

Mission: Nebraska Psychiatric Society exists to advance the profession of psychiatry, serve the needs of our members and provide support for psychiatric services across Nebraska.

Vision: To become a trusted voice and resource for psychiatric services in Nebraska.

A Message from the President:

Greetings fellow NPS members!

Fall is here and I truly hope you are all doing well. I've been busy with work, carpool duties and all the drama that comes with raising teenagers. I'm sure many of you can relate! Some of you may have visited local pumpkin patches, shopped for costumes for your kids (or yourself!), visited a haunted house, attended a Husker football game or attended various school activities for your children. Whatever you have been up to, I wish you peace and happiness.

I also know that some may be struggling, mourning the loss of someone close who will not be attending holiday celebrations with you this year. You may be feeling particularly alone during this season.

Regardless of your personal situation, I want you to know that NPS is here for you. We care deeply about every one of you and we know that to fulfill our mission of advancing psychiatric services across Nebraska, it's vital that each individual in our profession feels fully supported by his or her peers. This support comes in many forms, and it's important that each of you aim to provide your unique type of support to your colleagues, even if it is a simple acknowledgment of your professional or personal respect for them.

I was reminded of this important responsibility when I recently attended the funeral of a local psychiatrist with whom I worked for many years. You can read a tribute to her in this newsletter, so I won't go into that here. The experience reminded me that although we may have long titles, impressive CV's, a bunch of awards, and wear fancy clothes, we are all the same at the core, searching for love and meaning in our lives. This transcends and fuels our professional aspirations, so I implore all of you to be deliberate and work to impart this to others as you go about your daily routine.

I and the NPS board extend to all of you our deepest respect and appreciation for all you do. We wish you peace during the upcoming holiday season. As always, please don't hesitate to reach out to me, or anyone on the executive board, if you need anything or if you have something to share with our professional community.

Gratefully,

Steve Salzbrenner, MD
NPS President



Steven Salzbrenner, MD



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Legislative Update

Nebraska Psychiatric Society organized a Legislative Meet & Greet on September 15, 2023 in Omaha, Nebraska. The event was an opportunity for local physicians, lawmakers, and candidates to discuss and advocate for issues pertaining to health care in our state.

At the state capitol, the 1st session of the 108th Legislature was adjourned on June 1, 2023. The Health and Human Services Committee considered proposals on various measures intended to restrict abortion and gender-affirming care for minors, address the state's health care workforce shortage, and increase access to behavioral health services.

The legislative session was dominated by two bills (LB626 and LB574) on the issues of gender-affirming care, and abortion restrictions that ultimately were combined into one measure.

LB 574 was amended to create the Let Them Grow Act and the Preborn Child Protection Act. LB574 passed on a vote of 33-15 and took effect immediately.

The Let Them Grow Act prohibits physicians from performing "gender-altering" surgical procedures on individuals under age 19. The bill requires a minimum number of gender-identity focused therapeutic hours and a waiting period between the time a health care practitioner obtains informed patient consent and subsequently prescribes hormone therapy or puberty blockers.

The Preborn Child Protection Act bans the abortion procedure after the gestational age of 12 weeks (calculated from the first day of a pregnant individual's last menstrual cycle). The act has exceptions for sexual assault, incest and medical emergencies, but does not include exceptions for fetal anomalies.

A bill intended to cover a Medicaid reimbursement gap in Nebraska became an omnibus health services measure. LB227 includes provisions of more than 20 other measures related to health care licensure, practice and programs.

LB75 grants the state's Child and Maternal Death Review Team the authority to conduct reviews of the rates, trends and causes of severe maternal morbidity in the state.

LB181 allows a pharmacist to use his or her professional judgment to fill or refill a prescription with sufficient fills remaining and states that a prescription remains valid despite the prescribing practitioner's subsequent death or retirement, or the

suspension or revocation of the prescribing practitioner's credentials.

LB286 states that physicians' participation in wellness programs should be confidential unless a peer coach determines that the physician's condition constitutes a danger to public health and safety.

