

# MPA NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2023



## IN THIS ISSUE

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

PRESIDENT-ELECT'S  
MESSAGE

CONVENTION UPDATE

MSBOP CIVIL  
COMMITMENT  
WORKSHOP

LETTERS FROM REGION 2  
& 4 REPRESENTATIVES

FEDERAL ADVOCACY  
COORDINATOR UPDATE

APA COUNCIL  
REPRESENTATIVES  
UPDATE

TELEHEALTH UPDATE

2023 EXECUTIVE COUNCIL  
LEADERS



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# LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



Kristy McRaney, Ph.D.

Hello, MPA Members.

I hope that each of you is having a wonderful summer. It is hard to believe we are already halfway through the year. The Executive Committee (EC) has been working diligently over the last several months, and I think you will see that work reflected in many of the updates in this newsletter. As a brief snapshot, the EC has been actively working toward establishing a proactive approach to our annual legislative plan, reviewing our documents and policies as these are due for updates, and engaging in productive conversations about the shifting and changing the landscape of our field. These are important topics that we look forward to sharing more about in the upcoming months. As you see announcements and notices forwarded out from members and the EC, please do not hesitate to reach out to me and/or your regional representatives to communicate your thoughts on topics. Your voices are important to us, and we want to hear your thoughts

I'm also very happy to report that our first cohort of MPA's Leadership Development Academy (LDA) is continuing to progress through the year with much success. LDA fellows are required to complete a project as a part of the academy experience. Our first cohort has selected a project that I am very excited about. They are planning to survey current MPA members, as well as Mississippi licensed psychologists that are not MPA members. The survey will help us assess what MPA can do to best serve our current membership while also growing our membership. Please be looking for an announcement about this survey so that you can provide your perspective and input! LDA fellows will also be sharing the results of the survey at our convention this year.

Speaking of convention, I cannot wait to see all of you in September. Dr. Maack has been working incredibly hard to plan this year's convention, and I know that it is going to be an absolute treat!

Wishing you all a wonderful summer. As always, please don't hesitate to reach out if I can support you in any way.

Kristy McRaney, Ph.D.  
MPA President  
[kristy.mcraney@usm.edu](mailto:kristy.mcraney@usm.edu)

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Kristy McRaney, Ph.D.  
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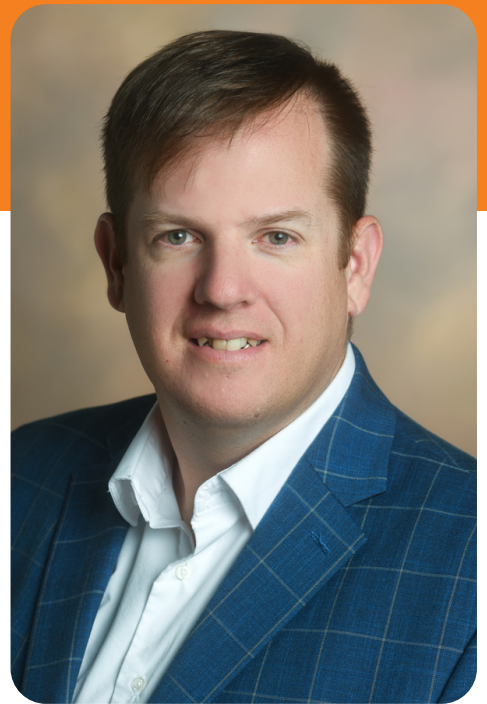


# LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT-ELECT

A few months ago, I had the privilege of attending the 2023 Practice Leadership Conference (PLC) as a representative for MPA and our state psychologists. For those who are not familiar with it, the PLC is an annual event hosted by APA in our nation's capital and billed as "the premier event for APA and SPTA leaders to co-create transformational impact for the psychology profession and critical societal issues." Pretty ambitious statement, right!? It was my first time in DC and to be honest, I was a little star struck. In a few short moments of free time I drove my rental car over the Potomac River, jogged past the south lawn of the White House, and stood in the shadows of the World War II Memorial. It was pretty fantastic really.

Our nation is strong and flawed. Its' history is imperfect and invaluable. Its' future is uncertain and predictable. These dialectics of humanity excite me because I enjoy the process of exploring nuance and the complexity of uncomfortable truths. So, what does this have to do with PLC, much less MPA? Well, these monuments caused me to think about the process of growth and after two long days with psychologists from all over the United States, Territories, and Canada, I left with perspective on a new dialectic truth about MPA: MPA is a strong and vulnerable organization.

