



New Hampshire Psychiatric Society

Newsletter

September 2015

We exist to bring together psychiatrists to work for the benefit of our patients and our profession.

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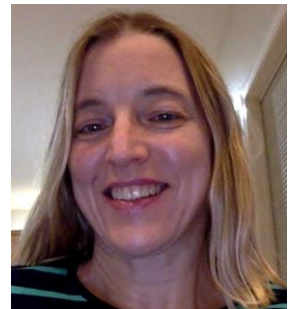
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President's Message

Since I don't tend to write things like this very often, I looked around on the APA and DB websites for examples of "President's Letters." I couldn't quite find anything that felt like my style, so here goes. I certainly did not expect Jeff to ask me if I would consider being president, but when he did, it occurred to me that most everyone else around the Executive Board table had served at least once, and that many of the presidents I knew had left or retired. It seemed like the right time to commit to paying back all of the hard work that folks before me had put into the job.

I missed the first meeting in July because I had laryngitis, but since then have been trying to learn the ropes from Jeff and Catrina.



One of the key roles NHPS plays is to provide a voice in the legislature, for our patients and for our profession. We will continue to advocate actively at the State House, with Jeff Fetter as our legislative representative. He and I may be reaching out to some of you to testify at crucial legislative hearings during the session, and hope the legislators can hear from as many of you as possible. As Alex deNesnera showed us during the years he was legislative rep, NHPS can make important changes to the NH statutes that affect our lives and our patients' lives.

I know that previous presidents had specific issues they concentrated on during their tenure. When I thought about what I wanted to focus on, I realized that I don't have a sense of what is important to the membership across the state. In order to better serve the membership, the Exec Board will be sending a survey via SurveyMonkey to all of you to please complete. It will be one open-ended question, "What do you want to see NHPS focus on this year and next?" As a small token of our appreciation for your input, we will be sending you a gift card for \$5. Please take the time to fill it out. We will collate the results and report them to you in the next newsletter.

Those of you who know me know I am passionate about the practice of psychiatry. It is from that standpoint that I find the work we do on behalf of our members, patients, and profession very satisfying. I look forward to the next year, working side by side with my wonderful and thoughtful colleagues on the NHPS Board.

Lisa Mistler, MD

Legislative Session Overview

SB 23: Signed into law. The Psychiatric Society supported the bill, which provides APRNs that have received additional training the ability to admit individuals to NH Hospital.

HB 422: Amended to remove provisions that would have provided similar abilities to physician assistants. It provides PAs with the authority to sign death certificates.

HB 564: Passed by legislature, still before the governor. Requires several reports to the Health and Human Services Oversight Committee relative to the efficacy of the prohibition on prior authorization for certain mental health prescriptions for individuals on Medicaid. Updates from the Department and Community mental health centers are required in July, August, September, and November.

SB 84: Passed by legislature, before the governor as well. It would become effective 60 days after being signed by the Governor with compromise language on controlled substances and telemedicine.

Other legislation of interest that has been passed into law:

HB 271 - relative to possession and administration of an opioid antagonist for opioid-related overdoses.
<http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/legislation/2015/HB0271.html>

HB 422 - relative to certification of death certificates by physician assistants.
<http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/legislation/2015/HB0422.html>

SB 22 - relative to certain changes in the law governing the therapeutic use of cannabis.
<http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/legislation/2015/SB0022.html>

SB 23 - allowing certain advanced practice registered nurses to authorize involuntary commitment and voluntary admission to state institutions.
<http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/legislation/2015/SB0023.html>

SB 31 - relative to the controlled drug prescription health and safety program.
<http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/legislation/2015/SB0031.html>

SB 33 - relative to continuing education requirements for mental health practitioners on suicide prevention.
<http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/legislation/2015/SB0033.html>

SB 56 - establishing a commission to study oversight, regulation, and reporting of patient safety and health care quality issues.
<http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/legislation/2015/SB0056.html>

