



# APA Aging Issues Newsletter

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### **APA Committee on Aging Award for the Advancement of Psychology and Aging**

The Committee on Aging (CONA) presented its second annual *Award for the Advancement of Psychology and Aging* at its October 2004 meeting to George Niederehe, PhD. The award was given in recognition of his pivotal role in the development of the field of geropsychology. Dr. Niederehe was commended for his creative leadership at the National Institute of Mental Health and his mentorship of students, fellows, and junior colleagues. The award also applauded his leadership in promoting the recognition of clinical geropsychology within APA including the establishment of APA Division 12, Section 2 and his tenacious advocacy in the development of the *Guidelines for Psychological Practice with Older Adults*. Dr. Niederehe was honored as a model psychologist whose professional work has been grounded in theory and research. His broad perspective on scientific, clinical, and educational issues has enriched geropsychology.

### **The Contribution of Geropsychology to An Aging World Project**

The Project, funded by a Research Retirement Foundation grant to the Office on Aging, is now complete. The project's objective was to develop and disseminate materials that portray the contributions of psychological research and practice to the health and well being of older adults. A brochure, *Psychologists Make a Significant Contribution: Psychology and Aging*, was developed and disseminated to policymakers and health and aging organizations. This eight-page color brochure defines psychology and geropsychology; describes the growing need for psychological research and clinical services; explains the interface between physical and mental health care; and sets forth policy recommendations to improve the mental and behavioral health of older Americans. Examples of the work of psychologists in fourteen diverse areas are highlighted. A national news release describing the brochure was also distributed. It noted how psychologists address the mental and behavioral health issues that many older persons face, and how to order a free copy of the brochure. In the first two months of its six-month release period, 140 newspaper articles were generated in 20 states with a total readership of 7,249,808.

A second set of materials targeting undergraduate students was also developed. *Geropsychology: It's Your Future* is a two-sided color fact sheet that encourages students to "Discover the answers...Be a part of the solution..." It directs students to websites where they can learn more about graduate programs that offer specialized training and/or have strong research foci on aging, clinical psychology internships, and postdoctoral fellowships; institutions that conduct mental health and aging research; potential careers in the aging field; the types of skills and areas of focus for psychologists working with older adults; and other resources for general information on aging topics. A companion poster directs students' attention to the range of exciting topics in psychology and aging. The fact sheets and posters were sent to all undergraduate departments of psychology, human development, and family studies, and to American Psychological Association of Graduate Students (APAGS) campus representatives for distribution on their campuses. *To order free copies of these materials, see the Resources section of this newsletter.*

### **2005 White House Conference on Aging (WHCoA)**

APA's Offices on Aging and Public Policy are actively advocating for consideration of mental health issues at the 2005 WHCoA, both independently and in collaboration with the National Coalition on Mental Health and Aging (NCMHA). The WHCoA will be held October 23-26, 2005. APA submitted written comments to the WHCoA Policy Committee in conjunction with the September 7th WHCoA listening session. The Aging Issues Officer and Director of Public Interest Policy met the Executive Director of WHCoA and the Chair of its Policy Committee to discuss APA's interest in the WHCoA, our involvement with past conferences beginning in 1971, the importance of good mental health to the lives of older adults, and the contribution of psychology to health and well-being. We also submitted letters outlining these issues and offering APA's assistance and support. APA also submitted nominations for the WHCoA Advisory Council, and provided specific revisions incorporating mental health into the WHCoA draft agenda. In all of our efforts, we have stated the need and rationale for including mental health as an issue of import for conference deliberations and resulting resolutions. Plans are underway for a Division 20 sponsored symposium on the WHCoA to be held in conjunction with the 2005 APA Convention.

### **APA Resolution on the 2005 White House Conference on Aging (WHCoA)**

CONA has developed an APA Resolution on the 2005 White House Conference on Aging to be considered for adoption as APA Policy by the APA Council of Representatives. CONA believes that their Resolution will bring attention to this important forum and convey and affirm the sense of APA that research and practice issues including contributions of psychology are critical to the health and well-being of older people and therefore need to be a central part of the agenda. At its November 2004 meeting, CONA's parent board, The Board for the Advancement of Psychology in the Public Interest (BAPPI) recommended the inclusion of the proposed resolution on the Spring 2005 Consolidated Meeting's Cross-Cutting agenda for review and comment by all APA boards and committees. The APA Board of Directors, would then consider the resolution and forward to the Council of Representatives for approval as APA policy in August 2005.