In my time with MPA, I have been so blessed by the mentorship, guidance, and professional wisdom of other psychologists. Experienced and early career, academic and practicing, clinical and counseling. We do relationships well and this makes a huge difference in the personal development of individual psychologists. It was in my conversations with colleagues from around the country that I gained perspective about this strength I had come to take for granted. However, as a body of professionals, networking and collaborating is not an area of collective strength. This is not to say that we have not had historical success in this area when efforted. There are certainly examples I've heard of those who have made a difference in your individual communities. However, as a whole, there is room for growth in the way we as an organization connect, collaborate, and promote the advancement of psychology in our state. Fortunately, I also believe we are well positioned for such growth, and I look forward to working alongside so many of you as we do!



David Gavel, Ph.D.

# CONVENTION CHAIR UPDATE



Danielle Maack, Ph.D.  
& The King

Convention 2023 is just about three months away, and my trusty sidekick here, Elvis, is helping to make sure we're set for an engaging time in Tupelo! I want to send a big "thank you" to all who submitted presentations for the 2023 Convention! We are finishing up review of submissions and soon will announce the lineup for speakers! With the theme, "Viva Psychology: Amplifying our voices throughout Mississippi," I hope we all will leave the convention with more knowledge, connections, and feeling energized about our profession moving forward! Please be watching for emails and social media posts related to registration opening and to ensure that you secure your convention hotel! Get ready for the return of the Gavel Club (past presidents), Silent Auction, evidence-based presentations, keynote speaker Marshall Ramsey, and of course, appearances and performance by Elvis! If you have any questions related to convention, please don't hesitate to contact me!

## CIVIL COMMITMENT WORKSHOP

The MS Board of Psychology will be offering Civil Commitment Certification Training at the MPA conference at the end of September 2023, in Tupelo. If you are interested in this Training, you must notify the MSBOP and submit payment via your profile in the License Management System (LMS), on or before **August 4, 2023**.

The Board will review all requests at their August 11th meeting and, if approved, you will receive the training materials prior to the conference.

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# SPONSOR OPPORTUNITIES



**SPONSORSHIP & EXHIBITOR**

**REGISTRATION OPEN**

*Viva Psychology*  
AMPLIFYING OUR VOICES THROUGHOUT MS  
**2023 CONVENTION**  
SEPTEMBER 27-29, 2023

TUPELO, MS SEPTEMBER 27-29, 2023  
**MISSISSIPPI**  
PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

The graphic features a cartoon Elvis Presley character in a white suit and sunglasses, holding a microphone and pointing towards the text. The background is a mix of orange, teal, and black with a large vinyl record graphic on the right side.

## BOOK YOUR HOTEL FOR CONVENTION



**Hotel Tupelo - \$159/night -  
cutoff date August 20th**

**The group code is 092623MIS**

**HOTEL TUPELO BOOKING LINK**



**Holiday Inn & Suites Tupelo North  
- \$139/night - 662-269-0096**

**HOLIDAY INN BOOKING LINK**

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# LETTER FROM THE REGION 2 REPRESENTATIVE

Hello colleagues! What a few weeks we have had in our region with weather. Heavy rain and strong winds have knocked down trees, left many without power, and even destroyed homes and buildings. But we Mississippians are a strong bunch and persevere despite the hardship.

This perseverance extends to us as psychologists. Since moving to this area, I have been inspired by the tenacity and determination of this professional group and its members. I have met psychologists through MPA who are passionate about the state and its population. As a profession, we face many stressors, both on a micro level (e.g., burnout, emotional load, struggling with insurance companies) and on a macro level (e.g., problematic legislation that is or is not passed, systemic issues around racism and socioeconomic disparities that affect access to under-resourced communities). In my mind, this makes the need for community and camaraderie timely and more important than

ever. As such, I have two proposals: 1) I invite you to reach out to me as your region rep with any needs, concerns, or requests you may have. I can't guarantee anything, but I can promise I will try to represent you as best as I can. 2) Let's have a party! I am going to plan a region get together, please let me know if you are interested! Date TBD but likely in the fall.

Feel free to contact me at [elissa@drelissawoodruff.com](mailto:elissa@drelissawoodruff.com)

Thank you for continuing to support our great state and its wonderful residents.

Warm Regards,

Elissa "Liz" Woodruff, PhD  
[www.drelissawoodruff.com](http://www.drelissawoodruff.com)  
[elissa@drelissawoodruff.com](mailto:elissa@drelissawoodruff.com)



Elissa Woodruff, Ph.D.