SB 96 - establishing a commission to study the expansion of rights of defense and indemnification under RSA 99-D to proceedings against state employees before professional licensing boards.
<http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/legislation/2015/SB0096.html>

SB 114 - enabling a driver's license applicant to request that his or her license indicate that he or she has a medically recognized disorder.
<http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/legislation/2015/SB0114.html>

Other legislation of interest passed by both the House and Senate but not yet acted on by the Governor:

HB 330 - establishing an oversight commission for medical cost transparency.
<http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/legislation/2015/HB0330.html>

HB 476 - amending the definition of "qualifying medical condition" in the therapeutic cannabis law.
<http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/legislation/2015/HB0476.html>

HB 483 - relative to the commission on primary care workforce issues.
<http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/legislation/2015/HB0483.html>

HB 508 - relative to the dissolution of the New Hampshire medical malpractice joint underwriting association and relative to cost-sharing parity for oral anti-cancer therapies.
<http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/legislation/2015/HB0508.html>

HB 564 - relative to prior authorization for certain prescription drugs.
<http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/legislation/2015/HB0564.html>

SB 84 - relative to the definition of "telemedicine."
<http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/legislation/2015/SB0084.html>

SB 112 - requiring the Medicaid managed care program to cover telemedicine services.
<http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/legislation/2015/SB0112.html>

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Legislative Session Overview cont.

Legislation that was retained/referred

HB 128 - authorizing individuals and certain businesses to purchase health insurance from out-of-state companies.

<http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/legislation/2015/HB0128.html>

HB 593 - permitting qualifying patients and registered caregivers to cultivate cannabis for therapeutic use.

<http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/legislation/2015/HB0593.html>

SB 67 - establishing a commission to study opioid misuse in New Hampshire.

<http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/legislation/2015/SB0067.html>

SB 131 - authorizing individuals and certain businesses to purchase health insurance from out-of-state companies.

<http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/legislation/2015/SB0131.html>

SB 138 - relative to claims arising from clinical services provided to the department of corrections.

<http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/legislation/2015/SB0138.html>

SB 224 - making a capital appropriation for the Valley Regional Hospital in Claremont to construct an involuntary commitment mental health facility.

<http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/legislation/2015/SB0224.html>

HB 564 Update

Isabel Norian, MD

House Bill 564, sponsored by Representative Dr. Thomas Sherman, recently became law. The law has multiple components, but highlights include that for approximately a year (starting in August 2015), prescribers employed by Community Mental Health Centers will not have to complete Prior Authorizations for psychotropic medications for their consumers who are enrolled in one of the two Managed Medicaid vendors in the state. Included in this so-called "moratorium" are a number of additional medications that are frequently prescribed by CMHC providers, such as medications offered to offset side effects of antipsychotic medications. There are some exceptions, such as so-called "new-to-market" medications. Also included in the law is the requirement that a work group (comprised of representatives from the CMHCs, DHHS, and the Managed Medicaid companies) meet and produce a report re: review of MCO policies on prior authorizations for further consideration.

A link to the House Bill can be found here:

<http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/legislation/2015/HB0564.html>

Letter from the Editor

Len Korn, MD

Today really felt like fall with cold, clouds, wind and a little rain. Changes are in the air, whether we like it or not, and that goes for psychiatry and medicine as well as for the seasons. Change is not easy for any of us, but we certainly need to adapt to survive.

This NHPS Newsletter is the first with Lisa Mistler, MD, as our newly elected President. We also have several relatively new Executive Council members that I'd like to introduce: Osvaldo Evangelista, MD, from Riverbend Community Mental Health Center, Isabel Norian, MD, from Center for Life Management, Rusty Kawatsuji, MD, from New Hampshire Hospital, and Patrick Ho, MD, Dartmouth Psychiatry Resident.

Since the last Newsletter, NHPS has continued to try to facilitate some reasonableness in the prior authorization process. Ken Cohen, Isabel Norian, Jeff Fetter and others are active in this area for all of NH psychiatry.

NHMS is also addressing this issue along with NHPS and other specialty societies. Please consider sharing your thoughts and even your energy with us as we try to change this time-consuming and mostly useless PA process.