LB276 was passed and adopts the Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic Act (CCBHC) to increase access to outpatient mental health and substance use disorder treatment. The program requires that DHHS develop a prospective payment system for providers to be reimbursed based on the anticipated cost of providing required services to Medicaid recipients.

LB792 requires the creation of a pilot program by DHHS to assess and treat individuals with PTSD resulting from community gun violence. An amended version of LB792 was included in the state's budget proposal this session and approved by lawmakers, but subsequently vetoed by Gov. Jim Pillen.

LB179 would prohibit credentialed health care professionals from providing conversion therapy to anyone under the age of 19 in Nebraska but excludes clergy members or religious counselors providing conversion therapy in a pastoral capacity.

At the federal level, the Federal Advocacy Conference was organized by APA leadership and the Council on Advocacy and Government Relations (CAGR) on October 16-17, 2023, in Washington, DC.

Dr. Harmit Singh and Dr. Alëna Balasanova represented Nebraska and visited the offices of Congressmembers at Capitol Hill. Based on the APA's legislative agenda for the 118th Congress, Dr. Singh and Dr. Balasanova worked to advocate for bills that impact psychiatry and the delivery of care for mental health and substance use disorders.

Three main topics were discussed including behavioral health integration, supporting and enhancing the psychiatric workforce, and health equity.

Behavioral Health Integration:

The COMPLETE (Connecting Our Medical Providers with Links to Expand Tailored and Effective) Care Act (S.1378/H.R.5819) enhances Medicare payment rates for behavioral health integration services (for three years) and facilitates increased access to needed mental health and substance use disorder services.

Supporting and Enhancing the Psychiatric Workforce:

The Resident Physician Shortage Reduction Act of 2023 (H.R. 2389/S.1302),

would raise the number of Medicare-supported GME positions.

The REDI (Resident Education Deferred Interest) Act (H.R.1202/S.704) allows borrowers to qualify for interest-free deferment on their student loans.

The Mental Health Professionals Workforce Shortage Loan Repayment Act (H.R.4933/S.462) would provide up to \$250,000 for mental health practitioners working in high-need communities.

The Conrad State 30 and Physician Access Reauthorization Act (H.R.4942/S.665) extends for three years states' abilities to request J-1 visa waivers for 30 foreign physicians (International Medical Graduates) per state per year with flexibility for expansion to meet demand.

Health Equity:

The Moms Matter Act (H.R.3312/S.1602) establishes a Maternal Mental Health Equity Grant to invest in support for mothers with mental health or substance use disorders, as well as to grow and diversify the maternal mental and behavioral health care workforce.

Preventing Maternal Deaths Reauthorization Act (H.R.3838/S.2415) ensures continued support for state maternal mortality review committees.

We encourage you to reach out to your local representative by email, phone call or letter, and let them know your opinion on legislation. The link to find your senator is here: <https://nebraskalegislature.gov>.

Your voice as a constituent matters. If you are interested in testifying next year during a committee hearing, the APA has resources to help. We also have NPS members who have testified in the past and will gladly guide you through the process (it's painless). Please feel free to reach out to any member of the Executive Committee if you'd like assistance with legislative issues.



Harmit Singh, MD

Assembly Report

On a bright and clear August morning, Dr. Wetzel picked up fellow Area 4 Assembly Representative, Dr. O'Dell, their destination being the utilitarian Airport Hilton outside of Kansas City, Missouri, for the summer Area 4 meeting. The ride was a source of fascinating conversations about all things psychiatry. So fascinating that, just after Dr. Wetzel drove onto the interstate, his interest in Dr. O'Dell's musings made him miss the exit to I-29, and the pair were briefly headed towards Denver.

The Area 4 summer meeting is usually virtual, but Area 4's good stewardship of finances permitted them to hold this summer meeting in person. Attendance was above average, with several new members also joining. Dr. O'Dell was one of the new faces and was immediately met with a warm welcome and engaging conversations with fellow representatives. As is typical for summer meetings, most of the agenda was used to thresh the obligations to the assembly and the Area 4 District Branches. These included such topics as national committee assignments (Dr. Wetzel is assigned a seat on the

Awards Committee), committee reports, and scheduling for future meetings.

