



APA Aging Issues Newsletter

December 2003

APA OFFICE ON AGING UPDATE

New Award Established

Norman Abeles, PhD is the first recipient of the *APA Committee on Aging Award for the Advancement of Psychology and Aging*. Committee on Aging (CONA) Chair, Forrest Scogin, PhD presented the award to Dr. Abeles in recognition of his extensive history of professional leadership and distinguished achievements in research, practice and education in the field of geropsychology. During his tenure as APA President, Dr. Abeles heightened the awareness of aging issues and institutionalized a presence for these issues within the Association. The award will be presented annually at Convention to recognize psychologists and friends of psychology who have made significant contributions to the field of geropsychology. The 2004 Call for Nominations will be announced in April 2004.

Guidelines for Psychological Practice with Older Adults

The APA Council of Representatives approved the Guidelines for Psychological Practice with Older Adults as APA Policy in August 2003. They were developed by the Division 12-Section II and Division 20 Interdivisional Task Force on Practice in Clinical Geropsychology. The Task Force co-chairs were George Niederehe, PhD (National Institute of Mental Health), and Linda Teri, PhD (University of Washington). "The specific goals of these guidelines are to provide practitioners with (a) a frame of reference for engaging in clinical work with older adults and (b) basic information and further references in the areas of attitudes, general aspects of aging, clinical issues, assessment, intervention, consultation, and continuing education and training relative to work with older adults." The guidelines can be downloaded from the APA Practice Directorate website at: [http://www.apa.org/practice/Guidelines for Psychological Practice with Older Adults.pdf](http://www.apa.org/practice/Guidelines%20for%20Psychological%20Practice%20with%20Older%20Adults.pdf)

APA Office on Aging Receives Grant Funding

The APA Office on Aging, on behalf of CONA, has secured funding from the Retirement Research Foundation to develop promotional materials that convincingly portray the contribution of geropsychology to the health and well being of older adults. The materials will serve two purposes: 1) to inform policy makers of the significant research, practice and educational endeavors of the psychology community on behalf of older adults and 2) to promote geropsychology as a career option among undergraduate students in psychology and human and family studies programs. Materials will be completed in 2004.

Aging Leadership Team Formed

The newly instituted Aging Leadership Team convened its first conference call in October. The formation of an Aging Leadership Team was one of the strategies agreed upon at the 2003 CONA Conversation Hour held at Convention in Toronto. Current members of the team include the CONA Chair, and the Presidents of APA Divisions 20 and 12- Section II.

Its objectives are to:

- create a mechanism for increased and ongoing communication between CONA, Division 20, and Division 12-II.
- ensure a coordinated, timely, and effective response to issues of import to geropsychology

- facilitate the flow of information on aging issues to APA entities including offices, committees, boards, directorates, divisions and the Council of Representatives.
- broaden support for aging issues within APA.
- secure the participation of geropsychologists, and the application of psychological knowledge to efforts related to aging issues, research, practice, and policy.
- present a united front on issues related to psychology and aging.

Legal and Psychological Perspectives On Assessment of Capacity in Older Adults – December 5-7, 2003. CONA and its representatives, and the American Bar Association Commission on Law and Aging (COLA) are collaborating in the area of assessment of capacity in older adults. In June 2003, a two-day meeting, *Legal and Psychological Perspectives On Assessment of Capacity in Older Adults: An ABA-APA Dialogue*, resulted in identification of specific needs from the legal, psychological and judicial perspectives, and a set of recommendations and action steps. At a second meeting in December the participants developed outlines for their two initial products – a manual for attorneys on key steps in the assessment of capacity of older adults and a book for psychologists on capacity assessment of older adults.

AARP International Forum on Long Term Care - October 22, 2003. The APA Aging Issues Officer attended this meeting at which international approaches to long term care were presented by representatives of Germany, The Netherlands, Japan, Australia and New Zealand. The proceedings from the meeting are available at www.aarp.org/international.

