

## **Executive Committee of the APA Board of Trustees**

### **Statement on Psychiatrist Redeployment in Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic**

*Issued April 7, 2020*

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to spread and reaches its peak at different times across the country, hospitals are turning as many beds as possible into intensive care beds to meet the demands of the rapidly growing patient population. Psychiatrists across the country are already helping support the mental and physical health of patients and their colleagues across medicine by providing stress management, support groups, urgent mental health evaluations, and other core psychiatric services, including for patients who have been affected by COVID-19.

Many hospitals and health care systems are calling on physicians, regardless of their specialty, to redeploy to areas beyond their specialty to meet the current medical needs of COVID-19 patients. As physicians, we are trained and can contribute to these teams during this ongoing pandemic.

For psychiatry residents and fellows who are currently in accredited residency training programs, APA recommends hospitals follow the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) Guidelines for Stage 3: Pandemic Emergency Status Guidance, which allow residents to redeploy<sup>1</sup> to other units if requirements are met which ensure adequate supervision and resources on that unit.

For practicing psychiatrists who volunteer or are called upon by their hospital to help on non-psychiatric units, APA recommends that they be part of a care team, provided appropriate supervision for the clinical circumstance, and are provided with personal protective equipment (PPE) to ensure they can deliver care in a safe and effective manner.

States need to expand “good Samaritan” immunity and provide immunity for physicians who are serving during this crisis and hospitals need to ensure that their insurance coverage extends to all physicians who serve the hospitals’ patients during this crisis, even if they are serving outside of their medical specialty.

Psychiatric units must ensure that psychiatric patients continue to receive high quality psychiatric care and medical treatment during this pandemic. APA supports and thanks psychiatrists and our trainees who bring medical experience and training as well as a range of psychiatric services to patients during this crisis.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://acgme.org/COVID-19/Stage-3-Pandemic-Emergency-Status-Guidance>