

## **COUNCIL OF REPRESENTATIVES ACTION**

February 19-21, 2010

**Agenda Item No. 17**

### **X. PROFESSIONAL AFFAIRS**

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#### **Development of Treatment Guidelines by APA**

##### **Issue**

APA Council of Representatives is asked to approve APA's development of treatment guidelines, including the establishment of a Steering Committee and Guidelines Development Panels to assist in their development.

The proposed process for APA's development of treatment guidelines, as conceptualized, connects to renewed interest by key APA governance groups and APA's Strategic Plan Goal 2 (Expand Psychology's Role in Advancing Health) and Goal 3 (Increase Recognition of Psychology as a Science.) In addition, and notably, APA's development of treatment guidelines has been recommended by the Presidential Task Force on the Future of Psychology Practice. At its December 4-5, 2009 Meeting, APA Board of Directors also approved and recommended APA's development of treatment guidelines.

##### **Background**

A process, including description of key groups and APA governance review, has been outlined to facilitate proposed APA's development of treatment guidelines, consistent with Association Rule 30.8 (Exhibit 1) and evidence-based practice in psychology (EBPP) or "the integration of the best available research with clinical expertise in the context of patient characteristics, culture, and preferences (APA, 2005.) As the process develops over time, it is expected that the Steering Committee will be charged with making policy recommendations, as needed, for review and approval by APA Board of Directors and Council of Representatives.

It is notable that, to date, APA has not opted to develop guidelines relevant to the treatment provided by psychologists. Instead, in 2002, APA adopted as policy Criteria for Evaluating Treatment Guidelines (Exhibit 2). This document offered criteria to evaluate treatment guidelines promulgated by health care organizations, government agencies, professional associations, and other entities, and proved useful for this purpose, especially in light of APA's decision not to develop treatment guidelines at that time.

Concerns regarding developing consensus for the support of treatment guidelines as well as recognition of the significant resources needed to develop sound treatment guidelines have been barriers to any activity in this arena. But, without strong guidelines from APA representing psychology and psychological interventions, it is possible guidelines established by other organizations may become the de facto standard.

##### **Renewed Interest and Support for APA Treatment Guidelines**

The environment for provision of psychological services has changed and renewed interest in APA's development of treatment guidelines has surfaced. For this reason, the Board of Professional Affairs (BPA) was asked to review APA's policy decisions related to the development of treatment guidelines and make recommendations about appropriate courses of action relevant to development of treatment guidelines. At its Fall 2008 meeting, BPA unanimously endorsed developing and promulgating information and recommendations regarding clinical interventions (Exhibit 3).

BPA also sought feedback from Committee for the Advancement of Professional Practice (CAPP) and Board of Scientific Affairs (BSA). CAPP enthusiastically agreed at its February 2009 meeting

that APA should begin developing treatment guidelines, and endorsed collaborating with BPA in this process. In March 2009, BSA, likewise, expressed support for the development of treatment guidelines by APA. The Committee on Professional Practice and Standards (COPPS) also provided a statement, dated May 2009, in support of an expedited process for the development of treatment guidelines (Exhibit 4).

Dr. James Bray established the Presidential Task Force and convened the Summit on the Future of Psychology Practice in May 2009 to address the needs of practitioners and inform the future of psychology practice. A key recommendation from the Summit included the development of treatment guidelines by APA, specifically the need for an expedited APA process for the development and approval of treatment guidelines. Participants at the Summit further noted that “the time has come to define psychological treatment practices and outcome measures, or others will do it for us.”

### **Cross-Directorate Team Established and Board of Directors Approval**

A cross-Directorate team was established in mid-June 2009, following this Summit and subsequent discussion of APA development of treatment guidelines at the June 2009 Board of Directors and APA Practice Organization (APA PO) Board of Directors meetings. This team is comprised of staff from Practice and Science Directorates. Members of this team include Katherine Nordal, PhD, Steven Breckler, PhD, Howard Kurtzman, PhD, Lynn F. Bufka, PhD, Ronald S. Palomares, PhD, Elizabeth Winkelman, JD, PhD, Daniel Galper, PhD and Mary G. Hardiman, MS. APA General Counsel Nathalie Gilfoyle provides legal consultation. The charge of this group is to make recommendations regarding the structure and policy framework for APA development of treatment guidelines, and collaborate with BPA, BSA, CAPP and COPPS on the same.

The Treatment Guidelines Project Team (TGPT) has met twice a month, reported to the Board of Directors at its August 2009 Meeting, and called a meeting of Treatment Guidelines Experts on October 5, 2009. TGPT has examined models from other agencies and outside organizations, and solicited feedback from experts in this area about the process (Exhibit 5). TGPT presented to the October CAPP meeting where the responses from CAPP members, Board of Directors liaisons, BPA Chair and other liaisons in attendance, were positive (Exhibit 6).

At its December 4-5, 2009 Meeting, APA Board of Directors approved APA’s development of treatment guidelines and recommended that this governance item go before APA Council of Representatives at its February 10-12, 2010 meeting for approval.

### **Proposed Rationale for Development of Treatment Guidelines**

APA governance groups, TGPT and experts agree that APA’s development of treatment guidelines could have positive benefits for the Association, its members and psychology, including an APA product that would

- Define key questions related to clinical practice and identify possible decision options and their outcomes.
- Identify, summarize and evaluate the best evidence and most current data.
- Guide clinical decisions and criteria regarding diagnosis, management, and treatment in specific areas of psychological practice.
- Spotlight the importance and efficacy of psychosocial interventions.
- Facilitate and enhance the contributions of Practice and Science communities.
- Advance evidence-based practice in psychology.