### **National Coalition on Mental Health and Aging (NCMHA)**

The APA Office on Aging is the organizational host of NCMHA, a coalition of 50 mental health and aging organizations interested in mental health and aging issues. NCMHA's recent efforts have focused on the 2005 WHCoA. The APA Aging Issues Officer provided oral testimony at the first WHCoA Listening Session on behalf of NCMHA in September. The key message relayed was that mental health should have an established place on the WHCoA agenda, proceedings, and resulting resolutions. NCMHA believes that the WHCoA is on the fast track with priority issues being determined by February 2005. Therefore, it was decided that consensus on a message of support for mental health which all member groups could deliver in unison from the outset of WHCoA planning was critical. Therefore, in lieu of convening a mini-conference as in 1995, NCMHA held an all-day meeting on September 28th to develop resolutions to forward to the WHCoA Policy Committee. Three comprehensive resolutions were developed -- mental health and substance abuse services and interventions; education and development of the professional mental health workforce; and consumer and caregiving issues. The resolutions draw heavily upon the resolutions developed at the 1995 mini-conference on Mental Health and Aging.

NCMHA has also been approved by the WHCoA to host a listening session focusing solely on mental health issues on January 24, 2005. It will be held at APA headquarters. Drs. Norman Anderson and Margaret Gatz will present testimony on behalf of APA. All are invited to attend.

It is very important for all interested in mental health and aging to testify at the listening sessions currently being scheduled around the country. The listening sessions provide a formalized mechanism to propose recommendations to WHCoA Policy Committee members. By statute, the WHCoA may produce no more than 50 resolutions, so the competition for mental health to be included, will be intense. The list of WHCoA listening sessions can be found at [www.whcoa.org](http://www.whcoa.org). If you are interested in receiving copies of the NCMHA resolutions or APA comments related to the WHCoA, please contact [ddigilio@apa.org](mailto:ddigilio@apa.org).

### **APA/ABA Assessment of Capacity in Older Adults Project**

As noted in earlier issues of this newsletter, APA and ABA are collaborating in the area of capacity assessment in older adults. The Capacity Assessment in Older Adults Project arose from discussions between the ABA Commission on Law and Aging, the APA Committee on Aging (CONA), and the APA Ad Hoc Committee on Legal Issues (COLI) Task Force on Facilitating APA/ABA Relations. The Project's first product, a document for practicing attorneys, *Assessment of Older Adults with Diminished Capacity: A Handbook for Lawyers* will be available in early 2005.

CONA held two events at the 2004 APA Convention related to this Project. At the CONA Annual Conversation Hour, the topic was the Assessment of Capacity in Older Adults: Psychological and Legal Perspectives. The discussion was led by two members of the APA/ABA Project on Capacity Assessment in Older Adults, Jennifer Moye, PhD, a geropsychologist with the Boston VA HealthCare System and Department of Psychiatry of Harvard Medical School, and Charles Sabatino, JD, Assistant Director of the ABA Commission on Law and Aging. Thirty-two individuals participated in the CONA Conversation Hour. The following day, a symposium, "Assessment of Capacity in Older Adults: An APA-ABA Collaboration" was held at which CONA and Project members described the state-of-affairs of capacity in older adults from the legal and psychological perspective, and reviewed the recommendations for action steps that emerged from two APA/ABA meetings held in 2003. Sixty-one individuals attended the symposium. Future Project plans include a continuing education offering for psychologists at the 2005 APA Convention and a companion handbook for judges. To receive notification of future offerings and updates on this project, contact [ddigilio@apa.org](mailto:ddigilio@apa.org).

### **Fall 2004 CONA Meeting**

CONA's Fall meeting was held October 1-3. A full agenda was considered by the Committee including developing an action plan for The 2005 White House Conference on Aging; fleshing out plans for its new Roadmap to Aging Project; providing input to APA Cross-Cutting agenda items (such as Revisions to the APA National Standards for the Teaching of High School Psychology; Guidelines for Education and Training at the Doctoral and Post-Doctoral Level in Consulting Psychology/Organizational Consulting Psychology; and Policy Formation on Mental Illness and the Death Penalty). CONA also met with a number of individuals to discuss a variety of issues, including: APA President Diane Halpern, PhD and Robert Johnson, PhD, Chair of the APA Presidential Initiative on Retiring Psychologists on how to build upon the momentum generated during the Initiative; two APA Board of Directors members, Paul Craig and Sandra Shullman on CONA's Roadmap to Aging Project; Florence Denmark, PhD, APA Past-President, APA NGO Representative to the UN, and APA Policy and Planning Board Liaison on current UN Committee on Ageing activities; Ellen Garrison, PhD Director of Public Interest Policy, on plans to hire a Senior Policy Officer to work on aging issues; Amanda Ring of the Education Policy Office on the Graduate Geropsychology Education Program; Diane Pedulla, JD, of the APA Practice Directorate on the Health and Behavior Codes; and Diane Elmore, PhD, who is currently an APA Congressional Fellow in Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton's office, on the Positive Aging Act and other aging issues.

## **Roadmap to Aging**

CONA's newest project, *The Roadmap to Aging*, will offer middle-aged and older adults guidance in planning for the challenges of late life. To attain this goal, CONA will develop educational materials that provide key messages, guidance and resources to assist people in planning for and addressing issues that often arise as they age, including those in the economic/financial, environmental, health, legal, psychological, social, spiritual, and work/retirement domains.