On September 26th NHPS is joining with the Maine Psychiatric Society for a social evening for residents, board members and their guests at Throwback Brewery at Hobbs Farm in North Hampton.

We are planning to have a special Resident's Column for future editions of the NHPS Newsletter, as NHPS tries to facilitate connections between all psychiatrists, young and not-so-young. We are all busy in our lives and practice, but we are stronger when we communicate with each other. Please let us hear from you through email, phone, articles, letters to the editor, book reviews, even poetry.

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Does NHPS have your email address? To keep your membership costs down, we try to utilize electronic communications as much as possible. Please make sure we have your email address.

Catrina.watson@nhms.org

Letter from the Editor cont.

At our last board meeting we discussed how best to represent psychiatry in NH for our loyal NHPS members and other NH psychiatrists who haven't yet joined. We considered a directed questionnaire, asking for your input in many specified areas and topics of interest or concern. However, we thought we would try very simply to just ask an open-ended question and to try to encourage response by giving a five dollar coupon (to Dunkin Donuts?) to all respondents. The survey can be through Survey Monkey or through email lenkorn.md@gmail.com.

The single survey question is as follows: What are the issues that you feel are most important for NHPS to be active in for 2015 through 2016? Thanks for your participation in this survey. We need to hear from you!

One final thought. I have always been in favor of a single-payer system, as far-fetched a dream as that may be. I just never quite imagined that it would be Anthem/Cigna! Call your congressman! Help!

Firearm Safety in NH

Len Korn, MD

It is hard to have a discussion of firearm safety in our country without some context of the enormity of the problem. Every day in the US there are some 30 murders and 58 suicides by firearm. That is 88 families of victims and perpetrators every day dealing with death by firearms, 88 police departments and 88 communities traumatized by violent death.

In the US we have a firearm homicide rate 20 times higher than the combined rate of 22 countries similar in wealth and population to us. American children die by guns 11 times as often as children from countries similar to ours. Indeed, a gun in the home is 22 times more likely to be used to kill or injure in a domestic homicide, suicide or unintentional shooting than to be used in self-defense.

Often, when I bring up the issue of gun violence with colleagues and friends, this issue is often dismissed as being too "political." Well, it is true that this aspect of public safety has been highly politicized by the NRA, so that our country leads so dramatically in these horrible statistics and safety.

I often contrast firearm safety in our country with automobile safety. Thanks to Ralph Nader and so many others we have a remarkably declining death rate on our roads. Indeed, cars of the future may drive themselves, hopefully even more safely than at present.

Firearm Safety in NH cont.

Cars are even being designed with automatic braking systems, just in case drivers are distracted. Not so with guns, as proposed safety regulations are often defeated with the slogan "just administer the laws we already have." Those laws, however, are filled with loopholes that the NRA has promulgated in spite of the vast public support for reasonable gun regulations.

In NH the New Hampshire Medical Society has passed a comprehensive and reasonable first step in safer gun regulations for New Hampshire. This policy position includes promoting universal background checks for all gun purchases, safety locks and other safe storage proposals and the provision of the names of persons involuntarily committed the NHH to the national data bank (NICS). I suspect some or all of these safety provisions will be included in legislation for the next session of the NH legislature. I will provide more specific information when actual legislation is proposed so that organized medical support can provide a balance to the power of the NRA on this important public safety issue.

The Fishing Bobber

By J.R., MD

Do you know the nature of the fishing bobber?
How the precious vessel glides upon a pond,
With every crest and trough,
Like human bonds,
Floating in daylight?

The scintillating surface is a smaller glove,
For keeping youthful desires warm.
In truly deep water,
Rests real reform.
It's...alchemical.

Now dragged down by the universal attraction
Resistance creates turbidity
And as water weight builds,
The heart's proclivity
Writhes beyond daylight.

However, a bobber can reach a place of such depth,
that it slows to a gentle creep,
And thanks to perseverance, it warmly floats again
without a glove in the deep.



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