



(L to R) Danielle Lutfi-Proctor, Dr. Emily Elliott, and Jenna Zeringue, all from Louisiana State University, participate in the recent SEPA conference in New Orleans.

Researchers from Lakes Charles, McNeese, Monroe Gather at SWPA

Psychological scientists will take on Pathogen Prevalence Theory, Victorian values, cell phone addiction, beliefs about global warming, and critique the policies for internship approval, among the myriad of topics as the Southwestern Psychological Association (SWPA) kicks off next

week, to be held in Dallas, April 8–10. The theme, “Evolutionary Psychology: The Adapted Mind,” is coupled with keynote speaker, Dr. David Buss from University of Texas at Austin, who will give the Forensics Psychology Lecture on “The Evolution of Sexual Morality.”

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Long-Term Chronic Pain Treatments

CDC – Opioids Bad, Psychology Good

In a March 18 report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) authors said that there was no evidence for a long-term benefit of opioid pain medications. However, the authors found strong evidence for serious risks, including overdose, opioid use disorder, and motor vehicle injuries.

The CDC said that other treatments, including psychological approaches, had long-term benefits, without the high risks of opioids.

“It is now widely accepted that pain is a biopsychosocial phenomenon,” clinical health psychologist and President of the Southern Pain society, Dr. Geralyn Datz, told the *Times* in a recent interview. “The Guidelines are really exciting because they explicitly state that physicians should be using nonpharmacological strategies including cognitive behavioral therapy as well as exercise for patients with pain,” Datz said.

Previously with the New Orleans Veteran Affairs Medical Center and Pennington Biomedical, Dr. Datz now directs the Pain Rehabilitation Program at

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SSA Thumbs Its Nose at Psychological Science and Institute of Health/Medicine

On March 24, the Social Security Administration published a new section on “When Not to Purchase a Consultative Examination.” In their new procedure, “DI 22510.006” in the Program Operations Manual System, the authors say, “Do not purchase symptom validity tests (SVT) to address symptom evaluation or

issues of potential malingering as part of a CE.”

This wording appears to ignore requests by SSA’s own Inspector General as well as the recommendations outlined in an April 2015 report from the Institute of Medicine (now the Institute of Health and Medicine), calling for the SSA

Cont pg 3

Tax Hikes, Austerity Measures

Legislators Digging In

Legislators continue to dig into the state’s money problems in the regular session now in its fourth week.

At the end of the special session to deal with the state’s dramatic economic woes, legislators had raised the sales tax to 5¢ bringing it to a combined state/local tax of 10¢. This is said to be one of the highest in the nation.

In scrapping for any savings they could find, the law-makers dropped sales tax exemptions for 196 items. For the first time in years, consumers will be paying sales taxes on Bibles and religious literature used in classes, fire-fighting equipment used by volunteer fire departments, food items for certain school

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Fotolia

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LPA Hosts
Expert Panel in May

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Editorial Page – Opinions

How SSA Behavior Explains the Trump Phenomenon

by J. Nelson

Quinnipiac University pollsters asked voters if they agreed or disagreed with this statement: “Public officials don’t care much what people like me think.” A whopping 76 percent of all respondents agreed. Only 23 percent disagreed and only 7 percent of those strongly disagreed.

While 75 percent of Sanders’ supporters agreed, and 61 percent of Clinton supporters agreed, a full 90 percent of Trump supporters said that public officials don’t care what citizens think.

Last month the SSA published its policy on symptom validity testing (see front page story), indicating that they don’t care about what anyone thinks—not the scientific community, not their Congressional bosses, not their Inspector, and probably most certainly, not the people that pay their salaries.

To get the full, flabbergasting effect and seriousness of the SSA’s group-level decision, here is a review:

- 1) Before 2007, psychological scientists, mainly the top shelf neuropsychologists, were innovating methods for figuring out symptom validity. Result: The SSA ignored new scientific innovations.
- 2) Around 2007, Mike Chafetz (along with others) collected data on symptom validity in SSA disability cases. He began to share the data. Result: Chafetz was discontinued as a consulting psychologist.
- 3) Around 2011, Senator Tom Coburn picked up the baton, found serious flaws and challenged the SSA. Result: SSA ignored Coburn and other members of Congress.
- 4) In 2012 and 2013, the Office of Inspector General told the SSA to change. Result: SSA sent a CPA to tell the Inspector General that the SSA disagreed and they’d get their own study from the Institute of Medicine (IOM).

5) In 2014-2015, the IOM studied the problem (at what cost, only God and Judicial Watch know) and came down dramatically on the side of psychological science and symptom validity testing.

Result: Last month the SSA ignored the IOM, and are staying mostly with their old policy, which conveniently benefits them in power, control, and resources. Not surprising is the fact that the innovations would save millions and millions of dollars.

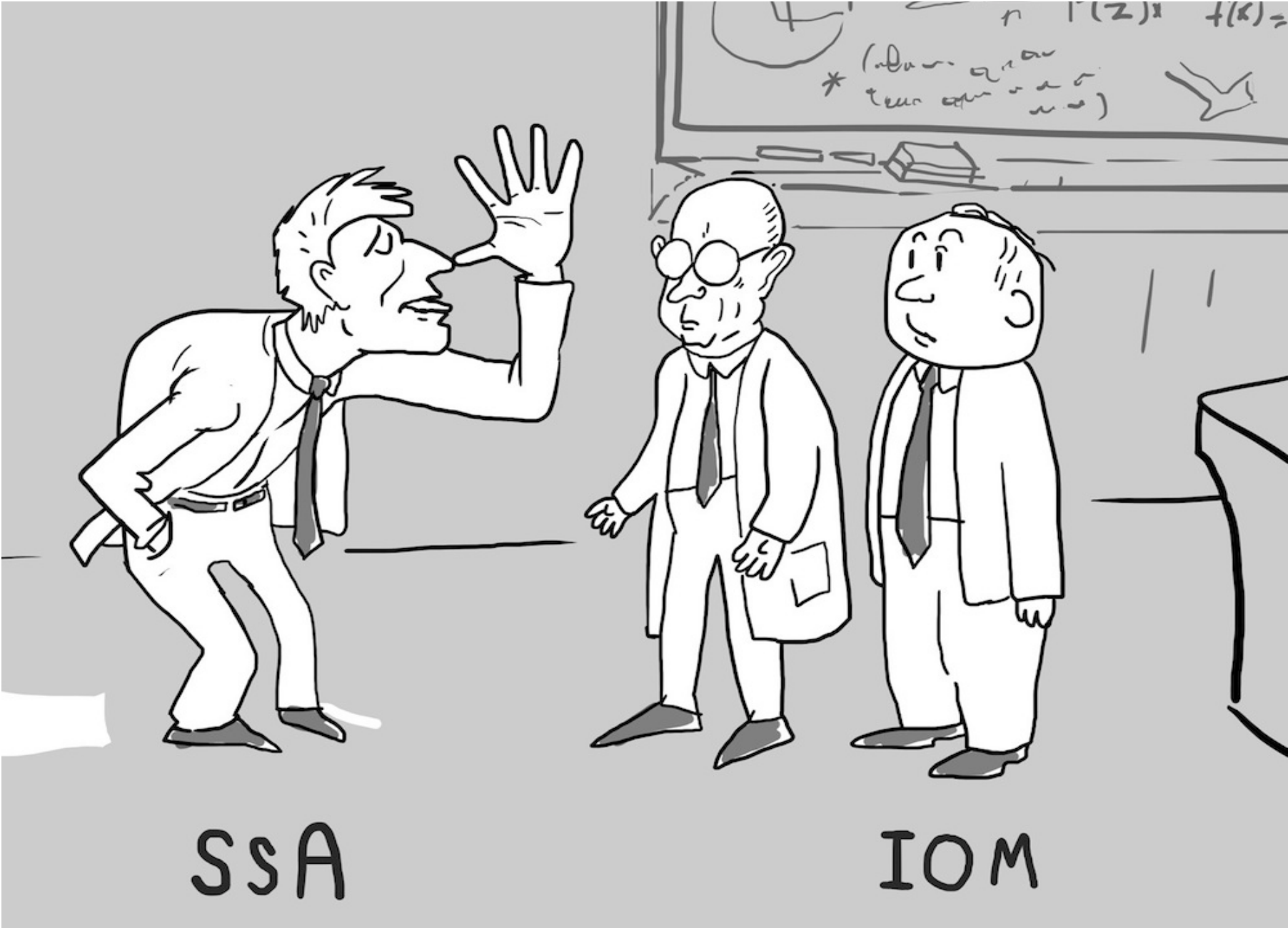
From an embedded social group theory perspective, we can predict that this type of over-boundary in a subgroup correlates with deficiencies in group-problem solving. We can also predict that the problem exists all over government, and elsewhere too, as a function of poor parent group boundaries. It is certainly the case with the IRS, and probably the Justice Department. It is the unlucky citizen who gets tangled up with them.

What should we social scientists be doing about this? In his 1950 essay in the *New York Times*, Bertrand Russell warned that our technological advancements could easily outdistance our ethical capabilities, and that the science of psychology holds the answer and must help guide the way.

Today, society may be too complex for individuals to ward off the pull of the collective unconscious. Ideas are so truncated and speeded up, that collective amnesia is the rule, not the exception. A single individual can’t usually overcome these group dynamics. Psychology should be part of the solution.

But the parent group needs a shot in the arm, to remind us, the collective, that the country was founded on a social system paradigm shift—the single principle of individual liberty.

If the Trump phenomenon is in response to the group dynamics, it makes perfect sense.



SSA Thumbs Its Nose at Science, Institute of Health/Medicine

continued

to integrate symptom validity testing into it procedures on a regular basis.

