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Subject: APA Headlines: House Overwhelmingly Passes Long-Delayed Mental Health Reform Legislation
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Good morning Ms Cathy Thompson

July 7, 2016

Leading The News

House Overwhelmingly Passes Long-Delayed Mental Health Reform Legislation.

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (7/6, Radnofsky, Subscription Publication) reports that on July 6, by a vote of 422 to 2, the House of Representatives passed [HR 2646](#), the Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act.

[The Hill](#) (7/6, Sullivan) reports that the Senate also has a "parallel, bipartisan" measure. Now, changes to the House version of the proposed legislation "have made it similar to the Senate bill." But, even though "mental health reform has been a rare area where both parties are looking to enact legislation," the effort in the Senate "has been stalled over gun politics, and it is unclear whether a bill can be signed into law this year."

[TIME](#) (7/6, Ockerman) points out the House bill, "introduced by Rep. Tim Murphy (R-PA), a licensed child psychologist, would potentially address a nationwide shortage of psychiatric beds and child psychiatrists, in addition to creating the federal position of assistant secretary for mental health and substance use disorders, to be filled by a licensed psychiatrist or psychologist and take over the responsibilities of the administrator of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration." For its part, "the American Psychiatric Association is urging that The Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act be approved by the Senate before the end of the year, though the [organization said in a statement Wednesday](#) that it endorses both the House and Senate measures."

The [Washington Examiner](#) (7/6, Cunningham) reports that the measure "had been toned down from the original version...to garner support from Democrats." The [New Orleans Times-Picayune](#) (7/6, Rainey) and the [Pittsburgh Post-Gazette](#) (7/7, Mauriello) also cover the story.

Psychiatric News Alert



[HHS Announces Series of Actions to Expand Opioid Treatment, Reduce Misuse](#)

[RAISE Study Suggests Shared Decision Making May Influence Antipsychotic Prescribing Patterns](#)

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Psychiatric Treatment/Disorders

Data Indicate 20 Veterans Per Day Committed Suicide In 2014.

[USA Today](#) (7/7, Zoroya) reports new data from the Department of Veterans Affairs show that on average, 20 veterans committed suicide daily in 2014. The article says this figure is "the first actual count of suicides among former service members," and points out that

the 2010 average of 22 suicides per day was an estimate. David Shulkin, VA undersecretary for health, highlighted “the slight decline from the 2010 estimate, but added, ‘it’s still far too high.’” The piece adds that according to the figures, the highest number of suicides occurred among male veterans aged 18-29, who had a suicide rate of 86 per 100,000 people; female veterans in that age group had a rate of 33 per 100,000, but the national average is 13 per 100,000 people.

People Who Carry Many Gene Variations Linked To Alzheimer’s May Have A Smaller Hippocampus Than Those With Few Of The Genetic Variations, Scan Study Finds.

In “Science Now,” the [Los Angeles Times](#) (7/6, Healy) reports a [study](#) published online July 6 in *Neurology* “offers fresh evidence that” Alzheimer’s disease “may gain a foothold years before dementia sets in.” Investigators discovered that people “who carried many of the telltale gene variations” linked to Alzheimer’s “had a smaller hippocampus...than did their peers with few of the genetic variations.”

[CNN](#) (7/6, Howard) reports that in arriving at these findings, investigators used magnetic resonance imaging “to analyze the hippocampi of 166 people with dementia and 1,026 people without dementia.” Next, they “calculated the same risk score and hippocampal volume in 1,322 healthy adults between the ages of 18 and 35.” In both younger and older groups, “a small association between a higher risk score and having a smaller hippocampal volume” was detected. Also covering the story are [HealthDay](#) (7/6, Reinberg), [Medscape](#) (7/6, Anderson), and the [Telegraph \(UK\)](#) (7/6, Knapton).

Burst Of Moderate Exercise May Improve Motivation, Energy In Adults With AD/HD, Small Study Indicates.

[HealthDay](#) (7/6, Salamon) reports, “A burst of moderate exercise may improve motivation and energy in adults with symptoms of” attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (AD/HD), research suggests. Included in the study were “32 young men who hadn’t been diagnosed with” the disorder, “but reported high levels of symptoms of” AD/HD. After completing a “20-minute session of leg cycling exercise,” study participants “reported lowered feelings of confusion, fatigue and depression before performing a mental task.” The findings were published in the June issue of *Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise*.