The special guest speaker was Steven Starks, M.D., Speaker-Elect of the National Assembly. Dr. Starks discussed the latest initiatives at the assembly and the work to improve the assembly's efforts to be relevant, to communicate, and to encourage participation of its members. On Saturday evening, a small cadre of attendees made the drive to downtown Kansas City to take in one of the more unique KC neighborhoods. Saving the best for last, the final order of business was the introduction of Action Papers for discussion. When members found themselves in heated debate (and there was heated debate), they maintained a respectful and professional demeanor, with the mission of the APA always in the forefront: the welfare of their patients and the public, the support of their work, and the promotion of the American Psychiatric Association.

The return trip to Omaha included a bonus detour to St Joseph to visit the Glore Psychiatric Museum. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glore_Psychiatric

[Museum](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glore_Psychiatric_Museum)). The museum visit was followed by brunch at one of the oldest establishments of vice in Missouri, The First Ward House.

The next meeting for your representatives is scheduled for the first week in November in Baltimore, when the Assembly Committees will gather to review this year's bumper crop of Action Papers. More Action Papers means more membership participation and more advocacy for you and your patients. If you have not yet done so, now is the perfect time to donate to the APAPAC. Even small donations carry tremendous influence in the APA efforts to educate lawmakers about our mission. (<https://www.psychiatry.org/psychiatrists/advocacy>).

Respectfully Submitted,
Martin Wetzel, MD, DFAPA
Area 4 Representative



Martin Wetzel, MD

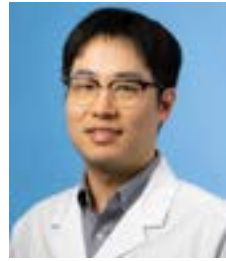


Legislative Meet & Greet

On September 15, 2023 NPS members connected with Nebraska lawmakers at the Legislative Meet & Greet



Welcome 2023-2024 Creighton Psychiatry Residents



Dr. Tommy H. Sung is a PGY-1 Psychiatry Resident at Creighton University. He received his bachelor's degree at Stanford University in California. He earned his medical degree at Kyungpook National University in South Korea. He is excited to be in Omaha and is enjoying all the city has to offer!



Dr. Meagan Kubista is a PGY-1 Psychiatry Resident at Creighton University. She completed her bachelor's degree in Biochemistry at Saint Mary's University followed by medical training at the University of Minnesota. She is having a great time discovering the city of Omaha and cannot wait to delve deeper into the field of psychiatry!



Dr. Anvesh Jalasutram is a PGY-1 Psychiatry Resident from Chicago, IL where he was born, raised, and educated through medical school. His interests in Psychiatry include Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Interventional Psychiatry. Outside of medicine, he enjoys long-distance running, rock climbing, and playing with his tuxedo cat, Fizz.



Dr. Kari Wolatz is a PGY-1 Psychiatry Resident at Creighton University. She grew up in Omaha and completed her bachelor's degree in Psychology at the University of Tulsa. She returned to Omaha for medical school at the University of Nebraska Medical Center. She is particularly interested in inpatient and consultation/liaison psychiatry.



Dr. Masha Impallaria is a PGY-1 Psychiatry Resident at Creighton University. She is originally from Upper Saddle River, NJ and earned her bachelor's degree at Johns Hopkins University in Behavioral Biology. She earned her medical degree at Creighton University. At the moment, she is open to all areas of psychiatry.



Dr. Lior Hilsenrath is a PGY-1 Psychiatry Resident and one of the first residents co-developing Creighton University's Rural Psychiatry Residency Program. Originally trained in theoretical mathematics, he eventually went to medical school at Ben-Gurion University, where he acquired his love for rural medicine while rotating in the Negev desert's Bedouin communities and the beautiful mountain towns of the Golan Heights.