In the April 2015 report, Institute of Medicine authors sided with psychological science saying that not only should psychological testing be routinely performed in many types of Social Security Disability claims, but that the use of symptom validity testing in particular is needed when there are questions of credibility. They authors said that the SSA should require psychological testing for “all applicants” when claims relate to either a) mental disorders unaccompanied by cognitive complaints; or b) claims where “somatic symptoms are disproportionate to medical findings.” Statements of validity should be included, which “could include” symptom validity tests.

Research has shown that up to 40 percent of claimants may exaggerate symptoms.

In September 2013 the Office of Inspector General (OIG) released a report pointing to flaws in SSA policy, the “Congressional Response Report: The Social Security Administration’s Policy on Symptom Validity Tests in Determining Disability Claims.” The OIG investigators said that the SSA runs contrary to scientific and medical consensus, other federal agencies such as Veterans Affairs, and standard practice in the private insurance sector, when it refuses to allow the use of Symptom Validity Tests, called SVTs.

The SSA still resisted. Their representative in the matter, a CPA and Financial Manager, Mr. Gary Hatcher, said that the agency disagreed and, “we plan to seek external expertise on psychological tests from the Institute of Medicine [IOM] to include an examination of published research and studies on SVTs,”

However, the SSA now appears to be ignoring the IOM findings in respect to the latest wording of the Program Operations Manual System (POMS), which notes:

“D. For issues of potential malingering. Do not purchase symptom validity tests (SVT) to address symptom evaluation or issues of potential malingering as part of a CE. Tests cannot prove whether a claimant is malingering because there is no test that, when passed or failed, conclusively determines the claimant’s motivation. Malingering requires a deliberate attempt to deceive.”

The guidelines state two exceptions: “The Office of Disability Programs may approve rare exceptions to this prohibition on a case-by-case basis (for example, testing ordered pursuant to a court order).” And, if the SVT is already part of a record, it can be included.

At the center of the debate is New Orleans clinical neuropsychologist, Dr. Michael Chafetz, one of a growing number of psychological scientists around the country who noticed disturbing patterns in disability evaluations. Chafetz and other nationally recognized neuropsychologists have offered scientific guidelines but these appear to also have been ignored by SSA.

Another serious and related problem with the Disability Determinations system is the massive backlog of reviews that must be considered by the Administrative Law Judges.

In 2011 U.S. Senator Tom Coburn became involved in trying to update procedures at the SSA. Through the U.S. Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, Coburn studied problems with backlogs in disability appeals. Administrative Law Judges (ALJs) were struggling with extremely high case loads causing years long wait times for decisions. Evidence from SVTs would help, Coburn and others said.

Coburn’s research found errors rates of 25 percent and insufficient evidence in decisions by ALJs. Some judges approved appeals simply because they did not have time to study the case, according to a report by the Cato Institute. Senator Coburn was referred to Chafetz who provided a special presentation in the public interest for Coburn’s office, through the Louisiana Psychological Association.

The ALJs have sought out Dr. Chafetz for help. A recent ALJ association press release noted: “Establishing the validity of the evidence is the cornerstone of any accurate disability determination. The American Academy of Clinical Neuropsychology (AACN) has recently sponsored an expert guidance article to help SSA with the rationale and transition for a change to proper validity assessment in disability examinations. The article promotes the shift from self-report, which is often unverifiable, to objective validity assessment, which can provide consultative examiners, DDS reviewers, and ALJs with the proper tools for more accurate disability determinations: ...”

The ALJs have also recently sought help from industrial-organizational psychologist, Leaetta Hough, PhD, a nationally recognized expert. She conducted a scientific study and work analysis of the ALJ problem. Hough and her team found that, while the SSA considers that a case can be reviewed in 2.5 hours, the actual time required is much longer.

The news report on the ALJ Association website noted: “A number of significant findings were reached by the study, including that it takes 7 hours to adjudicate an average size case (650 pages) if a judge reads all the evidence and follows all regulations, rulings and policies of the Social Security Administration. Our findings completely refute the agency’s contention that it only takes 2.5 hours on average to adjudicate a case.” Some cases are more than 1,000 pages, they noted.

“Given the importance of each decision, both to the claimants and the trust fund (each case has a value of \$350,000), spending sufficient time to reach a correct result is an imperative.”

The “Official Position of the American Academy of Clinical Neuropsychology Social Security Administration Policy on Validity Testing: Guidance and Recommendations for Change,” authored by M. D. Chafetz, M. A. Williams, Y. S. Ben-Porath, K. J. Bianchini, K. B. Boone, M. W. Kirkwood, G. J. Larrabee & J. S. Ord, is available free online.

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We welcome ideas for news, features, Letters to the Editor, photos, and other material related to psychological community of Louisiana. Editorials and commentary reflect the opinions of this newspaper. Columns and Letters to the Editor express the opinions of the writers and not necessarily those of *The Psychology Times*. All materials copyrighted by J. Nelson unless otherwise noted.

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State and Legislative News

Legislators Dig In

continued

lunch and breakfast programs, newspapers, textbooks for certain private academic schools, and even for Girl Scout cookies.

The lawmakers patched together a group of tax increases and cuts in the special session, that are given to be a reasonable fix to some issues facing the state, but continue to juggle problems and solutions in the current session.

In a March 23 announcement, the Board of Regents said that they reviewed and accepted the 2016-2017 funding recommendations, after the \$2 billion shortfall was reduced to \$747 million.

The real problems seem far from over. Legislators continue to propose efforts to deal with the state’s budget problems. Representative Jerome Richard proposed an across the board cut for all professional, personal, and consulting contracts for the state.

A bill by Representative Talbot would allow more leeway for the state to use services of the Department of Natural Resources and Representative Jay Morris presented a measure to reduce the salaries of certain public officials and employees. The bill is pending in House Appropriations.

In an Executive Order published in the March *Register*, Governor Edwards ordered expense and hiring freezes, for all departments and agencies in the executive branch. The Order includes licensing boards and the Department of Health and Hospitals, and any funds related to “vacant positions and the expenditure categories of Travel, Operating Services, Supplies, Professional Services, Other Charges, Acquisitions, and Major Repairs.”

Cuts across all departments were also noted. See box below for selected reductions amounts.

Schedule 09-Health and Hospitals	
09-300 Jefferson Parish Human Services Authority	\$ 111,648
09-301 Florida Parishes Human Services Authority	\$ 202,620
09-302 Capital Area Human Services District	\$ 270,352
09-303 Developmental Disabilities Council	\$ 13,751
09-304 Metropolitan Human Services District	\$ 494,323
09-307 Office of the Secretary	\$ 614,798
09-309 South Central Louisiana Human Services Authority	\$ 369,007
09-310 Northeast Delta Human Services Authority	\$ 175,081
09-320 Office of Aging and Adult Services	\$ 131,966
09-324 Louisiana Emergency Response Network	\$ 44,285
09-325 Acadiana Area Human Services District	\$ 269,039
09-326 Office of Public Health	\$ 715,009
09-330 Office of Behavioral Health	\$ 412,749
09-340 Office of Citizens with Developmental Disabilities	\$ 201,445
09-375 Imperial Calcasieu Human Services Authority	\$ 189,777
09-376 Central Louisiana Human Services District	\$ 235,906
09-377 Northwest Louisiana Human Services District	\$ 136,605
Schedule 10-Department of Children and Family Services	
10-360 Office of Children and Family Services	\$ 4,137,390
Schedule 19-Special Schools and Commissions	
19B-653 Louisiana Schools for the Deaf and Visually Impaired	\$ 566,770
19B-657 Louisiana School for Math, Science, and the Arts	\$ 151,469
19B-662 Louisiana Educational Television Authority	\$ 31,345
19B-666 Board of Elementary and Secondary Education	\$ 15,701
19B-673 New Orleans Center for the Creative Arts	\$ 128,925
Schedule 19-Department of Education	
19D-678 State Activities	\$ 945,439
19D-681 Subgrantee Assistance	\$ 2,052,790
19D-682 Recovery School District	\$ 37,189
19D-697 Nonpublic Educational Assistance	\$ 788,821
19D-699 Special School District	\$ 259,468
Schedule 19E-Louisiana State University Health Science Center	
19E-610 Louisiana Health Care Services Division	\$ 1,116,282



Senator Fred Mills at his desk in the Louisiana Senate last year. In the current legislative session he has introduced several measures, one of which relates to Medicaid standards.

Slew of Bills Proposed about Medicaid

Bills addressing the Medicaid expansion, cost containments for public healthcare, provider requirements, and many other topics are flooding into the committees on Health & Welfare.

A number of bills have been referred to committee last month and are currently pending, possibly due to the complexity of issues involving Medicaid expansion and the state’s serious and continued financial problems, which require juggling.

Included in these Medicaid proposals are: HB 461 which would require copayments for Medicaid-covered physician visits and non-emergency services provided in hospital emergency rooms. HB 492 is similar, authorizing collection of copayments in medical assistance programs. Both have been pending since March 14.

HB 497 by Representative Barbara Norton is an extensive measure that would provide for the Medicaid health home state plan options for those Medicaid enrollees with serious mental illness. It would provide minimum delivery requirements for health home providers. It has been pending since March 14.

HB 517, by Representative Tony Bacala, is a proposal that would authorize the Department of Health and Hospitals to impose provider fees on every class of healthcare provider, facility, and service recognized in federal Medicaid regulations. This would include psychological services, as well as all other health services, such as home healthcare services, physician services, outpatient prescription drugs,

dental services, and chiropractic services. The measure would also cap the fees.

SB 52 by Fred Mills proposes to create a single preferred drug list for Medicaid coverage.

He also proposed HB 106 with changes in Medicaid eligibility standards.