# LETTER FROM THE REGION 4 REPRESENTATIVE

Region 4: George, Hancock, Harrison, Jackson,  
Pearl River, & Stone counties

It's summertime on the Coast! Although school is out for most, the hustle and bustle has not lessened. We continue to stay busy with work, traveling, summer camps, and (hopefully) taking advantage of beautiful weather. At times, it seems impossible to fit everything in – especially new activities or events.

While considering my newsletter submission, I was thinking about our needs as psychologists in this rapidly changing climate. With everything from the pop-up venture capitalist-led telehealth platforms to AI, to life-changing legislation quietly passing in our state, it is no easy feat to keep up.

In this spirit, I would like to know what YOU need. How can I best support you, Region 4? To further broaden my call for action, I would like to invite anyone across the state to contact me directly and let me know the top three areas you would find beneficial – whether it's covering clinical topics to holding regional events – or anything else you can think of. Please email these to me at [drwaggoner@phoenixpllc.com](mailto:drwaggoner@phoenixpllc.com) and in the subject line, please specify your region. I will then take this information to my fellow region representatives and collaborate with them, as we share the same goal of supporting Mississippi psychologists the best way possible. Thank you for all you do for our citizens and our field.

Best,  
Kathryn K. Waggoner, PsyD, ABPP  
[www.phoenixpllc.com](http://www.phoenixpllc.com)



Kathryn Waggoner,  
PsyD, ABPP



# FEDERAL ADVOCACY COORDINATOR UPDATE



Danielle Maack, Ph.D.

By the time this newsletter is sent out, I will have been on the APA sponsored trip to Washington D.C. for the June 2023 Grassroots Fly -In. I am slated to meet with the offices of Representative Trent Kelly, Senator Cindy Hyde Smith, and Senator Roger Wicker. The major issues for these legislative conversations are related to the Kids Online Safety Act (S. 1409) and securing Youth Mental Health Research Funding.

The Kids Online Safety Act was introduced by Senators Marsha Blackburn (TN) and Richard Blumenthal (CT) to help enhance the safety of children's online activities with five major goals: creating duty of care for social media

companies, requiring companies to develop and deploy new parental controls, changing default security and privacy settings for young users, requiring social media companies to conduct and distribute an annual independent audit of risks to minors on the platform, and increasing access for public and academic researchers to receive data to conduct research

The Youth Mental Health Research Initiative is an effort that, if sponsored and passed, would be led through collaborations of the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) and the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities (NIMHD). The aim of this funding is to develop research initiatives for long term attention to youth with targeting preventative interventions for those at risk and improve treatments delivered to young people in crisis. The legislative ask is to authorize \$100 million per year for 5 years for this initiative.

Additionally, your MPA Federal Advocacy Committee has been meeting monthly and having discussions on issues that we see might be impactful to MPA membership. We continue monitoring movements with the EPPP parts 1 and 2 , have had further discussions of PSYPACT (as it impacts psychology at the intrastate level), and have had a specific focus on gathering information and discussing the upcoming move for APA to start accrediting masters level programs in health service psychology (beginning in 2024). We've met with members of APA and the director of the new program slated to start at Mississippi State-Meridian to get a broader understanding of this new degree program and what this new group of providers might mean for the MPA in terms of membership and inclusivity. As we continue to meet with key leaders for this, we will be presenting the information to the MPA Executive council to keep the group informed and to be proactive with changes that are occurring top down from the APA! Stay tuned for updates!

If you would like to be a part of the Federal Advocacy Committee, please email me! We meet the second Friday of each month at 10:00 via Zoom!

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# APA COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES UPDATE



Natalie W. Gaughf,  
PhD, ABPP

The American Psychological Association (APA) Council of Representatives is the legislative body of APA and has full power and authority over the affairs and funds of the association within the limitations set by the certificate of incorporation and the Bylaws, including the power to review, upon its own initiative, the actions of any board, committee, division or affiliated organization. The Council consists of 183 representatives from divisions, state/provincial/territorial associations, ethnic minority psychological associations and members of the Board of Directors, including the APA officers. The American Psychological Association of Graduate Students also has a representative that serves as a member of Council. Council representatives from divisions and state/provincial/territorial associations are required to be members of the division or state/provincial/territorial associations they represent as well as members of the Association.

The APA Council of Representatives is the policy making body of APA. The Council works collaboratively with the Board of Directors, who manage the business of the association. The workflow of the Council is facilitated by the Council Leadership Team (CLT). The CLT is elected by the Council and consists of eleven members, all of whom are present or former members of the Council.

<https://www.apa.org/about/governance/council>

Council representatives assume office on January 1 following the election in the summer of the previous year. Council members participate in two business meetings of Council each year: a mid-winter meeting and a meeting held at the time and place of the APA annual convention. Council members should be familiar with the APA Bylaws and Association Rules and participate in formal onboarding, mentoring, and ongoing town hall meetings. The term of office is three years.