- Encourage quality care for patients and clients.

In addition, the proposed process for APA's development of treatment guidelines, as conceptualized, connects to renewed interest in and reconsideration by key APA governance groups, and strongly connects to APA's Strategic Plan Goal 2 (Expand Psychology's Role in Advancing Health) and Goal 3 (Increase Recognition of Psychology as a Science).

### **Proposed Process, Beginning with Formation of Steering Committee**

TGPT has formulated a structure and process for APA to consider in developing treatment guidelines. Central to this effort will be the establishment in 2010 of a Steering Committee. One of the central tasks of the Steering Committee is the selection of specific disorders/conditions for which treatment guidelines will be developed. This Committee would be comprised of 6 members (recommended by BPA, BSA and CAPP and reviewed by the Board of Directors) who would facilitate, in collaboration with BPA, BSA, CAPP and staff, development of appropriate criteria for identification, selection and review of treatment guidelines, and provide feedback on an appropriate template for treatment guidelines. Once the criteria and template are established, the Steering Committee will recommend clinical questions for systematic reviews and content areas for guidelines to be developed. This Steering Committee would propose criteria for selection of experts to serve on the Guidelines Development Panels, and explore sources of funding to support development of clinical questions and systematic review (Exhibit 1).

In response to governance discussion and input, including recognition of the necessity of producing timely treatment guidelines, TGPT recommends that treatment guidelines undergo an expedited review process (that includes feedback from members, technical advisors, governance groups, public, and external organizations), and approval by the Steering Committee, Board of Directors and Council of Representatives. It is anticipated that the public review process will occur once during the development cycle prior to a document undergoing final review and approval by Council and that this review process may not coincide with the timing of scheduled governance meetings. To the fullest extent possible, technology, including collaborative tools and websites, will be used to facilitate the work of these groups and the overall treatment guidelines development and review process.

### **Implementation Plan**

If the Main Motion is approved, two (2) face-to-face meetings of the Steering Committee would be held in 2010 and, if appropriate, one (1) face-to-face meeting of a Treatment Guidelines Development Panel would be held in 2010. Depending upon financial considerations associated with the Systematic Review Process, including identification of possible sources of external funding for this project, the Steering Committee, in collaboration with TGPT and key governance groups, would oversee the development of a Systematic Review Process and apprise the Board of Directors of all progress in this regard.

### **Fiscal Implications**

If the Main Motion is approved, two (2) face-to-face meetings of the Steering Committee would be held in 2010 and, if appropriate, one (1) face-to-face meeting of a Treatment Guidelines Development Panel would be held in 2010. Note: Each year, the Practice Directorate budgets for a variety of research- and policy- related activities. The 2010 proposed budget takes into consideration ongoing efforts related to practice and treatment guidelines and can, as such, accommodate convening the following groups to advance the effort, if approved. Therefore, no funds are being requested for the establishment of the Steering Committee or Treatment Guidelines Development Panel.

### **Steering Committee**

Six (6) members @ two (2) meetings in 2010

Airfare for Steering Committee members to attend two (2)  
3-day meetings in Washington, DC (\$500 x 6 x 2 mtgs.) \$6,000  
Subsistence and Hotel (\$275 x 6 x 3 days x 2 mtgs.) \$9,900  
Monthly Conference Calls (\$100 x 10 calls) \$1,000  
Total = \$16,900

**Guidelines Development Panel**

Five (5) members (discussions have centered on 4-5 members per panel) @ one (1) meeting in 2010

Airfare for Guidelines Development Panel members to attend one (1)  
3-day meeting in Washington, DC (\$500 x 5 x 1 mtgs.) \$2,500  
Subsistence and Hotel (\$275 x 5 x 3 days x 1 mtg) \$4,125  
Monthly Conference Calls (\$100 x 6 calls) \$600  
Total: \$7,225

**Total Projected Meeting Costs for 2010 = \$24,125. Existing funds in the Practice Directorate Budget will be used for this purpose.**

**Main Motion**

- 1 That Council of Representatives approve APA's development of treatment guidelines, including the
- 2 establishment of a Steering Committee and Guidelines Development Panel(s) to assist in their
- 3 development.

### **Recommendation**

APA Board of Directors, Board of Professional Affairs, Committee for the Advancement of Professional Practice, Board of Scientific Affairs and Committee on Professional Practice and Standards recommend approval of the Main Motion.

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### **Exhibits**

1. Proposed process of APA development of treatment guidelines, including description of key groups and governance review, in accordance with Association Rules 30.8.
2. Criteria for Evaluating Treatment Guidelines (APA, 2002)
3. Board of Professional Affairs (BPA) minute from November 2008 meeting on APA development of treatment guidelines
4. Committee for the Advance of Professional Practice (CAPP), Board of Scientific Affairs (BSA) and Committee on Professional Practice and Standards (COPPS) minutes from Spring 2009 meetings on APA development of treatment guidelines
5. Treatment Guidelines Materials (Institutes of Medicine (IOM), external organizations)
6. Committee for the Advancement of Professional Practice minute from October 2009 Meeting on APA development of treatment guidelines.

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