Bill Would Abolish Regents, Create New Bd of Trustees

Representative Thomas Carmody has put up a bill, House Bill 169, that would abolish the Board of Regents and the management boards, and transfer their duties and responsibilities to a newly created board, to be named the Louisiana Postsecondary Education Board of Trustees. The measure appeared on the Interim Calendar on 2/26/2016. March 14 it was read by title and referred to the Committee on Education, where it is pending.

According to the digest the new Board of Trustees who have powers to revise or eliminate programs, departments, subdivisions, and formulate revisions including distributions of funds. Each institution, instead of each management board, would submit budget proposals. The proposal would move management of public hospitals to the Board of Trustees, according to the digest.

The measure would be an amendment to the state’s constitution.

Legislative News

Bill Establishing Mental Health “Stabilization Units” Passes House

House Bill 763 aimed to create and support “intervention and stabilization units” by the human services districts, passed the House and will be heard presently in the Senate Health & Welfare committee.

The proposed law defines the “intervention and stabilization unit” as a type of crisis receiving center in which a staff of mental health and behavioral health specialists provide a high level of screening and assessment to people experiencing mental health or behavioral health crises.

The digest for the proposal notes that the purpose is 1) To properly connect patients experiencing mental health or behavioral health crises to either acute or ongoing community-based treatment; (2) To diminish the need in a community for recurrent crisis services for persons suffering from mental illness, substance abuse, or both conditions; and (3) To serve as a crisis continuum component that assists law enforcement officers, hospital emergency departments, and jails by treating persons with mental health and behavioral health conditions in an appropriate setting.

Correction to Specialty Court Exemptions

A measure correcting a problem with a 2015 law, exempting certain facilities that provide substance abuse and mental health services to specialty courts, from certified providers.

SB 210 will change wording to ensure that providers are qualified.

Present law provides for exceptions relative to facilities operated solely to provide substance abuse or mental health services to specialty courts.

Proposed law provides that the provisions of this Part shall not be considered to permit the rendering of mental health services by persons or facilities that are not properly licensed, certified, or registered.

HB 252 Exempts LPC Board from Ex-Offender Licensing Protections

The LPC Board may be exempted from a law that authorizes entities issuing licenses for certain fields of work to issue provisional licenses to ex-offenders. The present law gives certain requirements about these entities who issue licenses to ex-offenders.

The bill is HB 251 and is scheduled for debate on the House floor on April 7. It was reported favorably out of committee. Sources say there will be an amendment.



Senator J.P. Morrell (R) at an interview in a previous legislative session. He is the new chairman of the Senate Committee on Revenue and Fiscal Affairs, dealing with taxation matters. And he has authored a measure to help stop discrimination due to sexual orientation.

SB 332 by Sen. Morrell Would Add Gender Identity to Employment Discrimination Protections

Senator J.P. Morrell has offered Senate Bill 332 which adds sexual orientation and gender identity or expression in provisions prohibiting discrimination.

The proposal adds definitions for purposes of the Louisiana Employment Discrimination Law. The proposed law defines “sexual orientation” as an individual’s actual or perceived heterosexuality, homosexuality, or bisexuality. The proposed law defines “gender identity or expression” as a gender-related identity, appearance, expression, or behavior of a person regardless of the person’s assigned sex at birth.

The present law authorizes the attorney general to institute civil proceedings to annul the articles of incorporation when a business or its officer engages in certain acts. The proposed law keeps much of present law but removes references to homosexuality.

The proposal is currently pending in Senate Judiciary B.

Senator Morrell has also submitted a bill for providing education programs in juvenile justice facilities, which is pending Senate floor debate. SB 303 would be called the “Educational Accountability and Rehabilitation Act of 2016,” according to the digest. The measure provides for the Department of Public Safety and Corrections, office of juvenile justice, to develop pupil progression plans for schools under its jurisdiction and to publish the plans on its website. The bill puts forth methods for developing, implementing and measuring programs for juveniles involved in the correction systems.

Requirements for the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education to adopt rules to develop specialized accountability for this program is called for, along with a variety of administrative type measures.

Legislative News

SB 326 Adds Starvation To Child Abuse Reporting

A bill that will add starvation and malnutrition to the definition of "serious bodily injury" to child abuse reporting laws, has passed the Senate in a 33 to 0 vote. It now moves to the House.

The law, authored by Senators Claitor, Barrow, Colomb and Representative James, retains the present law and is to be known as the Alfred C. Williams Child Protection Act.

Measures Support Open Meetings Law

Two bills could strengthen the open meetings laws and public records access, supporting the public's rights and abilities to know what government officials discuss.

HB 162 would prohibit communication among a quorum of the members of public bodies or boards, unless that communication is also open to be heard or seen by members of the public. This does not impact legally conducted executive sessions.

Proposed law provides that unless the public body is holding an executive session in accordance with present law (R.S. 42:16 and 17), no member of a public body that is subject to the notice requirements of present law (R.S. 42:19(A)) shall engage in communication of any type regarding a matter over which the public body has supervision, control, jurisdiction, or advisory power with a quorum of the members of the public body unless such communication is contemporaneously visible or audible to the public.

The present law also provides that each item on the agenda must be listed separately and described with reasonable specificity. Proposed law retains present law.

HB 81 would require public bodies to make it easier to contact a custodian of records, who is legally accountable to produce documents in a timely and legal way, to any member of the public who is over 18.

Both bills are pending hearings in the committee on House & Governmental Affairs.

Present law provides that any person who, pursuant to present law, is required to report the sexual abuse of a child, or the abuse or neglect of a child that results in the serious bodily injury, neurological impairment, or death of the child, and the person knowingly and willfully fails to so report is to be fined not more than \$3,000, imprisoned, with or without hard labor, for not more than three years, or both.

Present law defines "serious bodily injury" as injury involving protracted and obvious disfigurement or protracted loss or impairment of the function of a bodily member, organ, or mental faculty, or substantial risk of death.

Proposed law retains present law and adds injury resulting from starvation or malnutrition to the definition of "serious bodily injury."

More Freedoms in Telehealth Proposed

Several bills have been introduced that expand and clarify the new efforts to extend health services of the dwindling provider ranks, and at the same time, reduce costs, goals stated by Senator Scott Simon when he put forth the first telehealth efforts in previous sessions.

Senator Dan Claitor has authored a measure to extend the options of communications. The present law requires a physician practicing telemedicine to maintain a physical practice location in Louisiana or affirms that he has an arrangement for referrals with a physician in Louisiana. The proposed law repeals present law.


The present law defines "synchronous interaction" as including interaction via two-way video and audio transmission simultaneously. The proposed law provides for interaction via two-way video or audio transmission.

Present law provides for rulemaking by respective professional or occupational licensing boards. Proposed law provides that rulemaking shall not be more restrictive than the provisions of present law.

Proposed law provides venue in suits arising out of telemedicine services in the district court where the patient resides or where the patient was physically located during the service.

The bill is pending in committee. Other measures include HB50 by Schroder that adds licensed dietitians and nutritionists to the list of those who may use telehealth technology. Also there is SB193 by Long, that deals with the adequacy of networks.

American Board of Medical Psychology



The Specialty for the Coming Integrated Care Models in Primary Care Centers and Hospitals

Medical Psychologists are post doctorate trained and licensed psychologists with training in psychopharmacology, behavioral medicine, and health psychology. A medical psychologist is more than a psychopharmacologist and clinical psychologist and they are prepared for the mainstream healthcare system.

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www.amphome.org

CDC Guidelines– Opioids Bad, Psychology Good cont'd

Southern Behavioral Medicine Associates in Hattiesburg, Mississippi.

“This recommendation aligns itself very nicely with pain psychology,” she said, “and the biopsychosocial model, and brings these ideas into mainstream primary care.”

The report, “CDC Guideline for Prescribing Opioids for Chronic Pain – United States, 2016,” published in the *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, concluded that there was no evidence for long-term benefit of opioids in pain and function when compared to no opioids. However, the authors said there was “extensive evidence” for harm.

The authors also concluded that there was extensive evidence for some benefits of treatments such as cognitive behavioral methods and also non-opioid pharmacologic treatments compared with long-term opioid therapy.

Dr. Datz cautioned against overreactions to the report. “I would encourage pain psychologists and providers of all disciplines to actually read the guidelines,” she said, “because the guidelines themselves are a very rational, well thought out, cautionary set of thoughts and evidence, and this is different than the sensationalism that is in the news, on Twitter and Facebook.”

The findings stand in sharp contrast to the dramatic frequency with which opioids are prescribed. An estimated 20 percent of patients presenting to physician offices with noncancer pain symptoms or pain-related diagnoses receive an opioid prescription, said the CDC. In 2012 this came to 259 million prescriptions for opioid pain medication. “... enough for every adult in the United States to have a bottle of pills,” said the CDC authors.

Opioid prescriptions increased 7.3% from 2007 to 2012, with opioid prescribing rates increasing more for family practice, general practice, and internal medicine compared with other specialties, noted the authors.

Rates of opioid prescribing vary greatly across states in ways that cannot be explained by the underlying health status of the population, highlighting the lack of consensus among clinicians on how to use opioid pain medication, said the authors.

According to another CDC report, Louisiana ranks 7th in prescribing opioids. Alabama ranks first, followed by Tennessee at second. For those states with low use, Hawaii ranks last, then California and New York.

The CDC noted the prevalence of common, predominantly musculoskeletal pain conditions, such as arthritis, rheumatism, chronic back or neck problems, and frequent severe headaches, together estimated at 43% among adults.

The CDC authors noted that 165,000 persons died from overdose related to opioid pain medication in the United States between 1999 and 2014. The Drug Abuse Warning Network estimated that greater than 420,000 emergency room visits were related to the misuse or abuse of narcotic pain relievers in 2011, the most recent year for which data are available.