<https://www.apa.org/about/governance/council/members/spta-representatives>

I participated in the February business meeting virtually, and I plan to attend in-person in August. Please be on the lookout for agenda items prior to the August meeting. If you have thoughts about any of the items, I encourage you to engage your colleagues, your association, and me.

Sincerely,  
Natalie W. Gaughf, PhD, ABPP  
APA Council Representative

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# Telehealth Update



Though the impacts of COVID-19 are still evident for many practitioners, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) officially marked an end to the federal Public Health Emergency (PHE) on May 11, 2023. The PHE was critical in implementing changes to telehealth services that were beneficial to both patients and providers—many of which were essential to provide services during the pandemic. While much of the information related to this transition is unclear and still uncertain, the good news is there are few immediate changes that psychologists need to be aware of. Additionally, there are several permanent changes that will not revert, including:

- Audio-only provision of mental health services for Medicare patients.
- Medicare patients can receive telehealth services for mental health in their home.

Joshua C. Fulwiler, Ph.D.

However, there is an important change nearing for healthcare providers: by August 9, 2023, all telehealth services must be conducted on HIPAA-compliant platforms. While some providers began using popular videoconferencing software like Zoom, FaceTime, and Skype, and these applications were permitted in good faith during the PHE, it is now required to transition to HIPAA-compliant telehealth software, electronic record systems, and practice management software. Fortunately, many of these platforms offer a Business Associate Agreement (BAA) to ensure their compliance with HIPAA regulations. If using these types of programs, it's important to have these agreements in place before the August deadline—and for all providers to maintain updated HIPAA compliant policies and procedures.

Finally, other upcoming changes are expected on January 1, 2024, though advocacy and legislative efforts are ongoing. At present, the following changes are expected to take effect after this year:

- Reduced reimbursement rates for telehealth services.
- Certain CPT codes will no longer be eligible for reimbursement as telehealth services (including psychological and neuropsychological testing).
- Virtual/telehealth supervision will no longer qualify as “direct” supervision.

Note that these changes are specific to Medicare providers; private insurance plans often have different requirements, as does Mississippi Medicaid. Many third-party payers have also already implemented changes in their reimbursement for mental and behavioral health services. The current agreement suggests other possible impacts to psychological practice, including reinstating certain in-person visit requirements for patients, restrictions on where providers can originate telehealth-based services (particularly given Mississippi's absence from PSYPACT), and other state-specific telehealth policies. Regarding this last area, the Center for Connected Health Policy – [www.cchpca.org](http://www.cchpca.org) – has useful information and resources.

As the healthcare system continues to evolve in response to technological, social, and political changes, it is important for providers at all levels to be aware of and advocate for the effective provision of their services—particularly given the need here in the Magnolia State.

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# LETTER FROM THE CONTINUING EDUCATION CHAIR



Planning for the MPA 2023 Annual Convention is well underway. Proposals for presentations that will award Continuing Education credits have been received and are being reviewed. MPA will provide an excellent opportunity for psychologists to attend Continuing Education (CE) workshops that are MPA and APA approved. As in years past, participation in the pre-, during and post-convention workshops will generate increased knowledge and competencies and much needed CE credits for psychologists' licensure renewals. We are looking forward to offering the MPA membership a fantastic array of state of the art presentations in psychology. Please join us in Tupelo, MS.

MPA Continuing Education Committee Chair  
Pamela G. Banks, Ph.D.

Pamela G. Banks, Ph.D.

## SUPPORTING SENIORS WITH MENTAL HEALTH CONDITIONS

When thinking of age-related health issues, physical infirmity probably springs to most people's minds; however, seniors are also prone to mental health disorders. Another exciting transition is retirement, which many people anticipate with enthusiasm but might trigger or exacerbate mental health issues.

Although there are insufficient studies into seniors' mental health, those that do exist expose cause for concern. For example, almost one-fourth of seniors in the United States are believed to be socially isolated, and approximately two-thirds don't get the mental health treatment they need. Assisted living facilities provide safe, secure, and sociable homes with staff trained to care for residents with mental health issues.

Caring.com, an online platform that offers free resources, guides, and tools aimed at helping seniors and caregivers, created a guide that provides an overview of the mental health conditions that seniors typically face and how assisted living can help. You can learn more here: <https://www.caring.com/senior-living/assisted-living/options-for-seniors-with-mental-health-conditions/>.

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# 2023 EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

## **President:**

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