Interest in this type of information among psychologists was supported by the results of the 2004 APA Retirement Survey commissioned by APA President Diane Halpern as part of her Retiring Psychologists Presidential Initiative. After conversations with Drs. Halpern and Robert Johnson, chair of the Initiative, CONA decided to focus its initial efforts on providing guidance to psychologists to enable them to effectively and proactively planning their Roadmap to Aging. A web-based brochure for psychologists will be the Project's first product. The project is one strategy through which CONA will address one of its missions - "to assure that the older members of APA receive the appropriate attention of the association."

The project will convene with a Spring 2005 meeting at which experts in these domains will translate the wealth of empirical evidence in the research literature into practical steps to guide psychologists and others along the road to aging. The APA Board of Directors has recently allocated a portion of its 2005 Discretionary Funds to this project and the Office on Aging is exploring external funding sources to expand the project to reach the general population of mid-life and older adults.

## **Psychology and Aging Advocacy Training Workshop**

The APA Policy Office and the Office on Aging offered a *Psychology and Aging Advocacy Training Workshop* at APA headquarters on November 18 and 19. During the first day of the workshop, the twenty participants learned to utilize a variety of strategies and techniques for influencing social policy. The interactive component of the training included role-plays in preparation for Congressional visits. Participants were also briefed on two current legislative issues – the Positive Aging Act and the Graduate Psychology Education program. On the second day of the workshop, participants visited their Congressional representatives to advocate for these two legislative issues. Lunch and dinner presentations were made by Congressional staff, including Michael Zamore of Representative Patrick Kennedy's office, and Diane Elmore, PhD of Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton's office.

## **New Resources**

### ***Geropsychology: It's Your Future! Fact Sheet***

This fact sheet promotes geropsychology as a career option and directs students to websites to learn more about opportunities in psychology and aging. A companion poster directs students' attention to the range of exciting topics in psychology and aging.

### ***Psychologists Make a Significant Difference: Psychology and Aging Brochure***

This brochure highlights the contributions of psychology to the health and well being of older adults. Developed for policymakers and other health and aging organizations, it can be used by psychologists to inform policy efforts at the local, state, and national levels.

The above materials are available online at [www.apa.org/pi/aging](http://www.apa.org/pi/aging). Additional copies are also available from [ddigilio@apa.org](mailto:ddigilio@apa.org).

## ***Toward an Inclusive Psychology: Infusing the Introductory Psychology Textbook with Diversity Content***

This is a publication of the APA Commission on Ethnic Minority Recruitment, Retention, and Training in Psychology (CEMRRAT) Task Force Textbook Initiative Work Group. Developed for educators, textbook publishers and authors, it provides examples of diversity content for each of the 20 introductory psychology textbook topics organized according to diversity categories, including **aging**; culture, ethnicity, and race; disability; gender; language; and sexual orientation. Anderson Dodd Smith, PhD and Susan Krauss Whitbourne, PhD represented aging on the work group. This publication is available online at: <http://www.apa.org/pi/oema/inclusivepsychology.pdf>

### **Aging at APA**

#### **The Office on Aging**

The Office on Aging is the focal point for APA activities pertaining to aging. Its overarching mission is to promote the application of psychological knowledge to issues affecting the health and well being of older adults. Deborah DiGilio, MPH, staffs this office, the APA Committee on Aging, and the National Coalition on Mental Health and Aging. She can be contacted at: 202-336-6135 or [ddigilio@apa.org](mailto:ddigilio@apa.org).

#### **The Committee on Aging (CONA)**

CONA is a six-member committee of APA Governance consisting 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. Members include John Cavanaugh, PhD (Chair), Toni G. Antonucci, PhD, Barry Edelstein, PhD, Gregory A. Hinrichsen, PhD (chair-elect), Beth Hudnall Stamm, PhD, and Leonard W. Poon, PhD.

#### **Public Interest Public Policy Office**

The Public Interest Public Policy Office works closely with the Office on Aging on aging policy issues at the federal level. Directed by Ellen Garrison, PhD, the office is currently recruiting for a Senior Legislative and Federal Affairs Officer to manage a policy portfolio that will include aging issues. Inquires can be directed to Dr. Garrison at [egarrison@apa.org](mailto:egarrison@apa.org).

**APA Division 20 (Adult Development & Aging)** 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://apadiv20.phhp.ufl.edu>

**APA Division 12 – Section II (Clinical Geropsychology)** is devoted to research, training, and the provision of psychological services for older adults. Their website includes information on training opportunities for students and professionals including clinical psychology internships, postdoctoral fellowship opportunities, continuing education offerings, research funding and job information. <http://www.geropsych.org>.

**To subscribe to the APA Aging Issues Newsletter**, please contact Deborah DiGilio, APA Aging Issues Officer at [ddigilio@apa.org](mailto:ddigilio@apa.org). Past issues are also available on the Office on Aging website at [www.apa.org/pi/aging](http://www.apa.org/pi/aging).