Dr. Hesham Essa is a PGY-1 Psychiatry Resident at Creighton University. He attended medical school at Benha faculty of medicine in Egypt. After earning his medical degree in 2021, he joined the Mayo Clinic psychiatry department and worked in the neuropsychiatry lab specializing in the neurobiology of addiction and sleep disorders. He is interested in child and adolescent psychiatry.



Dr. Jesse Woo obtained his bachelor's degree in Biology and attended medical school at Creighton University before returning once again as a PGY-1 for the Creighton Psychiatry Residency program. His interests include Child & Adolescent psychiatry, medical education, and the intersection between psychiatry and technology.

Welcome 2023-2024 UNMC Psychiatry Residents



Dr. Keisha England is from Phoenix, AZ and has lived in the Midwest for the past 12 years. She loves painting and going to museums. Her favorite parts of Omaha are the diversity of the people and the great food! She is excited to serve the community and explore more of Omaha!



Dr. Christian Pollema is from North Sioux City, SD. He earned his Bachelor of Science in Biology and Communication Studies from the University of South Dakota where he also received his medical degree completing his clinical training in Rapid City. During medical school, he led as President of the Psychiatry Interest Group and served at a local homeless shelter on a weekly basis. He is passionate about working with and advocating for underserved populations and in practicing General Adult Psychiatry.



Dr. Claire Stavenga was born and raised in Detroit, MI before heading off to undergraduate studies at Kalamazoo College in Kalamazoo, MI. After graduation, Claire moved to France to work as an English language teacher in primary schools through the TAPIF teaching assistant program. She then joined WorldTeach to teach English to primary school children in Barranquilla, Colombia. Claire completed her medical degree at American University of the Caribbean School of Medicine.



Dr. Charlotte Ritchie grew up in Oregon and moved to Nebraska to attend medical school at Creighton! Despite being quite different from the Pacific Northwest, she grew to love the Midwest. She is grateful to have matched at UNMC through the couple's match and is excited to spend the next several years becoming the best Psychiatrist she can be! Her interests in Psychiatry include Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Forensic Psychiatry.



Dr. Monica Nava Frenier recently moved to Omaha, Nebraska from Chicago, Illinois. She attended the University of Illinois at Chicago for medical school and undergraduate. She chose Psychiatry because she is especially in tuned with a holistic approach to patients' health care as she is planning on specializing in Reproductive Psychiatry as she is passionate about reproductive rights and advocacy. She finds it especially rewarding to support those of Latinx descent, especially the central and South American immigrant population. It is her goal to serve this population through working in both an in-hospital and in a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) setting once she is finished with training.

A Tribute to Dr. Staci Rosche

One of Omaha's great psychiatrists, Staci Rosche, MD, passed away on September 19th at the young age of 45 after battling cancer for several years. Many NPS members fondly remember her as a coworker and friend. I personally worked with Staci for 4 years at Lasting Hope Recovery Center where I was blessed to observe the wonderful care she provided, the respect and love she showed her coworkers and the positive attitude she maintained in spite of some long hours and stressful times. I also spent time with her in social settings where I witnessed the extraordinary love she has for her family.

Staci was the type of psychiatrist whom other psychiatrists would recommend to close family members. She always had a smile on her face and could make me laugh from across the room with some of our inside jokes. In addition to Staci's top-notch clinical skills, she was also very down to earth and loved her family above all else, including her husband, Bob, and her two young sons, Kam and Sam.

This loss has led me to reflect on my own life, as I'm sure it has for many others who are reading this. Staci Rosche was one of the best. She was a role model for me and others, demonstrating the importance of empathy, compassion, humor, faith and positivity. She lived her life with intention, took risks, and led the way for me and others to blaze new trails in our individual careers and lives in general. Staci, I will miss you, and I will forever honor your legacy. When confronted with a challenging situation in both my professional life and personal life, I will consider, "what would Staci do?"