Regents Accept Budget

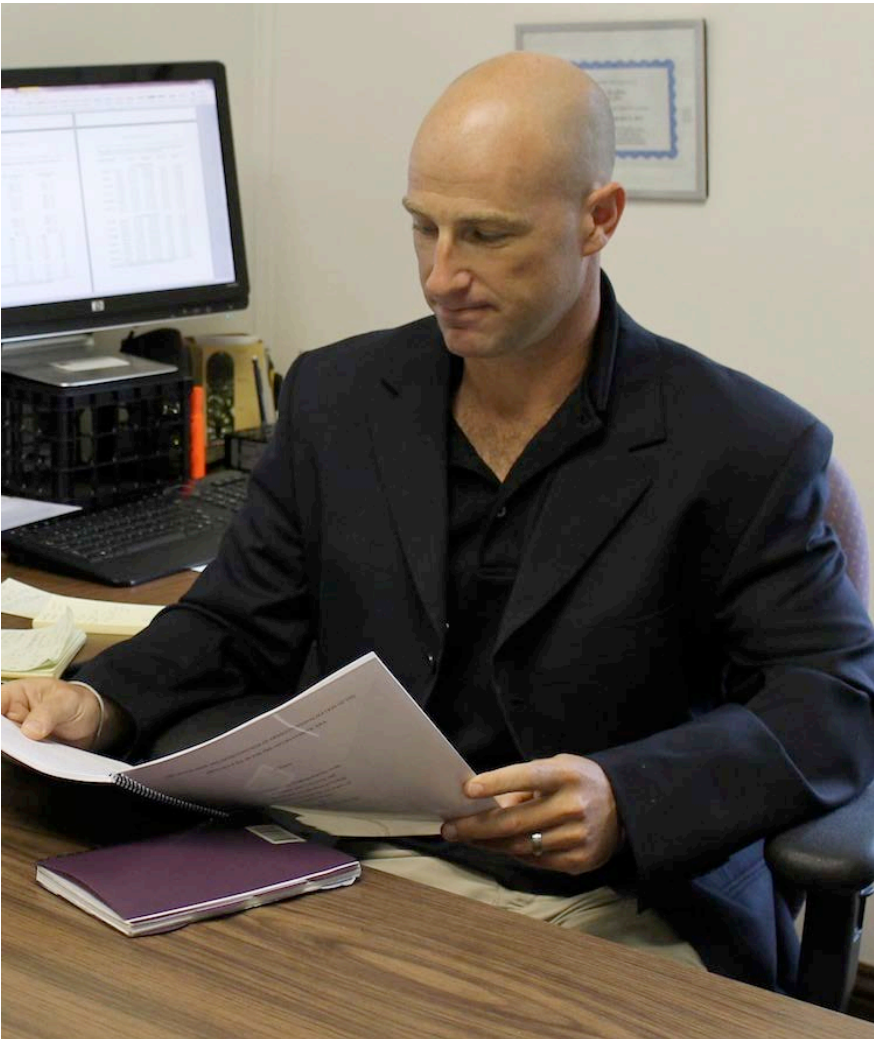
In a March 23 news memo, the Board of Regents wrote that they reviewed and accepted the 2016-2017 funding recommendations.

In their memo, they noted, “The Revenue Estimating Conference (REC) met last week and revised the revenue estimate to account for various measures enacted by the legislature during the 1st Special Legislative Session of 2016. Taking in to account the various revenue bills, approximately \$1.26 B was raised for FY 17. The latest shortfall calculation for FY 17 has been reduced from approximately \$2 B to approximately \$747 M.”

The Regents’ notice said that the preliminary recommendation which was approved on March 23 is

based on distributing available funds in the executive budget through the “outcomes-based funding formula models for 2 and 4-year institutions and a pro-rata distribution for the specialized institutions.” Also, “With regard to the 2 and 4-year institutions, 70% of the distribution is based on each institution’s existing operating budget base, 15% is based on cost, and 15% is based on outcomes.”

They said that final distribution will be determined by the funds appropriated in the final version of the appropriations bill and will be presented for approval at their June 2016 meeting.



Dr. Alex Cohen, licensed clinical psychologist and associate psychology professor at LSU, was recently awarded the “Rainmaker” for his work with computer analysis for mental disorders. His work will be featured on the National Geographic channel

Third Annual Mental Health Legislative Forum to Be Held

The 2016 Mental health Legislative Forum will be held on Friday, April 8, at the Louisiana Building in Baton Rouge.

The Forum is a community effort to cooperate and collaborate on legislative issues in the mental health services community. The Forum is organized by the Louisiana Counseling Association and the Louisiana Association of Marriage and Family Therapists.

Howie Brownell, M.S., Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist is this year’s director. He noted that eight groups were invited to attend the Forum. These are the Louisiana Association of Substance Abuse Counselors and Trainers (LASACT), the National Association of Social Workers-Louisiana Chapter (NASW-LA), the Louisiana Association of Clinical Social Workers (LACSW), the Louisiana Psychological Association (LPA), the Louisiana Counseling Association (LCA), the Louisiana Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (LAMFT), the Louisiana Behavioral Analysis Association (LaBAA), the Louisiana School Psychology Association (LSPA), and the Red River Institute.

Dr. Cohen Named “Rainmaker”

Dr. Alex Cohen, associate professor in the Psychology Department at Louisiana State University, has been named the 2016 Rainmaker Mid-Career Scholar Award by the LSU Council on Research and Economic Development. Dr. Cohen’s work will also be featured in the upcoming National Geographic Channel’s “Brain Games” Series. Dr. Cohen works with automatic analysis of natural behaviors in order to improve the treatment and lives of individuals with serious mental illness, including psychosis and mania.

Corrections & Clarifications

Dr. Sean Lane contacted us and corrected that his background included being the *Associate Chair*, not the *Chair*, of the psychology department at LSU. We corrected this in later editions and apologize for any confusion.

Please send corrections or clarifications to the *Times* at psychologytimes@drjulienels.com

Over-Budget Legal Costs Could Cause Fee Increase for Psychologists

In February the state psychology board's new Executive Director, Ms. Jaime Monic, alerted board members that one of the legal contractors, Mr. James Raines, had invoices amounting to \$66,597. Monic told the members she asked Mr. Raines to cease work until further notice. This according to the February minutes posted March 18.

Minutes noted: "The Board reviewed the legal contract with Breazeale, Sachse & Wilson, LLC (BSWLLC) in conjunction with invoices billed to date. Ms. Monic reported that upon her review she requested that Mr. Raines cease work on any case until further notice. With current invoices totaling \$66,597.42, Dr. Burnett moved to amend BSWLLC's contract to an amount not to exceed \$68,000. The motion passed by unanimous roll call vote of the members present."

Mr. Raines is one of the several legal contractors for the psychology board. Information gathered last year by the *Times* indicated that his contract was for \$15,000. His firm is Breazeale, Sachse & Wilson. However, current state records do not appear to list any current information about the firm's contract.

The board might look to licensees to cover their budget problems. Minutes from January note: "A draft budget for 2016-17 was provided for review. The Board discussed the proposed budget in conjunction with the current financials and agreed to continue to review potential revenue sources (including potentially raising renewal fees and charging a convenience fee to renew online) and expenditures in order to continue to carry out its duties."

The psychology board, under the past management of the last few years, seems to have increased its use of legal services.

In March 2015 the *Times* asked then Executive Director, Ms. Kelly Parker to examine information about investigations, legal fees, and attorneys employed by the board. Parker declined the request to directly examine public records, and said, "I am invoking our right to have your request and responsive documents reviewed by legal counsel prior to disclosure." Then in an April 2015 written response Parker said the board had no internal policies and no contracts to provide. She provided resumes from the attorneys' websites. She also said there was no resume for herself.

According to government records at that time, Taylor Porter had a contract of \$15,000 and Breazeale, Sachse & Wilson, for Mr. Raines, also had a contract for \$15,000. Another contract with McGlinchey, Stafford, and Lang, for \$19K was listed with the state. This appeared to be the contract for a legislative consultant.

While legal fees may likely be over \$100,000 for 2015, it is the same year that the board may have confused the

time limits for investigations, called "prescription." (See *Times* Vol 6 No 10, "Board May Have Botched Time Limits on Complaints.")

It is not clear why the higher legal fees have been needed. The board has a low disciplinary rate, 8 to 9 actions over the last five years. However, the board has an unusual pattern of discipline actions, when compared to other state boards. (See *Times* investigative report, "Secret Life of Board Complaints," Vol 6, Nos 10 & 12.)

At the same time attorney fees have risen to perhaps over \$100,000, the consulting psychologist who is part of the investigations team is paid a current fee of \$4,999 per year, and only \$4,000 previously. And he is paid by the case, not hour.

RIGHT: Dr. Alicia Pelligrin states her views at LSBEP. The board's attorney, Mr. Lloyd Lunceford is looking on. Legal fees for 2015 were high for the psychology board but total disciplinary actions were average.



Minutes "Missing" from Special Board Meetings During the SB113 Politics

In the January 2016 meeting of the Louisiana State Board of Examiners of Psychologists (LSBEP), the new Executive Director, Ms. Jaime Monic, informed the board that minutes from two board meetings held last May, are now missing.

The two meetings, held on May 4, 2015 and May 7, 2015, occurred during the hotly contested political exchange about Senate Bill 113, and the conflicts created when the LSBEP wanted to remove the Louisiana Psychological Association's right to develop the "list" of names that go to the governor for appointments.

SB113 was initiated by the LSBEP but many believe that the Louisiana Academy of Medical Psychologists was also involved. Medical psychologists have held a majority of positions on the LSBEP since the passage of Act 251 in 2009, even though they represent only about 5 percent of the licensees.

According to the January minutes, Ms. Monic told the current board members that the Minutes for these two meetings "were missing." And, "She [Monic] requested input on these meetings and any decisions that were made to put this documentation together. The Board agreed to investigate and provide as much information as possible."