The National Coalition on Mental Health and Aging - October 14, 2003. The Coalition is a group of over 40 national health and aging organizations committed to issues of mental health and aging. The Coalition, staffed by the APA Office on Aging, meets quarterly at the APA headquarters. At the meeting presentations were made by Lauren Fuller, Chief Investigative Counsel, Special Committee on Aging on The Elder Justice Act. [See the Aging Policy and Advocacy Update section of this newsletter.] Naomi Karp, Associate Staff Director, ABA Commission on Law and Aging provided an overview of the study and the resultant publication, *Incapacitated and Alone: Health Care Decision-Making for the Unbefriended Elderly*. She stated that, in most states, the legal framework for making treatment decisions on behalf of these individuals is insufficient, and as a result they may be subject to over or under-treatment, or treatment that does not reflect their values or address their well-being. The publication outlines the current state of the law and practice and identifies workable solutions. [See the Resources section of this newsletter for information about the publication.] The third presenter, Robyn Golden, Heinz Senate Fellow with Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton discussed the Lifespan Respite Act and the Washington, DC Grandfamilies Rally held in October.

AGING POLICY AND ADVOCACY UPDATE

The Public Policy Office works closely with the Office on Aging on aging policy issues at the federal level. This collaborative team includes Diane Elmore, Ph.D., SPSSI James Marshall Public Policy Scholar within the Public Interest Public Policy Office, Nina Levitt, Ed.D., Director, Education Policy Office, and Deborah DiGilio, MPH, Office on Aging. Please visit the Public Policy Office website at: <http://www.apa.org/ppo/issues/aging.html> or contact Dr. Elmore at: (202) 336-6097 or delmore@apa.org for more information.

Funding for Graduate Geropsychology Education

The Bureau of Health Professions awarded 7 grants totaling \$1,216,889 to geropsychology programs this fall as part of the new Graduate Geropsychology Education Program. Institutions awarded grants include the University of South Florida, Albert Einstein College of Medicine/Yeshiva University, University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, VA Black Hills Health Care System, University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa, University of Rochester Medical Center, and the University of Illinois at Chicago. Information about program directors and abstracts for each program can be found at: <http://www.apa.org/ppo/issues/e2003geroawards.html>. The initiative has been a top legislative priority for the APA Education Directorate, Public Policy Office, and Office on Aging, and represents the culmination of tremendous grassroots efforts by psychologists around the country, including members of APA 's Committee on Aging (CONA) and Division 12-2.

Congressional Hearing: Providing Lifespan Respite Care: Vital Support for Family Caregivers

This congressional briefing on July 30th cosponsored by APA and the National Lifespan Respite Care Task Force, featured APA member William Haley, Ph.D., University of South Florida. Dr. Haley presented psychological research findings on caregiving's effects on stress, health, and emotional well-being, and the benefits of respite services, as well as individual and family counseling. In a follow-up visit with staff of Rep. Michael Bilirakis (R-FL), Dr. Haley urged House passage of the Lifespan Respite Care Act, S.538/H.R. 1083, introduced by Senators Hillary Clinton (D-NY) and John Warner (R-VA), and Representatives James Langevin (D-RI) and James Greenwood (R-PA). Other panelists included Congressman Dennis Byars (R-NE) and three family caregivers who provide care for individuals across the lifespan.

The President's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health: As you may know, President George W. Bush established the President's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health in April 2002 to conduct a one-year study of the nation's mental health service delivery system and make recommendations for improvement. Our public policy team actively followed the efforts of the Commission throughout and is now working as a member of the *Campaign for Mental Health Reform*, a coalition of about a dozen organizations formed to implement the recommendations of the report of the President's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health.

The APA Policy Team contributed to drafting the Campaign's testimony on the Commission's report, which was presented at a November hearing before the Subcommittee on Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services of the Senate HELP Committee. We met with Senator Tom Harkin's (D-IA) staff, along with other Campaign members, in November to discuss the implementation of the goals of the Commission report. The Campaign also met with Kathryn Power, the new Director of the Center for Mental Health Services, on two occasions to discuss the report. APA met separately with Ms. Power in October and sent a follow-up letter in which the following priority areas were identified as requiring attention in the effort to transform the mental health system: 1) Aligning federal programs to increase access to mental health services; 2) Workforce development; and 3) Integration of mental health services in primary health care settings. The APA Committee on Aging provided input on the importance of these issues for older adults.