Steve Salzbrenner, MD
NPS President

What Clinicians Need to Know About Delta-8

On my weekly visit to the farmers market in Omaha, I came across a vendor selling gummies in brightly colored packaging with labels stating “CBD/Hemp-based delta-8 THC.” A young man next to me inquired if he had to be 21 years old to buy them. Since Nebraska has not legalized cannabis (marijuana) use yet, here are some facts clinicians might want to consider about delta-8 THC (Δ 8-THC).

Recently Δ 8-THC has been gaining popularity, especially in states like Nebraska where advocacy groups are still trying to get cannabis legalized for medical use. New stores have opened around the state selling “CBD and legal Delta-8 THC.” The public perception seems to be that Δ 8-THC is a legal, less potent, and safe alternative for marijuana-based Δ 9-THC.

“Cannabis” from the *Cannabis sativa* plant is made up of more than 500 different chemical components called cannabinoids. Of these, tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) - specifically delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (Δ 9-THC) - is the main psychoactive chemical that causes euphoria or “high,” alterations in mood, anxiety, memory, coordination, and is psychomimetic.

Δ 8-THC is an isomer of Δ 9-THC, with nearly identical chemical structure, but about two thirds less potent than Δ 9-THC. It is minimally present in cannabis and synthesized in large quantities by chemically converting cannabidiol (CBD) derived from Hemp, a chemovar of *C. sativa* called *C. sativa* L, to Δ 8-THC.

The passage of “Agricultural Improvement Act of 2018” or “The Farm Bill” removed hemp as a controlled substance. Subsequently, “Nebraska Hemp Farming Act”, made it legal to sell hemp-derived CBD, hemp seed oil, textile fibers and other products as long as Δ 9-THC concentration is less than 0.3 % of dry weight. However, it does not address Δ 8-THC products, allowing manufacturers to sell Δ 8-THC products made from hemp-derived CBD.

CBD Oracle, an independent agency that reviews hemp-derived products, sent 51 Δ 8-THC products to Food & Environment Safety Analytical (FESA) Labs, to confirm potency levels and other metrics printed on the products’ labels. They found that over 3/4th of the tested products contained Δ 9-THC greater than 0.3% and more than 3/4 had on average 15% less Δ 8-THC than advertised. Such inaccurate labeling with high levels of Δ 9-THC in these Δ 8-THC products make them “more potent” and technically illegal.

Δ 8-THC is relatively new and lacks a well-established safety profile. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has issued safety warnings regarding the unregulated nature of the production process of Δ 8-THC. Potentially unsafe household chemicals are used by some manufacturers during the chemical synthesis of Δ 8-THC from CBD in uncontrolled or unsanitary settings, which may lead to the presence of unsafe contaminants and harmful by-products in these products.

There are no official age limitations in local Nebraska laws concerning purchasing Δ 8-THC. As per Nebraska PACT Act (for tobacco products), customers must be 21 and over to purchase, own, and use Δ 8-THC vape products. Other vendors require customers to be 18 years or older.

