



Nebraska Psychiatrists Newsletter

3rd Quarter 2012

Insurance Chair Report

My insurance chair report for this newsletter will be only partially related to insurance issues. I want to explore why volunteer organizations in general, and this organization in particular, are struggling with declining meeting attendance and member participation. You may have noticed that the same two people, i.e., Dr. Theobald and Dr. Qadri have been nominated and elected to multiple positions. Dr. Theobald is both President and Deputy Assembly Representative, and Dr. Qadri is both President Elect and Assembly Representative. They are also our delegates to the Nebraska Medical Association. This was not a power grab on their part. It was due to their being the only members willing to take on these responsibilities. I want to thank them for their willingness to serve. (We are still in need of someone to serve as Secretary/Treasurer.) It appears to me that a variety of societal changes have tended to weaken volunteer organizations such as ours. Having been active in this organization for nearly 45 years, I have seen many changes not only in NPS, but in the way psychiatry is practiced as well.

The Sioux Psychiatric Society, our predecessor organization, was founded in the early mid 1960's. Our members worked in academia, small private practices and state hospitals. We became the Nebraska Psychiatric Society in 1979 after the Dakotas split off to form their own district branches. Our peak membership involvement was in the 1970's and 1980's. By then a typical meeting attendance was often in the range of 50-60. Members from Lincoln,

Norfolk, and points west found time to come to many of our meetings. We regularly had four meetings per year. For special meeting topics such as a speech by Dr. Robert Pasnow, who was then President of APA, or by Dr. Merrill Eaton who reported on Chinese psychiatry after spending a year in China, we had over 100 psychiatrists and their spouses in attendance. Our elections were contested during that era, and there seemed to be no shortage of candidates for elected office or for various committee assignments within the executive committee. The terms of office were shortened from two year to one to allow more members to participate. Now it is not unusual for attendance at our meetings to be in the high teens or low twenties and for appointed committee positions to go unfilled. It is my understanding the problem of declining attendance is not unique to NPS and that other medical specialty groups are facing the similar issues. I will try to identify some factors which may be contributing to these changes in organized psychiatry.

I would place reduced third party reimbursement at or near the top of that list. By the early 1980's, Medicare, and later private insurance companies, shifted from paying a percentage of our reasonable and customary fees to paying a percentage of allowed fees. Over time, their allowed fees gradually shrank relative to inflation and are now at roughly 50 to 60% of what



John Donaldson, M.D.

NPS CALENDAR 2012 EVENTS

September 18

Member Meeting
Omaha Marriott

(See flyer in this newsletter)

October 2

Monthly Executive Mtg

October 23 to 28

AACAP Meeting

November 6

Monthly Executive Mtg

December 4

Monthly Executive Mtg

HELPFUL LINK:

Find help with
prescription costs
www.needymeds.com



would be our inflation adjusted fees. This means that after overhead our inflation adjusted hourly income is less than half of what we enjoyed 30 years ago. Closely related to that is the need for psychiatrists to work longer hours and to focus more on 15 minute medication checks in an effort to maintain something close to a satisfactory outcome.

During the later 1980's, the health insurance industry changed

**Get More From
Your NPS Membership
Get Involved!**

NPS Board Positions

The following physicians have been elected to listed positions for the remainder of 2012.

President

Jane Theobald, MD

President Elect

Faiz Qadri, MD

Assembly Rep

Faiz Qadri, MD

Dep. Assembly Rep.

Jane Theobald, MD

There are still positions available for anyone wanting to get involved and serve:

Secretary/Treasurer
Ethics

Legislative
Early Career

Membership
Rural Representative

For those members outside the Omaha area, your participation is encouraged as well.

Members may participate in all NPS Board meetings currently via conference call. Video conferencing is in the works and we hope to offer that for future meetings as well.

from most companies being mutual organizations who shared profits and losses with their members, to being for profit companies, with less predictable payments and much higher overhead. (One of those CEO's later became notorious for having collected over a billion dollars in salary and bonuses at the expense of the providers and the people who were insured by that company.) Also starting in the late 80's we were often faced with take-it-or-leave-it opportunities to become "preferred providers." We could accept reduced fees from the various insurers or risk not having those patients or not being reimbursed if we did. The problems

with reduced fees, unpredictable insurance payments, technical denials, and regulations in general became so intolerable for those in private practice that in an effort to ensure a predictable income, more and more of our members have gradually chosen to be employed by large corporations, the universities, or various government agencies. As a result, most of our members have lost control over their scheduling and are no longer able or cannot afford to block out periods of their professional time for civic involvement such as volunteer faculty time or for involvement with this or similar voluntary organizations. By being employed,



Depression Research Study

Are you depressed and not quite feeling like yourself lately?

A research study is currently underway in your area to evaluate the safety and effectiveness of an investigational medication for the treatment of depression.

In order to qualify, you must:

- Be between the ages of 19 and 65 years old
- Be diagnosed with depression
- Be currently experiencing depression symptoms that have lasted between 4 weeks and 1 year

Qualified participants may receive:

- Study-related medical care
- Study medication
- Compensation for time and travel

Health insurance is not needed to participate.

Call University of Nebraska Medical Center at

402-552-6246

or log onto www.navigatingdepression.com
for more information and to see if you qualify.

they may have also gained a sense of income security and professional identity which would make an organization like ours seem less essential.