Elder Justice Update: During the October meeting of the National Coalition on Mental Health and Aging, we were pleased to receive a briefing regarding the Elder Justice Act (S.333/H.R.2490) from Lauren Fuller, Chief Investigative Counsel for the Senate Special Committee on Aging. Ms. Fuller reviewed the key points of the bill, which seeks to elevate the attention devoted to elder abuse at the federal level. For information about the Elder Justice Act and Elder Justice Coalition, go to: <http://www.elderabusecenter.org/default.cfm?p=elderjustice.cfm>.

National Institute on Mental Health Advisory Council Meeting - September 12, 2003. APA member, former CONA chair and geropsychologist, Steve Zarit, PhD, presented comments on behalf of APA at NIMH's National Advisory Mental Health Council (NAMHC) meeting. At this meeting, the Council's Aging Research Workgroup's Final Report, *Mental Health for a Lifetime: Research for the Mental Health Needs of Older Americans* was released. The Workgroup was formed earlier this year to review the mental health and aging portfolio at NIMH. The report recommends several strategies to increase coordination and support for research and training in mental health and aging. Dr. Zarit applauded the report and, with other aging and mental health organizations, recommended that NIMH consider reinstating the Aging Branch and increasing funding for aging research and training. APA Public Policy and Aging staff will continue to monitor the status of the workgroup's recommendations. The report is now available online: <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/council/agingreport.cfm>

IN THE NEWS

Measuring Cognitive Decline: Tests that measure age-related cognitive decline many not be completely accurate, a study says. *Monitor on Psychology*, Volume 34, No. 11, December 2003. <http://www.apa.org/monitor/measuring.html>

Persistence pays with Medicare reimbursement. *Monitor on Psychology*, Volume 34, No. 10, November 2003. <http://www.apa.org/monitor/persistence.html>. [See the Resources section for the link to the Medicare Local Medical Review Policies Tool Kit that assists psychologists in advocating for changes in Medicare policy.]

Members further APA's advocacy efforts. *Monitor on Psychology*, Volume 34, No. 9, October 2003. Highlights testimony of Donna Cohen, PhD and Jane Pearson, PhD before the Senate's Special Committee on Aging hearing, "Senior depression: life-saving mental health treatments for older Americans"; and William Haley, PhD at an APA congressional briefing on "Providing lifespan respite care: vital support for family caregivers." <http://www.apa.org/monitor/oct03/advocacy.html>

Reaching the underserved: APA is promoting legislation to enhance mental health across the life span. Volume 34, No. 8 September 2003 Provides a Summary of legislation aimed at meeting the needs of underserved populations across the lifespan. These highlighted pieces of legislation would provide assistance to older adults and young children as groups at increased risk for poverty, abuse, and insufficient services. This article can be accessed at: <http://www.apa.org/monitor/sep03/ppup.html>

The Effects of Widowhood on Physical and Mental Health, Health Behaviors, and Health Outcomes: The Women's Health Initiative. *Health Psychology*, Vol. 22, No. 5, September 2003. <http://www.apa.org/releases/widowhood.html>

Cross-Sectional and Longitudinal Patterns of Dedifferentiation in Late-Life Cognitive and Sensory Function: The Effects of Age, Ability, Attrition, and Occasion of Measurement. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, Vol. 132, No. 3, September 2003
<http://www.apa.org/releases/cognitiveability.html>

HOW PSYCHOLOGISTS CAN BECOME INVOLVED IN SUPPORTING APA AGING EFFORTS

The Office on Aging and Public Policy Office welcome the contributions of psychologists with expertise in aging to assist in our efforts. We are currently creating a database of psychology and aging experts interested in collaborating with APA on aging issues. There are a variety of ways in which members can work with APA, including:

- drafting language for and/or expressing views on critical pieces of legislation
- serving as an APA representative on interdisciplinary panels and workgroups
- Representing and APA and aging interests at meetings with other organizations
- presenting at congressional briefings and hearings
- contacting or meeting with key congressional offices on behalf of geropsychology
- being listed as a media resource on aging issues with APA's Public Communications Office
- providing guidance/consultation to APA staff on geropsychology research and practice issues.