During the 2015 legislative session, LSBEP took a stand on deleting LPA from the licensing law. When, during backroom negotiations, LPA offered to include a

solution for "proportional representation" for board appointments, LSBEP rejected the idea. No rationale for rejecting this idea was given.

However, in a 2015 records request by the *Times*, emails between then Executive Director Ms. Kelly Parker and legislative officials, suggested that the LSBEP apparently called an emergency meeting early on Monday morning, May 4 to decide on wording about the "list," appointments, and elections.

Parker emailed Senate legal aid, Michelle Ridge, at 8:43 am on May 4. She wrote, "A majority of the Board met this morning to review the proposed language." The board was removing the statewide association sentence from the psychology law and wanted this sentence added: "(b) By January 1, 2016, the board shall adopt rules in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act establishing the nomination and election process by which appointments are made to the governor."

On May 7, Parker emailed the Senate attorney again. "On Thursday, May 7, 2015, a majority of the Board voted to revoke the previous amendment language submitted on Monday, May 4th and instead submit the following: 'The board shall work with the statewide associations representing licensed psychologists during the initial rulemaking process.'" Other communications appeared to have occurred by phone.

Ridge asked Parker if the board was okay with the statue saying: "The board shall adopt rules

State Medical Board Has New Executive Director

As of February 15, Eric D. Torres took over the position of Executive Director for the state medical board. Mr. Torres is an attorney by training, according to the announcement on the website. He has served as the Business Operations Director for the Health Promotion Unit at DHH Office of Public Health. He takes over for Dr. Ceila Mouton who remains the Director of Investigations. She previously served in both roles.

Institute of Medicine Changes Name

The Institute of Medicine, a division of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, Medicine, announced in March that it would change its name to the Health and Medicine Division. “This new name builds on the heritage of the IOM’s work in medicine while emphasizing its increased focus on a wider range of health matters.”

Defendants in Medicare Case Ask Government To Define Their View of CPT 96101

In December 2015, defendants in the government’s case against psychologists who delivered Medicare services for people in nursing homes, asked for information to use in their defense.

According to documents posted by *Leagle*, defendant Gertrude Parker and her counsel asked for 1) affidavits to the seizure warrants that resulted in the forfeiture of Parker’s bank accounts; 2) the Medicare beneficiaries for whom the United States contends fraudulent services were billed; 3) the United States’ documentation and interpretation of CPT Code 96101; and 4) the identities of the unnamed co-conspirators.

Medicare publishes information about CPT Codes, which are copyrighted by the American Medical Association but which are public by the Obama administration. The CPT code 96101 is psychological testing with a report written by a psychologist.

From available documents, it appears that the Government attorneys asked that the identities of “unnamed co-conspirators” be kept secret from defendants. Both sets of defendants appear to have requested to know the identities of these individuals. Because of an apparent time limit, this seems to have been denied Defendant Parker. However, Judge Carl Barbier appears to have granted it to Defendants John Teal and Beverly Stubblefield.

Dr. Rodney Hesson and Ms. Parker own and operate a firm that provided services across four states for several of years. Dr. Teal, a medical psychologist from Mississippi licensed in Louisiana, and Dr. Stubblefield, a well-known member of the community, are said to have worked as employees at the Hesson firm for a short time.

“Missing” Minutes from SB113 Politics Continued

in accordance with the administrative procedure act for the nomination process and election of board members.” Ridge also asked, “What is meant by the ‘initial rulemaking process.’?”

On May 12, the proposed language was apparently to be changed again. Parker forwarded a message from the Senate committee and asked Dr. Joe Comaty, medical psychologist and member of the board at the time, if this wording was okay: “The board shall adopt rules in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act to implement the nomination and election process of board members. During the initial rulemaking process, the board shall consult with statewide associations representing psychologists who are licensed by the board.” Dr. Comaty emailed her back, “Yes.”

Political conflicts were resolved when the author for SB113, Senator Gallot said he would not take sides and would kill the bill if conflict continued.

While emails contained no evidence of LAMP communicating with the board, representatives of the LSBEP and LAMP lobbyists exhibited a seemingly collegial manner at the Senate committee.



Minutes are missing from two LSBEP votes that directed efforts about removing LPA from the law. Above: LAMP lobbyist chats with board members at the Senate committee meeting for SB113 in 2015.

STRESS MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR WOMEN LIVING WITH MS: COGNITIVE BEHAVIORAL METHODS IN A GROUP SETTING



BEGINNING FEBRUARY 2016

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The intention of this group is to foster development of specific strategies and practices that have been shown to reduce fatigue and improve mood in individuals living with multiple sclerosis. Topics that will be addressed include social functioning (communication and assertiveness), fatigue, anxiety, relaxation, pain management, and cognitive impairment.

Women are invited to participate, and it will be led by clinical psychologist, Melissa Dufrene, PsyD. Participants will be asked to practice skills outside of sessions and to monitor their progress.



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Psych Board Proposes More Changes to Continuing Education Rule

The state psychology board is proposing more changes to its Rules for Continuing Education, also called Continuing Professional Development (CPD). The proposed changes modify the major changes that were made in October 2013, and which take affect in some way for most psychologists this year.

The newest proposed changes were put forth in the March issue of the *Louisiana Register*. Comments from the public must be received by the board by noon on April 9.

The 2013 changes added several new types of training allowed for professional development, and increased the number of required hours from 30 to 40.

Among the more significant changes proposed in March, are the following:

1) an increase the length of time that licensees must maintain continuing professional development records, from two years to six years.

2) a reduction in credits claimed for presenting a training workshop. Previously presenters could claim up to four times what attendees of the workshop earn. The new change reduces it to two times the length.

3) for "Practice Outcome Monitoring," one client equals one credit. This changes the 2013 procedure that one questionnaire equals one credit.

4) all self-directed learning, which includes what was previously called "Home Study" is to be limited to no more than 10 hours.

5) a new document for verification, called the "CDP Verification Form," is required for logging activities and documenting hours, and used for peer consultation, practice outcome measures, professional activities, and self-directed learning, and possibly others.

Other changes include the addition to "Peer Consultation" as involving a "structured and organized format."

A specific note that professional activities do not include lobbying activities is included.

For publications, credits are clarified to be: one article is equal to 10 credit hours; and a book or a book chapter, related to the field of psychology, is equal to 10 credit hours.

The new Rule will delete the confusing wording in §808, having to do with calculation of credits.

In a memo dated February 29 and posted on the psychology board's website, Executive Director Ms. Jaime Monic wrote that modifications to the Rule are expected to be effective by June. This appears to also mean that changes may be in place for the July 1 renewals.



Current LSBEP Chair, Dr. Marc Zimmermann and Vice Chair, Dr. Darla Burnett, at a previous planning meeting. The board is making more corrections and changes to the Rules for continuing education. Public omments are due by April 9.

U.S. Senator Bill Cassidy Authors Mental Health Reform Legislation

Louisiana U.S. Senator, Bill Cassidy, has helped author S. 2680, called the Mental Health Reform Act of 2016. Co-authors are Sens. Lamar Alexander of Tennessee and Patty Murray of Washington, and Chris Murphy of Connecticut.

Some of the elements of the bill include helping the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSA) by supporting a coordinating committee and best-practices efforts.

Grant programs are included for individuals with serious mental illness, as well as supporting efforts to promote integration of primary and behavioral health

care. There is a reauthorization of a suicide prevention grant program and support of the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline program.

The bill includes a number of efforts without clear methods for funding the programs, according to Peter Earley, author and advocate for mental health reform. Early noted that the bill could be improved by embracing some of what is proposed in "Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act," and also the "Comprehensive Behavioral Health Reform and Recovery Act of 2016."

Am Psychological Association "Stress In America" Report Finds Discrimination a Stress

The American Psychological Association released its annual study of stress in American in March, titled, "Stress in America: The Impact of Discrimination."

The authors note the connections between discrimination and stress, mental health, and the impact on employment in this year's report. They note that nearly seven out of 10 adults in the United State report having experienced some type of discrimination. Almost half of all adults, the authors say, have experiences major forms of discrimination.

Among the conclusions, authors said the adults experiencing stress are largely optimistic and find that social support lowers the stress. Also, while women are typically more stressed, men's stress has increased. The younger generation is reporting more stress, with money and work being the central issues identified. Adults who are LGBT report higher stress levels that their non-LGBT peers.

The report is available online at the Am. Psychological Assn.

Guidelines Support Psychologists’ Work to Integrate Whole Person in Pain Management

The recent CDC guidelines, pointing to serious problems with opioid use for pain, stands in relationship to a massive problem in health. Pain costs society up to \$635 billion annually, and is the number one reason for disability. The good news is that pain is becoming better understood as a multifaceted phenomenon with psychological factors. Pain signaling can often be modified.

Dr. Geralyn Datz is in the lead of the move from older views to the modern view of pain management. “It is now widely accepted that pain is a biopsychosocial phenomenon,” she said. “This is a departure from the traditional belief that pain was primarily physical, and to be only treated by medical means, which was the biomedical model,” Datz said.

“The benefits of pain psychology are that the person experiencing chronic pain ultimately has more control over their pain process, their reaction to it, and their life,” Datz said. “This is accomplished by teaching patients about how their expectations, their attention, and their stress levels interact with chronic pain and can be greatly exacerbated.”

Dr. Datz is a Clinical Health Psychologist and a nationally recognized speaker, previously with New Orleans Veteran Affairs Medical Center and Pennington Biomedical Research Center.

Currently Dr. Datz is Clinical Director of the Pain Rehabilitation Program at Southern Behavioral Medicine Associates in Hattiesburg, Mississippi.