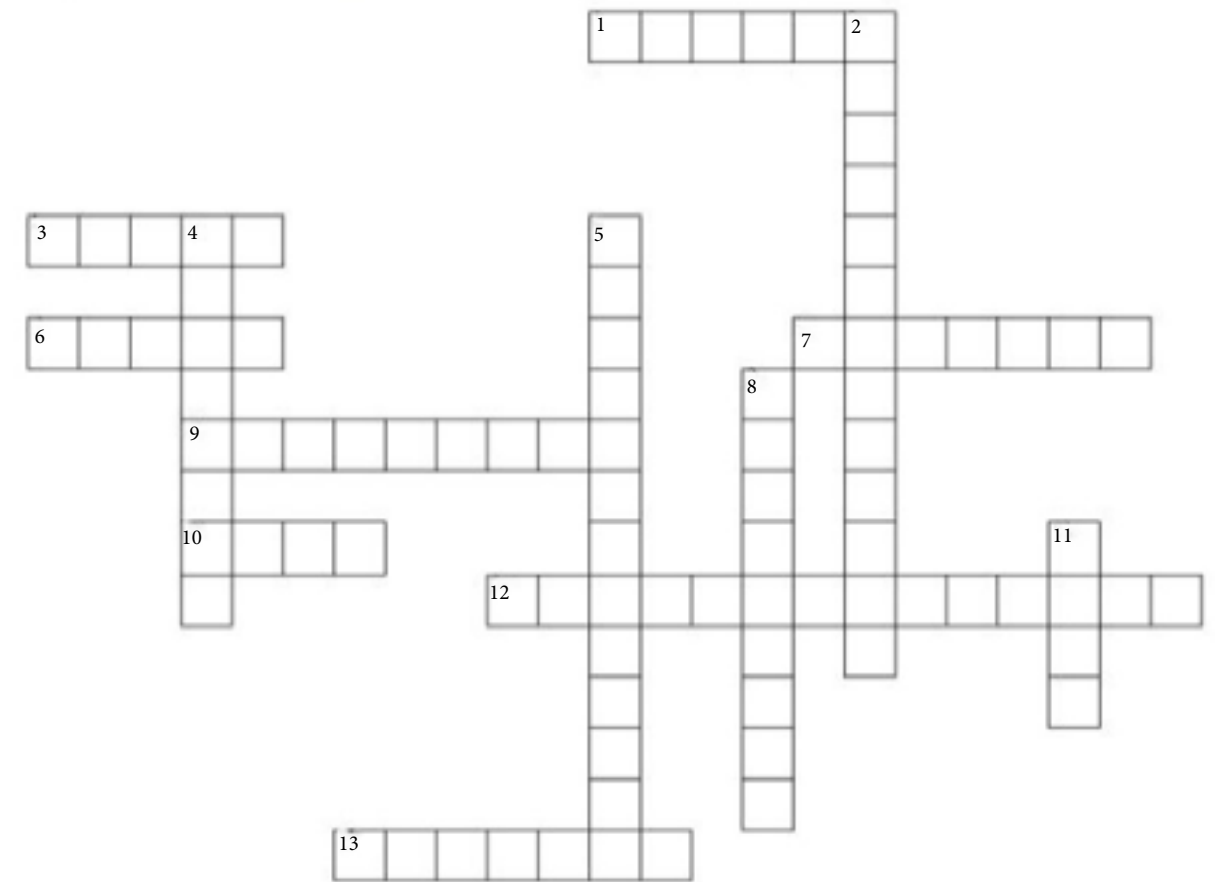
Due to its similarities with Δ 9-THC, the risks associated with Δ 9-THC, such as addiction and psychosis, might also apply to Δ 8-THC. There have been published case reports of psychosis secondary to use of Δ 8-THC. Such risks are especially high for vulnerable groups like adolescents and individuals with history of psychiatric disorders.

Standard urine drug screening doesn’t differentiate between the cannabinoids (CBD, Δ 9-THC or Δ 8-THC) and results show positivity for cannabinoids. This can lead to misdiagnosis as a primary psychiatric disorder. It is thus imperative to ask the patient what kind of product was used.

As more states legalize cannabis and Δ 8-THC, the research on long-term effects and potential risks of Δ 8-THC is still limited. Clinicians should take a precautionary approach, advising patients to abstain from Δ 8-THC until more research is available.

Harmit Singh, MD

NPS Crossword



ACROSS

1. Eponym for nihilistic delusion of loss of body parts
3. Eponymous area of brain for speech production
6. Nonsensical rhyming speech
7. This medication reduces suicide risk but can worsen acne
9. Side effect of inner restlessness
10. Low blood levels of this is associated with restless leg syndrome
12. The first antipsychotic produced
13. Defense mechanism to cancel out or remove destructive thought/action

DOWN

2. Experiences of unreality or detachment from surroundings
4. Use of this substance associated with later development of schizophrenia
5. False memory created without intention to deceive
8. Brief episodes of sudden loss of muscle tone precipitated by laughter
11. Screening tool for neuroleptic side effects

ANNOUNCEMENT:

We want everyone to be informed of exciting updates from NPS! Please ensure senders from “omahamedical.com” are being sent to your inbox, rather than spam. The communications promise to be useful, not overwhelming.





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