If you are interested in being listed as a resource person in our database, please send an e-mail to wfranklin@apa.org that includes your name, contact information, and your priority area(s) of research and/or practice. We appreciate your help!

RESOURCES

APA Aging Issues Fact Sheets: The APA public Policy Office and Office on Aging have created fact sheets on aging issues for congressional offices, individuals and groups interested in aging advocacy, and psychologists and the general public. Topics include: depression, suicide, mental health and aging policy issues and recommendations, and the contributions of psychology to the health and well being of older adults. They are available at: <http://www.apa.org/pi/aging/>

Incapacitated and Alone: Health Care Decision-Making for the Unbefriended Elderly (June 2003) by the ABA Commission on Law and Aging seeks to improve medical decision-making on behalf of older adults incapable of making their own decisions and lacking surrogate decision-makers. The report assesses the current state of the law and practice and lays out policy recommendations on the best mechanisms for health care decision-making for this population. 62pp. \$25.00 per copy. Contact: abaaging@abanet.org

Medicare Local Medical Review Policies (LMRPs) Tool Kit: The purpose of the tool kit is to assist psychologists in understanding Medicare provisions for psychological services and in providing input into their development. Components include an explanation of the LMRP development process, opportunities for advocacy, and tools, such as samples of correspondence with insurance intermediaries, "psychology-friendly" LMRP provisions, and empirical evidence to support incorporation of such provisions. It can be accessed at: <http://www.apa.org/pi/aging/lmrp/>.

Get Connected! Linking Older Adults with Medication, Alcohol and Mental Health Resource Toolkit (NCADI Inventory #GCKIT) provides resources for service providers and older adults needing information and services related to medications, alcohol and mental health issues. It can be ordered free of charge from SAMHSA's National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information at 1-800-729-6686 or e-mail info@health.org.

AGING at APA

The Office on Aging – Within the APA Public Interest Directorate, The Office serves as the coordination point for the Association’s activities pertaining to aging. It promotes aging issues within APA, among APA members, other professionals and the public. The Office strives to bring psychological knowledge to bear on discussions regarding matters that affect older adults. Deborah DiGilio, MPH, staffs this office and the APA Committee on Aging. For more information, visit the Office on Aging website at: <http://www.apa.org/pi/aging> or contact Deborah at: 202-336-6135 or ddigilio@apa.org.

The Committee on Aging (CONA) - CONA is a six-member committee of psychologists with substantive professional expertise in aging issues who are selected to serve three-year terms. CONA works toward the optimal development of older adults, expanded scientific understanding of adult development and aging, and the delivery of appropriate psychological services to older persons. CONA’s current (2003) members include Forrest Scogin, Ph.D. (Chair), University of Alabama; John Cavanaugh, Ph.D. (Chair-elect), University of West Florida; Gregory A. Hinrichsen, Ph.D., Long Island Jewish Health System; Beth Hudnall Stamm, Ph.D., Idaho State University; Leonard W. Poon, Ph.D., University of Georgia; and Antonette Zeiss, Ph.D. (immediate past chair), VA Palo Alto Health Care System.

APA Division 20 (Adult Development & Aging) - APA's Division 20 is concerned with the study of psychological development and change throughout the adult years. Their website includes resources for educators and students, information about graduate programs for students interested in pursuing this field, publications, conference information, and links to other sites. <http://aging.ufl.edu/apadiv20>

APA Division 12-II (Clinical Geropsychology) - APA's Division 12, Section II is devoted to research, training, and the provision of psychological services for older adults. Their website includes information on geropsychology training guidelines, training opportunities for students and professionals including clinical psychology internships, postdoctoral fellowship opportunities, and continuing education offerings, and research funding and job information. <http://bama.ua.edu/~appgero>.

TO FIND OUT MORE OR TO BECOME INVOLVED, PLEASE FEEL FREE TO CONTACT US:

Deborah DiGilio, MPH, in APA’s Office on Aging at ddigilio@apa.org

Diane Elmore, Ph.D., in APA’s Public Policy Office at delmore@apa.org

VISIT OUR WEB SITES AT:

APA Office on Aging: <http://www.apa.org/pi/aging/>

APA Public Policy Office: <http://www.apa.org/ppo/>