“A large body of research,” said Datz, “has shown that use of structured cognitive behavioral therapy, and in particular cognitive behavioral therapy combined with physical therapy, as happens in functional restoration programs, are extremely effective ways of dramatically improving physical function, mental health, and overall well-being in patients with chronic pain,” she said.

“Unfortunately, these methods have been sorely underused, partly due to insurance coverage issues,” she said. “With the advent of the ACA however, this is getting a lot better. Also, I think providers and patients are more open to these ideas now that the opioid epidemic has become such a hot topic nationally,” she said.

Dr. Datz has presented at Pain Week, American Pain Society, American Academy of Pain Medicine and others, and is currently President of the Southern Pain Society.

“No matter the source, chronic pain affects a person’s whole life,” she said. “It affects their thinking, which often becomes negative, depressed, or involves feelings of helplessness and frustration. That is because at its core the



Dr. Geralyn Datz, pain psychologist and President of the Southern Pain Society. (Courtesy photo.)

experience of chronic pain is one of physical and emotional suffering,” she said. “Chronic pain can also affect a person’s quality of life, relationships, ability to work, and even to enjoy pleasant things. So all of these things point to ways in which I can work with patients to overcome the physically and emotionally overwhelming effects of pain.”

Dr. Melissa Bonnell-Weidlich, is with the Veterans Health Care System in New Orleans, is a colleague of Dr. Datz and is also a member of the Southern Pain Society, and works in the area of pain management.

At the Southeast Louisiana Veterans Health Care System Dr. Bonnell-Weidlich helps “... veterans self-manage some of the negative impacts that chronic pain can have on their daily functioning,” she said.

She works on interdisciplinary teams composed of anesthesiologists, physical therapists, occupational therapists, a pharmacist, nurses, and psychiatrists, to help veterans improve health and quality of life.

“When working with veterans,” Dr. Bonnell-Weidlich said, “I often provide psychoeducation and skills training in group format that covers topics such as behavioral activation, pacing, relaxation, goal setting, interpersonal effectiveness, and managing pain flares. I also



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Science News Feature

Psychologists Work to Integrate Whole Person in Pain Management, continued

conduct cognitive behavioral therapy for chronic pain and draw on tenants of acceptance and commitment therapy to improve overall pain coping,” she said.

Previously, Dr. Bonnell-Weidlick worked in at the Cognitive Behavioral Therapy Center in New Orleans. Along with assisting those with chronic pain, she helped those with sleep, stress, mood, and adjustment issues. She conducts research about harm reduction, rural health, personality, and behavioral change, and is assistant director for the accredited pain rehabilitation program.

“Operating from the biopsychosocial model of chronic pain,” said Dr. Bonnell-Weidlick, “really expands patients’ treatment options, allowing clinicians to tailor treatment recommendations to meet the patient’s needs, enhance adherence, and maximize outcomes in a streamlined, cost effective way,” she said.

Dr. Datz also sees these positive outcomes. “A big part of pain recovery is reconditioning the body and buffering it against pain signals. So, overall pain psychology involves teaching a patient new ways to think about their pain, changing old beliefs about pain, and building coping skills such as exercise, relaxation, and other techniques to buffer against the effects of pain.”

“One of the things that I do is to help people understand the physiology of pain and to tease out the suffering from the pain experience,” said Datz. “That is kind of a radical notion to most people. But it is possible to experience the physical sensations of pain and not suffer as much. This involves learning how to undo the association with pain as a threat. Also it involves learning how to undo the association of pain with fear.”

Clinical psychologist and clinical hypnotherapist, Dr. Joe Tramontana also works with individuals experiencing pain. He is past President of the Louisiana Psychological Association.

Tramontana began working part-time at Omega Women’s Hospital in Metairie in 1998, he said. Before long, referrals were coming for psychotherapy for depression, anxiety, or other symptoms frequently experienced by chronic pain patients,” he said.

“The state-of-the art in pain management is interdisciplinary treatment,” he explained. “This approach includes medical providers, nurse practitioners, psychologists, physical therapists, and just about anyone involved in working with pain patients,” he said. “More and more, the focus is on the mind-body connection.” We know that pain causes emotional distress and the distress causes more subjective pain. “It is like a vicious circle,” he said.

All three pain experts are members of the Southern Pain Society, a regional association of the American Pain Society. The Society includes 18 southern states and Puerto Rico, said Executive Director, Lori Postal, RN. “Our mission is to serve people with pain by advancing research and treatment and to increase the knowledge and skill of the regional professional community,” Postal said.

Dr. Datz, who is President, said, “The Southern Pain Society helps me by keeping me plugged into other providers perspectives. We make a strong effort to involve national speakers and discuss practical issues that face the frontline pain practitioner. Our meetings address everything from ethics to ICD-10 coding to innovations in pain treatments. We also talked a lot about the business and the clinical aspects of providing pain treatment in the present day.”

The Society will hold its next annual scientific conference in New Orleans, this year, September 30 – October 2. The theme is “Pain Management: Are We Doing Anything Right?” Regular Membership is open to all health care professionals and scientists with an interest in the study or treatment of pain, said Postal. More information can be found online at southernpainsociety.org.



Board members for the 2015 Southern Pain Society while at the Annual Meeting held in Nashville in 2014. (Left to Right) John Satterthwaite, MD, Treasurer; Lori Postal, RNC, MHA, Executive Director; Ann Quinlan-Colwell, APN, PhD, At large Director; Mordecai Potash, MD, President Elect; GERALYN DATZ, PhD, President; Timothy Beacham, MD At Large Director; Leanne Cianfrini, PhD, past president; and Thomas Davis, MD, secretary. (Courtesy photo.)

Researchers to Take Up Evolutionary Psychology at SWPA, April 8–10 cont’d

Louisiana psychologists, professors, and student researchers from the Lake Charles Research Group, Louisiana State University – Shreveport, McNeese State University, Northwestern State University, and University of Louisiana – Monroe, will present their work.

The Lakes Charles Research Group, a free- standing group of independent, diverse researchers, will offer an impressive list of studies. One of Group’s organizers, Dr. Larry Dilks, of Counseling Services in Lake Charles, said previously, “It’s made up of different people every year. It’s a number of local psychologists, interns, post-doctoral fellows, practicum students, and then pretty much anybody else who’s just interested in publishing journal articles and doing presentations at conferences.”

Dr. Dilks will be leading a presentation on “Unintended Consequences in 2020: APA Seeks to Restrict Nationwide Licensure.” He and colleagues will examine the possible long-term consequences of the new rules being developed by American Psychological Association (APA). He will discuss that 16 percent of doctoral students do not find approved internships.

University of Monroe researchers will present work on Pathogen Prevalence theory, and relationship to beliefs, gun violence, and police fatalities. Presenters include Dr. Kilian Garvey, Mary Medin, Sebastien O’Neill, and Kelly Buxton.

McNeese authors, Jimmy Trahan, Chase Walling, Linda Brannon, PhD. Bianca Augustine, and Dena Matzenbacher, PhD, will present research on gender issues from the evolutionary standpoint, including work on partner preference, attractiveness, and how money fits in to mate decisions.

Presentations from Louisiana researchers include:

Lake Charles Research Group

The Research Group includes Lawrence S Dilks, PhD, Counseling Services (Lake Charles); Kimberly S. Hutchinson, from Lake Charles Memorial Hospital; Burton Ashworth, PhD, from Counseling Services; Sandra Isabel Viggiani, from Fuller School of Psychology, Fuller Seminary; Chelsi King, from California School of Professional Psychology at Alliant International University, Fresno; Marnie Richard, from Hawaii School of Professional Psychology; Katherine Hippman from Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge; and Billie Clare Myers, from Fielding Graduate University.

“Unintended Consequences in 2020: APA Seeks to Restrict Nationwide Licensure,” by Lawrence S Dilks, PhD, Counseling Services (Lake Charles); Kimberly S. Hutchinson from Lake Charles Memorial Hospital, and others from Lake Charles Research Group.

“Workshop – A students guide to understanding ICD 10,” by Lawrence S Dilks, PhD, from Counseling Services; Sandra Isabel Viggiani, from Fuller School of Psychology, Fuller Seminary; and others from the Lake Charles Research Group.

“How to get an internship: the crisis in clinical psychology,” by Larry Dilks, PhD, Kimberly S. Hutchinsonand the others from Group.

Below: Panoramic view of one room at SEPA. SWPA is next week.



Anna MacLellan (L) speaking with Dr. Lillian Range at the recent Southeastern Psychological Assn (SEPA). Dr. Range is a past President of SEPA. Both are with the University of Holy Cross (Previously, Our Lady of Holy Cross College).

“A Correlational Study of Shyness and Conflict Negotiation within Romantic Relationships,” by Billie Clare Myers, of Fielding Graduate University; Chelsi King of the California School of Professional Psychology at Alliant International University; and others.

“Comorbid Disorders Relationship with Disruptive Behavior Disorder,” by Burton Ashworth, PhD, from Counseling Services; Kimberly S. Hutchinson, Lake Charles Memorial Hospital and others.

“Caregiver Cannabis Use Relationship to Childhood Mood Disorders,” by Burton Ashworth, PhD, from Counseling Services; Marnie Richard, Hawaii School of Professional Psychology and others. Results suggest cannabis has a larger impact on mood development than caregiver alcohol or heroin use.

“Caregiver Physical Assault and Psychological Aggressive Impact on Disruptive Behavior Disorder,” by Burton Ashworth, PhD, and Larry Dilks, PhD, from Counseling Services, and others. A total of 835 children were evaluated as part of a prescribed assessment program through the Longitudinal Studies of Child Abuse and Neglect consortium.

“A Case Study of Central Pontine Myelinolysis Co-Morbid with Alcohol Abuse,” by Chelsi King, from California School of Professional Psychology at Alliant International University, Fresno, and Sandra Isabel Viggiani, Fuller School of Psychology, Fuller Seminary, and others.

