosted a congressional briefing titled "The Power of Work: A Discussion on the Psychological Benefits of Work and the Impact of Joblessness on Individuals, Families, and Communities" in recognition of World Poverty Day.
- In September 2011, submitted a statement to the U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions, Subcommittee on Primary Care and Aging, on the mental and physical health effects of poverty.
- In spring 2011, began collaborations with Rep. Alcee Hastings (D-FL) in support of the reintroduction of the National Commission on Employment and Economic Security Act.
- In March 2011, joined several other organizations including the American Public Health Association and the American Academy of Family Physicians in urging Congress to oppose changes in the Affordable Care Act that would weaken Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program.

WOMEN'S ISSUES

- In October 2011, worked with Sen. Kay Hagan (D-NC) in support of the introduction of the Consolidation of Grants to Strengthen the Healthcare System's Response to Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, and Stalking Act ([S. 1765](#)).
- In April 2011, worked with Rep. Louise Slaughter (D-NY) to introduce the Violence Against Women Health Initiative Act of 2011 ([H.R. 1578](#)), which, along with [S. 1765](#), would improve the health care system's assessment and response to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking.
- Successfully worked with Sen. Kay Hagan (D-NC) and Rep. Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) in support of the July 2011 reintroduction of the Healthy Media for Youth Act ([S. 1354/H.R. 2513](#)), which is largely based on recommendations from APA's 2007 report on the sexualization of girls.
- In April 2011, hosted a summit of 25 organizations representing researchers, clinicians, advocates, and government agency representatives to create a strategic plan to encourage healthier media images of women and girls.
- In February 2011, hosted a Capitol Hill day for the executive committee of Division 27 (Society for Community Research and Action: Division of Community Psychology) to advocate for the ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.



Tarshia Stanley, PhD (*left*), and Deborah Tolman, PhD, at the April summit on creating healthier media images of women and girls.



From left: M. David Rudd, PhD, ABPP, Heather O'Beirne Kelly, PhD, Salvatore Giunta, Melba J.T. Vasquez, PhD, ABPP, and Diane Elmore, PhD, MPH, at a reception honoring Giunta.



From left: Gwyne White, Kathleen Van Dyk, and Rep. Frank Pallone (D-NJ) during a PsycADVOCATE Day meeting.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

- Continue to work in support of appropriate and timely implementation of several key provisions of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (P.L. 111-148) that address integrated health care, prevention and wellness, geriatric and pediatric health professions education and training, health disparities, American Indian and Alaska Native health, and long-term services and supports.

MILITARY SERVICE MEMBERS, VETERANS, AND THEIR FAMILIES

- In December 2011, worked with Rep. Ann Marie Buerkle (R-NY), chair of the Subcommittee on Health of the House Committee on Veterans Affairs, to host a workshop for faith-based providers on the mental health needs of military service members, veterans, and their families.
- In September 2011, cohosted three events with the University of Utah's National Center for Veterans Studies focused on suicide prevention in military and veteran populations, including a dinner honoring Medal of Honor recipient Salvatore Giunta, a day-long best practices working group meeting, and two congressional briefings.
- In May 2011, collaborated with the Practice Directorate to present a session on advocacy on behalf of veterans at the annual VA Psychology Leadership Conference.

PSYC ADVOCATE™ DAY

- Partnered with Education GRO for the inaugural PsycAdvocate Day, which included a Continuing Education advocacy workshop on effectively communicating with policymakers, as well as over 100 meetings with congressional members and staff on Capitol Hill.

APA CONGRESSIONAL FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

- The program, now in its 38th year, has fellows currently serving in the offices of Sen. Jeff Bingaman (D-NM) and Sen. Jon Tester (D-MT). Activities at the 2011 APA convention included a booth in the exhibit hall and a symposium that featured former congressional fellows still working in public policy in Washington, DC.

2011 APA MONITOR ARTICLES ON PI-GRO ACTIVITIES

- “Focusing on Service Member Suicides”
- “Health-Care Reform 2.0”
- “PsycAdvocates Work to Safeguard Key Programs”
- “On Your Behalf”
- “Answering the Call of Public Policy”
- “Protecting Girls”
- “APA Steps Up Advocacy Efforts on HIV/AIDS”



AMERICAN
PSYCHOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION

Public Interest Government Relations Office

750 First Street, NE
Washington, DC 20002-4242

www.apa.org/about/gr/pi

202-336-6166