One of our founding members, Dr. John Baldwin, recommended that this organization be called a *Psychiatric Society*. He believed that in addition to being a scientific organization, it should also be a social organization. Starting in the late 1960's and continuing through the 80's, spouses were routinely invited to our meetings. In the 1970's and 80's our spring meetings often featured entertaining speakers such as Roger Welch or then Coach Bob Devaney. At that time, psychiatrists were predominantly male and the meetings helped our wives become acquainted. As more and more women attended Medical School and entered Psychiatry by the 1990's, we found that few husbands of psychiatrists were interested in attending our meetings. At that same time, dual career families were also becoming much more com-

mon. Our younger members seemed to have less personal time and to experience more guilt about leaving children who had already been with care givers during the day. The social networking aspect of our organization therefore became less important.

Finally, the reduced requirements for APA Fellowship status, i.e., only to be board certified, be a member and pay dues for 5 years, are a marked reduction from the old standards which required multiple types of service to the organization and to the profession. Those efforts are now required only of Distinguished Fellows. Therefore, there is less incentive to serve the society. Added credentials also may seem less important to employed physicians than to those in private practice or academia

In the interest of brevity, I left out discussion of the time stolen by electronic medical records, the internet, children's soccer leagues, as well as potential member loss related to the

APA's political stances in recent years.

We discussed these issues at our August Executive Committee meeting, and it was suggested that Dr. Joel Strauch (a house officer who is doing triple duty as our newsletter editor, our Public Affairs Committee Chair, and our informal IT expert) be asked to design a questionnaire giving our members an opportunity to provide suggestions on the best way to help the Nebraska Psychiatric Society to become more meaningful to them. The questionnaires will likely be on-line but also available in print form. I hope you will be giving the future role of NPS some thought, i.e., what changes might make it more likely for you to participate, should it focus on being a scientific and professional organization, a way to network, a political advocacy group for ourselves and our patients, or should it have a smaller role in the future.

John Y. Donaldson, MD
Insurance Chair



NOW Coalition for Bipolar Disorder

PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT (PI) CME ACTIVITY

Improve your Patient Management and Earn MOC Part 4

Serious about practice change? The NOW Coalition for bipolar disorder performance improvement module (PIM) offers the opportunity to improve performance associated with the diagnosis and management of patients with bipolar disorder.

AVAILABLE CREDIT UPON COMPLETION OF THIS MODULE

- Earn 20 points toward the Self-Evaluation of Practice Performance requirement of **Maintenance of Certification (MOC)** through the **American Board of Internal Medicine's (ABIM)** Approved Quality Improvement (AQI) Pathway
- Earn Assessment and Performance in Practice points toward your **MOC** requirements through **American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology (ABPN)**
- Earn up to 20 Prescribed Credits by the **American Academy of Family Physicians** (for physicians only)
- Earn **AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™**

TIME COMMITMENT

All educational activities are accessible online 24 hours a day. Learners can progress at their own pace, but the following are suggested reasonable time lapses:

Stage A: Self-assessment survey and 25 chart entries
(> 1 week)

Stage B: Three online educational interventions
(minimum of 90 days)

Stage C: Post-assessment survey and 25 new chart entries
(> 1 week)

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact Michele Frey at The France Foundation at mfrey@francefoundation.com or info@NOWBipolar.org or call (860) 598-2251

www.NOWBipolar.org

2012-2013 PSYCHIATRY RESIDENTS



KARIM ABBAS

Medical school: St. Matthew's University School of Medicine (Grand Cayman).

Karim completed his undergraduate studies in Biological Sciences at Rutgers in Newark, NJ. He came to the US from Egypt at the age of 18 and enjoys reading, soccer, and running.



NATHAN MAESER

Medical school: University of Sydney in Sydney, Australia.

Nathan grew up in Logan, Utah, and attended Utah State. He has a background in research, and wants to serve the underserved. He enjoys running, cycling, basketball, backpacking, skiing, ceramics, and poetry.



YON CHONG

Medical school: St. George's University, Grenada.

She completed her undergraduate work at Ohio State. Yon's parents emigrated from Korea when she was a child. She has visited 31 countries, calls herself "an unofficial food critic," and enjoys going to music shows. She is interested in photography, modern art, and architecture.



HIND MARY

Medical school: American University of Antigua College of Medicine.

Hind attended Wayne State in Detroit for her undergraduate degree in Chemistry. She was born in Baghdad, Iraq and immigrated to the US when she was 16, following the first Gulf War. Hind likes volleyball, cooking, baking, and arts & crafts.



SIV HOUR

Medical school: Saba Univ. School of Medicine, Netherlands Antilles.

She completed her undergraduate degree at the University of California-Riverside. Siv enjoys movies with "great dialogue," enjoys playing basketball, and is an avid Stephen King and Alfred Hitchcock fan.



KATHERINE ROBERTSON

Medical school: Creighton University.

Katherine grew up in Hibbing, Minnesota and attended the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul where she majored in biochemistry. She spent time in Peru during medical school. As a child she was active in "all" sports, but ended up focusing on swimming and figure skating.



JOSHUA LOTFALLAH

Medical school: St. George's University, Grenada.

Josh did his undergraduate work in Canada. He enjoys traveling and has a large passion for sports—playing golf, tennis and soccer. He has a self-proclaimed "passion for cinema" and loves to discuss deep and meaningful films.



RAHUL SHARMA

Medical school: St. Matthew's in Grand Cayman.

Rahul received his undergraduate degree in psychology from Roosevelt University in Chicago. Prior to medical school, he worked as a pharmacy tech. Rahul is an avid car enthusiast, and enjoys working on autos. He also enjoys watching and playing sports.