‘Case Study of an Individual with Gillain-Barré Syndrome and Diabetes Mellitus,’ by Billie Clare Myers of Fielding Graduate University, Kimberly S. Hutchinson of Lake Charles Memorial Hospital and others.

‘Neuropsychological Functioning of an Individual with a History of Agent Orange Exposure,’ by Billie Clare Myers of Fielding Graduate University, Dr. Larry Dilks, and others. The current study revealed

Cont’d next pg

Researchers to Take Up Evolutionary Psychology at SWPA

continued

perceptual-motor deficits in an individual with a history of Agent Orange exposure and PTSD.

‘Cognitive and Emotional Impairments as a Result of Encephalomalacia: A Case Study,’ by Sandra Isabel Viggiani of Fuller School of Psychology, Fuller Seminary, Kimberly S. Hutchinson of Lake Charles Memorial Hospital and others.

“An exploratory study examining the correlation between Bender-Gestalt performance and IQ,” by Marnie Richard of Hawaii School of Professional Psychology, Dr. Larry Dilks, and others.

“Relationship between Cognitive Impairment and Depression in Adults: A Pilot Study,” by Chelsi King, from California School of Professional Psychology at Alliant International University, Fresno, Kimberly S. Hutchinson of Lake Charles Memorial Hospital, and others.

“Association between Cognitive Impairment and Anxiety in Middle Age and Older Adults,” by Chelsi King, from California School of Professional Psychology at Alliant International University, Fresno, Katherine Hippman of LSU, Baton Rouge, and others.

“The Relationship Between Expulsion Rate and IQ Scores in Juvenile Delinquents,” by Katherine Hippman of Louisiana State University Baton Rouge, Chelsi King, from California School of Professional Psychology at Alliant International University, Fresno, and others.

Louisiana State University - Shreveport

“Importance of Values in Life: A National Survey of U.S. Population,” by Yong Dai (LSU–S), and Qing Zeng (University of Texas Rio Grande Valley). Compared to their Caucasian and Hispanic counterparts, African-

American respondents were more likely to view politics and religion as important in their lives.

“The Role of Need for Cognition and Study Habits in Student Success,” by Melissa J. Hawthorne (LSU–S), and Benton Pierce (Texas A & M University – Commerce).

McNeese State University

“Current Gender Differences in Residual Victorian Era Gender Role Beliefs in SWLA (SWPA),” by Jimmy Trahan and Chase Walling. Results indicate that men may possess more stereotyped views than women. Victorian Era stereotypes have diminished, but still present.

“Partner Preference: Looks Trump Money—If You’ve Already Got Money,” by Linda Brannon, PhD, Bianca Augustine, PhD, and Dena Matzenbacher, PhD. Participants rated potential male partners’ physical attractiveness as significantly more important to high-income women than low-income women.

Northwestern State University

“Integrative Model of Motivation and Commitment: Comparing Academic and Relationship Motivation,” by Cynthia Lindsey, PhD, and Melanie Midkiff. The Integrative Model of Commitment and Motivation is among the first to combine the concepts of commitment and motivation into one theory, which focuses on work. For both foci, commitment was the primary predictor of motivation.

“Personality and Cell Phone Overuse Predict Anxiety when Cellular Access is Restricted,” by Jalyn Ayo, Dr. Cynthia Lindsey, and Melanie Midkiff. Researchers found indications of addiction-type problems associated with cell phones.

University of Louisiana – Monroe

“Personal or Impersonal God? Males and Females Differ on the Nature of the Divine,” by Kelly Rene Buxton and Kilian Garvey, PhD. “The evolutionary pressures on women to collaborate, cooperate, and generate more empathy than males may have produced an impression of God as reflecting those values. Males, on the other hand, may have their characteristic conception of god as impersonal due to different evolutionary pressures.”

“Pathogen Prevalence and Gun Ownership: A Dangerous Interaction,” by Kilian Garvey, PhD. Greater access to guns may seem like an obvious risk factor but, the variable of pathogen prevalence was a better predictor for not only murders, but for life expectancy, religiosity, political orientation and other factors.

“Fear and Belief: A Pathogen Prevalence Exploration of Religiosity Across 33 Nations,” by Mary Medlin and Dr. Garvey. Authors examined differences in religiosity across countries as predicted by pathogen prevalence, economic factors, patterns of individualism and collectivism, and demonstrate how the environment can influence belief systems.

“The Best and the Brightest: Where are Nobel Prize Winners Born?” by Mary Medlin and Dr. Garvey. The state of residence of the winners was primarily predicted by higher levels of per capita income.

“Life in the Fast Lane: Fast Life Strategies for Shorter Life Expectancy,” by Mary Medlin and Dr. Garvey. Teen pregnancy was primarily predicted by higher levels of pathogen prevalence, and to a lesser extent by lower levels of life expectancy and lower state GINI.

“Football, baseball, and basketball: Regional characteristics associated with professional athletes in the big three sports,” by Sebastien O’Neill and Dr. Garvey. Characteristics of the fast life theory were present in the football and basketball states, but not in the baseball states.

“Police Fatalities in the United States: Religion, Politics, and Life History,” by Sebastien O’Neill and Dr. Garvey. Open source data bases were used to compile the average number of police officers killed in the line of duty. Politically conservative and highly religious regions are characterized by more police fatalities. However, the strongest predictor is shorter life expectancy of the population in question.

“Tolerance of ambiguity or intelligence: Explanation for Global Warming Denial,” by Frank Cook, and Dr. Garvey. Three straightforward questions on belief in global warming were asked as well as measures of intelligence and tolerance of ambiguity. The results suggest that denial is being driven by the personality style of (in)tolerance of ambiguity.

“Gender, Intuition, and the Cognitive Reflection Test,” by Kelly Rene Buxton and Dr. Garvey.



University of New Orleans researcher Victoria Sacco (C) explains her SEPA research to colleagues from the University of Georgia. SEPA is wrapping up and the Southwestern Psychological Assn begins next week.

A Shrink at the Flicks

It Takes a Village...: Review of *Spotlight*

by Alvin G. Burstein

The winner of the 2016 Oscar for best film was *Spotlight*, an account of the Boston Globe’s 2002 exposé of child abuse by that city’s Catholic clergy and the attendant cover-up. The film is powerful. The power is rooted in its realistic feel and in the psychological phenomena it captures.

The movie meticulously recreates the offices of the Boston Globe, the environment of the *Spotlight* team, the country’s oldest continuously operating investigative journalism unit. The film begins with the arrival of Marty Baron, a new editor-in-chief for the Globe. In his meeting with his new staff, he directs *Spotlight* to abandon its current project and begin an investigation of a reported case of child abuse by a parish priest and what appears to be cover-up attempts by the hierarchy. He makes it clear that he is more interested in the systemic issues than the singular case.

The poet, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, spoke of the importance in literature of the reader’s “willing suspension of disbelief.” *Spotlight’s* recreation of detail is such that there is no sense of a need to suspend disbelief. We feel like eye-witnesses to the actual events. The danger inherent in a *faux* documentary is an issue to which I shall return. But the artistic power of this film to sweep the viewer into a sense of *being there* is remarkable.

We watch the investigators as they pull at the strings of the tangled events, slowly revealing, not just a single case of abuse, but a staggering epidemic of child sexual abuse and clergy whose misdeeds are swept under the carpet, hidden by undisclosed financial settlements and non-disclosure



agreements. The sordid manipulations, which include moving errant clergy from place to place and enriching the lawyers involved in “mediating” claims, are traced all the way to the diocese’s archbishop.

As we become privy to the reporters’ encounters with individual victims painfully sharing their scarifying betrayals, we feel the investigators’ mounting frustration at having to continue the painstaking assembly of information. That frustration becomes almost unbearable, when on the verge of being able to break the story, the 9/11 tragedy demands a refocusing of journalistic efforts.

Ultimately the story breaks, revealing, not a Bostonian bad apple or two, but hundreds of errant Catholic priests and over a thousand known abuse victims. The enormity of the crime is emphasized by the listing as the film ends of the cities of the world where, it is now clear, a parallel situation exists.

The emotions portrayed in the film and those stirred up in the viewer testify to the destructive potential of betrayal. A central point in self-psychology is understanding the role of parents as trusted, indeed, idolized figures upon whom the child initially depends. Healthy development involves the gradual de-idealizing of parents while retaining the ability to look up to and admire others whom we strive to emulate. Traumatic betrayals by one’s trustees are excruciating, and especially early in life, can warp and deform subsequent relationships. Thus the special burden of prudence in professions that require trust—clergy, therapists, teachers, physicians, lawyers—and that therefore have the potential to reawaken childhood dependencies and to reopen old scars.

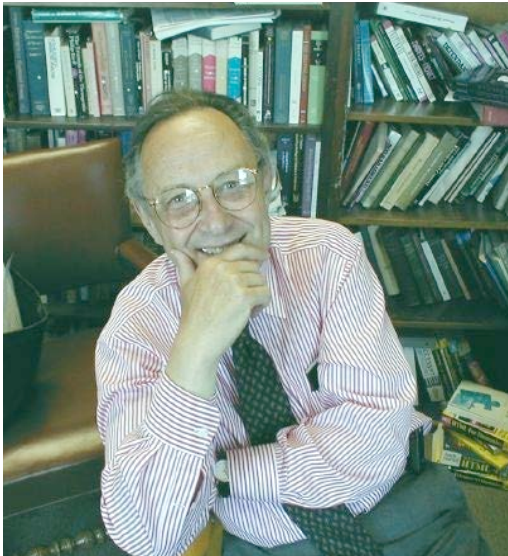
As a *faux* documentary *Spotlight* claims, like investigative journalism, to get at the truth. Do documentaries, does investigative journalism have a responsibility to get at the *whole* truth? Given the compression of events stretching over years into a two-hour film, totality is out of the question. The film reveals but doesn’t explore the ability of basically decent people, a village as a whole, to close their eyes to disquieting truths. It appears that the leader of the *Spotlight* team had, years earlier while editor of the *Metro* section, printed but not followed up on a story about several cases of sexual abuse by local priests. It had been sent to the paper by one of the bad guys, a mediation lawyer.

