

From Shannon Goecke-Watson, PsyD, LP, Minnesota (MPA) Representative to APA's Council of Representatives

Hello Fellow Minnesota Psychologists,

I want to take a moment to update you all on the important work being done at APA. If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to reach out so we can schedule a time to talk. My contact info is 651.493.9412 or sgwatson@sgwpsych.com.

APA's Council of Representatives (COR) convened for a hybrid meeting on August 5-7, 2024, with in-person Council members convening in Seattle, WA before the start of the annual convention. It was a busy agenda for COR, in which measures on important social issues were addressed and debated.

Presidential Task Force on Immigration and Health

The Council voted unanimously to receive a report by a presidential task force on immigration and health that underscores the importance of mental health support for immigrants and details the role of psychological science in addressing this issue.

The report, titled "Psychological Science and Immigration Today," sheds light on the intersection of psychological science and immigration and underscores the importance of mental health support for immigrants and the role of psychological science in addressing this issue.

Based on the findings in the report, the Council also adopted a policy statement supporting a population health-based approach to working with immigrants, which aims to address the cultural, economic, systemic, historical, environmental, relational and occupational contexts that influence health status, well-being, and functioning across the patient's lifespan.

That measure was passed by a vote of 156-6, with 1 abstention.

The resolution condemns policies that harm immigrants and their families, including forced family separation, and calls for federal and state funding for research to understand better immigrants' health needs, including research on topics such as the evaluation of training, curricula, and community-based immigration initiatives that strive to improve immigrants' health and wellness and better understand the effects of trauma.

Statement on Artificial Intelligence and the Field of Psychology

By a vote of 156-2, with 1 abstention, the Council approved a policy to recognize the critical role of psychological science and knowledge in guiding the many forms, applications and analyses of AI, and the real and potential impacts of artificial intelligence on psychological research and the training, practice, and application of psychology.

"APA affirms the vital role of the discipline of psychology in addressing societal challenges, the challenges and opportunities related to health and well-being, and the ethical and privacy implications of AI," the policy states. "APA is resolutely committed to identifying, mitigating,

and eliminating harmful impacts of AI while ensuring that everyone in society can benefit from AI technologies to the greatest extent possible.”

The role of APA and psychology falls into three domains: Shaping AI’s societal impact, using AI to promote health and well-being, and addressing and upholding ethics and privacy related to AI.

APA Statement Calling for an Immediate, Permanent, and Comprehensive Ceasefire in the Israel-Gaza Conflict

The Council also passed a measure, by a vote of 106-52, with 8 abstentions, calling for “an immediate, permanent, and comprehensive ceasefire in the Israel-Gaza conflict.”

“APA urges all actors to prioritize the protection of civilians, to adhere to international humanitarian law, and to engage in meaningful dialogue and negotiation toward just and sustainable resolutions, the resolution states. It also calls for “increased access to culturally responsive, contextually relevant, evidence-based psychological resources for those affected by armed conflict and living through humanitarian emergencies.”

Resolution Supporting Girls’ and Women’s Human Rights Globally

Regarding the global rights of women and girls, the Council approved a resolution by a vote of 157-4, with 3 abstentions, calling for national and international educational initiatives to enhance awareness of the issue. The measure commits APA to expanding formal education about girls’ and women’s rights and promoting research on factors that “enable versus prevent violations of girls’ and women’s human rights.”

This resolution notes that girls and women are denied numerous human rights, including sexual and reproductive rights; educational, work and economic rights; the right “to choose if, when and who[m] to marry; and the rights of self-expression and self-determination.” The measure also directs APA to work to eliminate research practices that “implicitly but powerfully marginalize girls’ and women’s experiences and rights.”

Individual, Collective, and Intergenerational Trauma Recovery: Considering the Restorative Roles of Restitution and Reparations

In another action, the Council passed a resolution committing APA to advocate for restitution and reparations for the survivors of individual and collective trauma and their descendants. The measure, which passed by a vote of 113-52, with 4 abstentions, defines the types of traumas covered, which include gender-based violence and human trafficking; the Holocaust; U.S. internment of Japanese Americans and Unangan people; U.S. enslavement of Africans and their descendants; and the taking of native lands and systematic oppression of Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders, Alaska Natives, American Indians, Puerto Ricans, and other populations.

The measure also calls on APA to consider convening a task force to initiate, support and disseminate a psychological research report examining the benefits of collective reparations “to understand best practices with regard to the distribution of restitution programs and to facilitate the adoption of distributive justice practices in other global organizations.”

Guidelines Related to Psychological Practice

Council also approved multiple guidelines related to psychological practice. These included:

- Clinical Practice Guidelines for Psychological and Nonpharmacological Treatment of Chronic Musculoskeletal Pain in Adults; vote: 122-27, with 10 abstentions
- Guidelines for Working with Adults with Complex Trauma Histories; vote: 153-8, with 3 abstentions
- Guidelines on Key Considerations for Working with Adults with PTSD and Traumatic Stress Disorder; vote: 148-11, with 4 abstentions
- Guidelines for the Practice of Telepsychology; vote: 157-1, with 3 abstentions
- Guidelines for Psychological Evaluations in Child Protection Matters; vote: 158-3, with 5 abstentions
- Guidelines for Behavioral Projects with Nonhuman Animals in Schools (K-12); vote: 150-2, with 4 abstentions

Presidential Citations and Raymond D. Fowler Award

APA President Cynthia de las Fuentes, PhD, presented a posthumous presidential citation to Norman B. Anderson, PhD, for his exceptional leadership and dedication to the field of psychology and APA; and a presidential citation to James H. Bray, PhD, for his lifetime of dedication to the discipline, the profession and APA.

Dr. de las Fuentes presented former President Jennifer F. Kelly, PhD, with the 2024 Raymond D. Fowler Member Award.