

# Partners in Mental Health Initiative: Stakeholders Report 2018



## Overview

On the one-year anniversary of the PArtners in Mental Health Summit, the initiative's steering committee, composed of leaders of the six largest PA organizations and PA and interprofessional champions, met on June 3-5, 2018 in Johns Creek, Georgia. The meeting's purpose was to celebrate first-year successes; to update the initiative's environmental scan, including forces working for and against the movement; and to broaden and deepen commitment to this work by identifying actionable strategies for further exploration in 2018, 2019, and beyond. The steering committee affirmed its continuing commitment to a collective impact strategy that seeks to advance the common purpose established at the Summit, namely to effect systemic change that improves the nation's health by advancing the roles of PAs and strengthening partnerships to address issues impacting mental health and substance use disorders.

## First-Year Accomplishments

PA organization leaders shared reports on activities within each organizations' mission and capacity to support the common purpose. First-year activity highlights are noted:

- **AAPA:** Continued advocacy related to opioid use disorder and the removal of barriers to PA practice in mental and behavioral health; support for condition-specific educational opportunities, including a Buprenorphine training and multiple mental health sessions at the annual conference; and new and sustained partnerships with mental and behavioral health organizations, governmental groups, and others with an interest in this work.
- **ARC-PA:** A fifth revision of the accreditation standards is underway.
- **NCCPA:** Released 2019 recertification exam blueprint, which focuses on core medical knowledge and includes 5% psychiatry and behavioral science content; reported 20% of psychiatry PAs have achieved the Certificate of Added Qualification; and shared NCCPA data generated from its practice analysis, core medical knowledge initiative, and PA Professional Profile to describe PA contributions to addressing mental health needs.
- **nccPA Health Foundation:** Led and published for the initiative the *PArtners in Mental Health Summit Proceedings and Recommendations*; provided communication, coordination and support to the steering committee, including hosting this meeting; launched a \$1,000 mental health community outreach grant for PAs and PA students; and announced plans for a curriculum survey to better describe and understand noted variability in PA curricula.
- **PAEA:** Partnered with the American Academy of Addiction Psychiatry and was awarded a SAMHSA grant with earmarked funds to train PA educators and PA students to treat opioid use disorder with the goal of 30% of educators and students being eligible for the X-waiver required to prescribe buprenorphine within two years. Successfully advocated for PA inclusion as eligible providers for loan repayment under H.R. 5102 – the Substance Use Disorder Workforce Loan Repayment Act and supported AAPA efforts to secure permanent X-waiver eligibility for practicing PAs.
- **PA Foundation:** Completed training of its first PA cohort of 15 Mental Health First Aid Fellows, who will now each train 100 community members; launched mental-health focused podcasts as part of its Vital Minds series (topics include Extending the Practice Environment for Treating Patients with Opioid and Alcohol Use Disorder, Mental Health First Aid, Mood Disorders and Depression); and partnered with community colleges to provide Mental Health First Aid on campuses that lack health services for their students.

## Environmental Scan: Force Field Analysis

Building on the robust SWOT analysis conducted at the Summit, steering committee members participated in a force field analysis to identify, update, and synthesize the forces working for and against an initiative that seeks to advance the role of all PAs to address mental health needs. Following the identification of forces working for the movement, deemed potential

force multipliers, and forces working against us, deemed opportunities for mitigation strategies, the steering committee prioritized the top forces as follows:

#### **Forces Working FOR Us:**

- Increased visibility and social awareness of mental health and substance use disorder needs.
- Recognized mental health workforce shortages and increased demand/need for services creates access challenges.
- Certified PAs have the medical knowledge, prescriptive authority, and ongoing professional development to embrace mental health.
- PA organizations have a track record for collaboratively addressing clinical issues.

#### **Forces Working AGAINST Us:**

- PAs aren't recognized by insurers and reimbursed accordingly for the mental health services that they can provide.
- PAs have a limited identity/recognition as a potential solution to mental health access to care issues or provider shortages.
- Provider/community perceptions of mental health outcomes as long-term, hard to measure, and without a true "cure" are challenging.

### **Planning for the Future: Actionable Strategies for Continued Exploration**

The steering committee next identified actionable strategies in support of the Summit's four recommendations to enhance PA educational approaches; to strengthen the practice environment and foster integration, to raise the profile of PAs addressing mental health across disciplines; and to support this movement. The dialogue generated a significant number of avenues for consideration. Subsequent discussion regarding potential to impact patients' mental health; potential to inform/impact all PAs; and the availability of resources and/or the likelihood of future resources facilitated prioritization of likely activities for continued exploration in 2018, 2019, and beyond. (Please note: The enumerated items are anticipated in addition to continued activities each of the PA organizations will undertake in support of their own spheres of influence and expertise.) Although the committee acknowledged formidable challenges, these activities represent a commitment to continued information gathering as well as a grassroots outreach to engage additional PAs and partners in this movement and promote awareness of mental health issues within PA practice.

#### *Proposed 2018 Activities*

- Circulate a Stakeholder Report to PA organizations, Summit attendees, and others interested in this work.
- Submit proposal to present PArtners in Mental Health Initiative as an interactive focus group at AAPA 2019 (by 7/31/18)
- Reach out to PAEA and Psych Congress to determine 2018 presentation opportunities
- Prioritize opportunities to submit abstracts to PA state conferences to share this movement
- Create a PArtners in Mental Health slide deck and elevator speech to describe and invite engagement with this movement
- Identify PA champions and experiences addressing mental health needs.
- Brand shared movement hashtag(s): (e.g., #PArtnersinMentalHealth, #PAs4MH)

#### *Proposed 2019 Activities*

- Develop toolkit or microsite to serve as a landing site/clearinghouse for PAs seeking resources related to mental health
- Maintain commitment to presentations, including AAPA, PAEA, state PA conferences, Psych Congress, etc.
- Publish curriculum survey results & NCCPA data
- Explore external funding opportunities.

#### *Potential Opportunities for 2020 & beyond*

- Continue outreach to state, national, psychiatry meetings and stakeholders
- Monitor insurance, reimbursement, and legislation changes
- Identify future partners.
- Consider long terms goals and consider future stakeholder summits

## Supporting the Movement

The steering committee concluded by declaring its continued commitment to this movement as a multi-year initiative and emphasizing the value of dedicated time and space to brainstorm actionable and sustaining strategies. It was noted that the steering committee may seek to gather concordant with other PA meetings and to supplement such gatherings with conference calls. Further, the committee expressed its hope in the continued momentum of this movement to make an impact on the PA profession and ultimately the quality of life of all patients cared for by PAs. To stay apprised of these efforts, share your contact information with the nccPA Health Foundation at [contactus@nccpahealthfoundation.net](mailto:contactus@nccpahealthfoundation.net).

## Participants & Acknowledgements

The nccPA Health Foundation thanks the following individuals for their participation at this meeting:

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Although unable to attend the meeting, the nccPA Health Foundation acknowledges the contributions of fellow steering committee members:

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