Spotlight is a riveting film, stirring feelings, disturbing assumptions, raising questions.

Guest Columnist,
Dr. Alvin Burstein

Burstein, a psychologist and psychoanalyst, is a professor emeritus at the University of Tennessee and a former faculty member of the New Orleans-Birmingham Psychoanalytic Center with numerous scholarly works to his credit. He is also a member of Inklings, a Mandeville critique group that meets weekly to review its members’ imaginative writings.

Burstein has published flash fiction and autobiographical pieces in e-zines; *The Owl*, his first novelette, is available at Amazon. He is, in addition to being a movie fan, a committed Francophile, unsurprisingly a lover of fine cheese and wine, and an unrepentant cruciverbalist.



courtesy photo

Conference May 20–21 in New Orleans

Integrated Approaches Featured at LPA

At their annual convention this May, the Continuing Education Committee of the Louisiana Psychological Association will host a distinguished group of psychologists who educate and practice in the developing field of integrated health care.

“Epigenetics is the new ‘buzzword’ in areas of psychology and science, and appears to be a revolution in the understanding of how life works,” said Dr. Gail Gillespie, Chair of the Education Committee for the Louisiana Psychological Association (LPA).

“The term epigenetics refers to heritable changes in gene expression that do not involve changes to the underlying DNA sequence,” she explained. “Epigenetic change can be influenced by such factors as environment, nutrition, and lifestyle. New research is continuously uncovering how environmental factors switch genes on or off,” she said, “which affects how cells read genes, and the resulting connection to a variety of human disorders and fatal diseases.”

Gillespie is involved in one of the newest movements in this area called Energy Psychology. “The connection between epigenetics and psychology is most clearly revealed in new ‘energy psychology’ methods,” she said, “which are a collection of novel psychological interventions that balance, restore, and enhance functioning through the stimulation of specific meridian points on the body.”

One of the techniques she uses and teaches her patients is a tapping method for acupressure points. “Among other mechanisms, the parasympathetic nervous system is activated,” with this technique, Gillespie said, “which results in a deep calming effect - likened to systematic desensitization...” but more efficient and effective. This is just one of many new tools in this mind-body area.

Gillespie said she is delighted for LPA to host Dr. Gerald LaHoste, biopsychologist and professor at University of New Orleans, who will give a keynote address on “Epigenetic Foundations in Health,” May 20.

LaHoste will be followed by a distinguished panel of experts representing an array of health service contexts, Gillespie noted. Included will be Mary



Xavier researcher Efehi Edomwonyi (L) speaks with Dr. Christoph Leonhard at the recent SEPA conference. Dr. Leonhard is Chair at the Chicago School of Professional Psychology at Xavier. He will speak on new the “Health Services Psychologist” training model at the May conference of the Louisiana Psychological Assn to be held in New Orleans.

Lou Kelley, PhD, Professor and Director of Pediatric Psychology Service at Baton Rouge Clinic; Sarah Moody–Thomas, PhD, Professor at the LSU School of Public Health and director of the Community Health Program; and Deborah Palmer–Seal, PhD, licensed psychologist with the Health & Education Alliance of Louisiana.

Christoph Leonhard, PhD, Chair at the Chicago School of Professional Psychology at Xavier University, will also speak on the panel, and discuss the Health Services Psychology training model from the American Psychological Association (APA).

In direct responses to the behavioral health care mandates under Obama Care, APA adopted a new accreditation system in February 2015, which takes affect in January 2017, and brings some key changes, Dr. Leonhard said.

The Affordable Care Act brings the integration of behavioral health into all health, including primary care, he explained. “While psychologists aren’t necessarily going to be providing this care,” he said,

“this mandate presents a huge opportunity for psychologists to play a much larger role in providing services in integrated health care settings. In these settings, psychologists will assess, treat, and/or consult on mental health and behavioral disorders for patients

not commonly seen in traditional psychological service settings ...”

This includes chronic medical problems such as obesity, substance use disorders, cardiovascular disease, diabetes and others, he explained.

Cont’d next pg



Dr. Gail Gillespie (R) at a previous workshop. She is Chair of Continuing Education for the Louisiana Psychological Association and a practitioner in “Energy Psychology.” Dr. Lacey Seymour, LPA president, is in background.

Up-Coming Events

Integrated Approaches Featured, cont'd

“... we are training students to become 'health service psychologists,’” he said. “This term is intended generically to refer to psychological service providers, whether they be clinical psychologists, school psychologists, or counseling psychologists.”

Another way the training standards are different is the emphasis on the “working in interprofessional care settings,” he said.

“There is much psychologists already know about seizing opportunities as health service psychologists in interprofessional care settings,” Leonhard said. “Our skills in being team players with other allied health professionals as we collaborate to prevent, assess, and improve health conditions will be particularly helpful.”

“All allied health professions share a commitment to evidence-based practice but often as psychologists we are particularly well trained to assess health and mental health conditions in a reliable and valid way and to document the positive synergistic effect the addition of behavioral health care services can make to the management of many of the disorders that make up the bulk of the disease burden nation wide,” Dr. Leonhard said.

“Finally, supervision and consultation competencies have been upgraded and are now co-equal with other mandatory competencies, such as assessment, intervention, and diversity competencies,” he said.

Dr. Leonhard does see certain challenges. “It is up to us to show that as health service psychologists we are interested in doing this work, that we have specific competencies uniquely qualifying us, and that health outcomes benefit from including us in interprofessional health care teams.”

He also said that it is up to psychologists to move from their typical cottage industry type work and evolve to a new role in the interprofessional settings of the future.

The Chicago School at Xavier was set up from the beginning to train health service psychologists, Dr. Leonhard noted, and to implement these new APA standards and competencies.

The one they added was teaching. The model is the “... *Community Engaged Scholar-Practitioner* model,” he said, and the department has a “... special emphasis on serving the diverse population of New Orleans, Louisiana, and the Delta South region.”

The LPA Convention is scheduled to be held May 20–21 in New Orleans.



The lotus window is one of those decorating the Tam Bao Meditation Hall in Baton Rouge, where the Annual Mindfulness Day is held each year.
(Courtesy photo.)

Hasha, Sandoz, Landry Present for Mindfulness Day April 9, Baton Rouge

On Saturday, April 9th, 2016, the Tam Bao Meditation Hall will conduct its 7th annual Mindfulness Day for Mental Health Professionals, an all-day workshop providing six hours of continuing education credit for LPCs, psychologists and social workers.

This year’s workshop is titled, “Mindfully Addressing Emotions.” The event is held at the Tam Bao Meditation Hall, 975 Monterrey Blvd., Baton Rouge, LA

Presenters for this year’s program include Thay Dao Quang, M.Ed.; Margot Hasha, Ph.D., LCSW, CT; Emily Sandoz, Ph.D.; and Helen Landry, LCSW.

Thay Dao Quang, will provide the “Introduction, Mindfulness instruction, and Guided sitting meditation.”

Margot Hasha, Ph.D., LCSW, CT, will present, “Mindfulness Practices for Facing Grief and Loss.”

Emily Sandoz, Ph.D., will provide a presentation on “ACT: Using Mindfulness to Sponsor Meaningful Action.”

Helen Landry, LCSW, will present, “Integrating Mindfulness Interventions into Your Therapy Practice.”

Dr. John Pickering, psychologist and one of the organizers, said, “Previous workshops have included topics about use of mindfulness interventions in psychotherapy, introduction to various evidence-supported therapies based on mindfulness, neuropsychological mechanisms involved in mindfulness, and the use of meditation to enhance therapists’ attention, presence and empathy.”

The popularity of Mindfulness as a therapy method and technique has grown in recent years, as evidence for its effectiveness and research findings have been helped understanding.

“As always, there will be several short periods of guided meditation led by a Zen Buddhist monk throughout the day,” Dr. Pickering said.

Up-Coming Events

Professional Training Resources Offering “Going to Court Even If You Don’t Want To” Training

Professional Training Resources and Dr. John Simoneaux will offer “Going to Court Even If You Don’t Want To,” for mental health professionals throughout April. Training opportunities are offered in Lafayette on April 8, in Kenner on April 15, and in West Monroe on April 22.

The workshop is aimed to help mental health professionals analyze various challenges that non-forensic specialists may encounter when they are ordered to testify. Participants will be provided strategies for preparing for court and communicating with attorneys. Information about direct and cross-examination is included.

More information is available online at the PRT website.

Association for Psychological Science to Hold 28th Annual Convention May 26-29, Chicago

The Association for Psychological Science will host keynote speaker Dan Ariely from Duke University, who will give the Fred Kavli Keynote Address on “The Honest Truth About Dishonesty,” as part of the 28th Annual Convention for the association.

The Presidential Symposium will include, “The Cognitive Map,” with Chair, C. Randy Gallistel, and “Grid Cells and Cortical Maps for Space,” by Edvard Moser.

Award Addresses include Steven Pinker, Richard Ivry, and Phoebe Ellsworth.

LA Academy of Medical Psychologists to Hold Conference, April 16 and 17

The Louisiana Academy of Medical Psychologists are scheduled to hold a training conference on April 16 & 17, in Baton Rouge, according to their website.

The group met in January for two days of continuing education including, “Gestational and Lactational Psychopharmacology: The Pain and Pleasure,” by Dr. Robert Nevels. Also, Daniel Dowd, PharmD, spoke on “Genetic Markers and Personalized treatment in Psychiatry.”

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