APA in the News

HHS Raises Limit On How Much Buprenorphine Qualified Health Facilities Can Prescribe.

The [Washington Post](#) (7/6, Eilperin) reports that on Wednesday, HHS said “it is raising the limit on how much of an opioid addiction medication, buprenorphine, qualified health-care” professionals “can prescribe.” Until now, healthcare professionals “could prescribe buprenorphine to no more than 100 patients at once,” but HHS is raising that limit to 275.

[Psychiatric News Alert](#) (7/6) quotes American Psychiatric Association CEO and medical director Saul Levin, MD, MPA, who said, “We welcome the final rule raising the cap on buprenorphine patients because it balances the needs for access to quality care and safety.” Dr. Levin added, “APA had provided feedback to SAMHSA, and we are encouraged that the agency followed the spirit of our recommendations.” Dr. Levin said that APA will “continue to work with our members and partner medical societies to curb the opioid epidemic, and we applaud the steps taken by the administration.”

Psychiatric Medication Update

Psilocybin Safe, Potentially Efficacious In Treatment Of Major Depression, Small Study Suggests.

[Medscape](#) (7/6, Melville) reports that “psilocybin, the active ingredient in ‘magic mushrooms,’ is safe and is potentially efficacious in the treatment of major depression,” research suggests. The findings of the 12-patient [study](#) were published in the July issue of *The Lancet Psychiatry*. An accompanying [comment](#) “noted the importance of the fact that nearly half of the patients in the study had previous experience with psilocybin.”

Researchers To Test Ketamine In Combination With Psychotherapy To Treat Alcoholism.

[Reuters](#) (7/6, Kelland) reports researchers at Exeter University are recruiting 96 volunteers “with severe alcohol disorder who have been ‘recently abstinent’” to participate in a trial testing whether ketamine, “also known as the party drug ‘Special K’, may be helpful in reducing relapse rates among people with severe alcoholism.” A pilot study “found that three doses of ketamine plus psychotherapy reduced average 12-month relapse rates to 34 percent from 76 percent.” The researchers believe “ketamine’s antidepressant properties may have helped.”

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Other News

Medical Marijuana Being Used As Substitute Medicine To Treat Several Medical Conditions, Study Suggests.

[Reuters](#) (7/6, Cohen) reports a study published in Health Affairs suggests that medical marijuana is being used a substitute medicine in states where it is legal. Researchers found that physicians wrote fewer prescriptions for drugs used to treat conditions that medical marijuana can also be used to treat in states with legal access to medical marijuana compared to states without such access. Researchers calculated that Medicare saved over \$165 million on prescription drugs in 2013 in states where medical marijuana is legal and the researchers estimated that Medicare could save over \$468 million per year if all states legalized medical marijuana.

The [Newark \(NJ\) Star-Ledger](#) (7/6, Livio) reports the researchers aimed to examine the use of medical marijuana to treat several conditions including: "anxiety, depression, glaucoma, nausea, pain, psychosis, seizures, sleep disorders and spasticity," and found that the number of prescriptions for alternative drugs to treat all those conditions declined except for glaucoma and spasticity.

The [Philadelphia Inquirer](#) (7/6, Sapatkin) reports researchers compared the number of prescriptions for other medications, besides medical marijuana, used to treat those conditions in states with legalized medical marijuana and states without it, and found a drop in such prescriptions in states with legalized medical marijuana. The researchers also looked at the change in the number of prescriptions for medications that medical marijuana could not be used as a substitute for, such as antibiotics and blood thinners, and found the prescription rate for such drugs were unaffected.

Wednesday's Lead Stories

- [CMS Now Allowing Medicaid To Pay For Mental Health, Substance Abuse Treatments For Adults.](#)
- [Administration To Nearly Triple Opioid Treatment Options, Seek Additional Funding To Address Epidemic.](#)
- [Rural Residents Rely On Telemedicine For Psychiatric, Specialty Care.](#)
- [Telemedicine Most Helpful For Remote Monitoring And Psychotherapy.](#)

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