

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENTIAL TASK FORCE ON STRUCTURAL RACISM THROUGHOUT PSYCHIATRY

September 13, 2020

The Presidential Task Force on Structural Racism Throughout Psychiatry is pleased to present this report of its activities since its inception to the Board of Trustees.

Formation and Composition of the Task Force:

President Jeffrey Geller, MD, MPH formed the Presidential Task Force on Structural Racism Throughout Psychiatry (Task Force) in June of 2020. The members of the Task Force submitting this report are:

Cheryl Wills, MD, DFAPA, Chairperson
Renée Binder, MD, DLFAPA
Frank Clark, MD, FPA
Charles Dike, FRCPsych, MBChB, MPH
Mary Jo Fitz-Gerald, MD, MBA., DLFAPA
Danielle Hairston, MD
Hunter L. McQuiston, MD, DLFAPA
Michele Reid, MD, DLFAPA
Steven Starks, MD, FAPA
Richard F. Summers, MD, DLFAPA
Sanya Virani, MD, MPH

Charge of the Task Force:

Focusing on organized psychiatry, psychiatrists, psychiatric trainees, psychiatric patients, and others who work to serve psychiatric patients, the Task Force is initially charged with focusing on anti-Black racism and:

1. Providing education and resources on APA's and psychiatry's history regarding structural racism.
2. Explaining the current impact of structural racism on the mental health of our patients and colleagues.
3. Developing achievable and actionable recommendations for change to eliminate structural racism in the APA and psychiatry now and in the future.
4. Providing reports with specific recommendations for achievable actions to the APA Board of Trustees at each of its meetings through May 2021; and
5. Monitoring the implementation of tasks 1-4.

Surveys:

In order to engage the membership in the Task Force's work and to guide it in what issues the membership believes to be most important, the Task Force has conducted two "mini-surveys" to seek quick input from members and non-members on certain topics. The surveys are distributed through Psych News alerts, APA list serves, APA social media, and we ask recipients to share it in their networks. Through APA list serves, the surveys reach approximately 18,000 people.

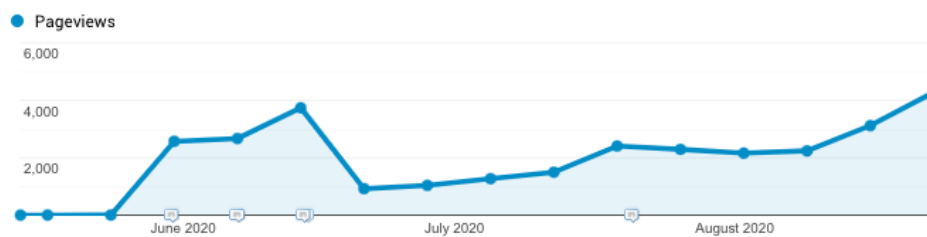
Survey No. 1 was fielded June 30-July 10th and asked the question “What are the top three areas the Task Force should focus on to address the impact of structural racism on our patients?”. 485 people responded to that question. The top three areas identified by the responses were 1) access to health care; 2) diversity of the profession; and 3) experiences of racism. A more in-depth summary of the survey is available here: [Initial Task Force Survey Results](#)

Survey No. 2 was fielded from July 23-August 6th and asked the question: “What are the top three ways that institutional racism is reflected in APA as an organization?”. 731 people responded to that question. The top three areas identified by the responses were 1) leadership is not diverse enough; 2) none—no institutional racism in APA; and 3) other—disparate answers that did not fit in other categories. A more in-depth summary of the survey is available here: [Second Task Force Survey Results](#)

Task Force Web Section:

A new psychiatry.org site section for the Task Force was quickly built after the announcement of the Task Force. It is located online at psychiatry.org/TaskForce. Details about the Task Force’s charge, membership, surveys, town halls and news are located here, along with a list of resources including webinars, CME, relevant APA press releases, blogs, letters, books, position statements, journal articles and *Psychiatric News* articles, and other media about structural racism.

**Task Force, Town Hall & Structural Racism News Items
Page Views by Week, May 14 – August 30, 2020**



Traffic to psychiatry.org pages about the task force, town halls and structural racism news and blog items has grown over the summer. There have been over 30,235 page views (the total number of pages about the topic viewed - repeated views of a single page are counted) since mid-May. District Branches report that they are using APA’s webpage to engage members in education about racism.

Engagement of APA Membership:

In addition to the mini surveys, the Task Force has sought to inform and engage the APA membership, including by publishing information about the Task Force’s charge and membership on the APA webpage (psychiatry.org/taskforce). Dr. Geller and Dr. Wills answered questions about the Task Force, including its composition and goals, which were published in the form of a *Psychiatric News* article on July 30, 2020. Dr. Wills met with the M/UR Presidents and M/UR Assembly Representatives, the Guideline Writing Group, the Council on Advocacy and Government Relations, Area IV Assembly Representatives,

the Council on Consultation Liaison Psychiatry, the Committee on Women’s Mental Health, and the Council on Quality Care. She will meet individually with all other APA councils and committees during their September Component meetings in September 2020 to discuss the Task Force and its work. There has been informal and formal feedback from the membership via numerous phone calls and presentations to Areas and District Branches by the Task Force members (e.g. presentations to Area 4 and Michigan Psychiatric Society). There was also an informal presentation to the Louisiana Psychiatric Medical Association through the newsletter, and a recent appointee to the Academy of Consultation-Liaison Psychiatry’s Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Presidential Task Force.

Meetings and Reports of Workgroups:

The full Task Force met every week for 90 minutes between June 27, 2020 and August 3, 2020 and decided thereafter to meet weekly as workgroups. Each workgroup provides a weekly update to the Task Force through Google Docs. Full Task Force meetings occur on a monthly basis. The Task Force has divided into several sub-workgroups who report as below:

- **The Workgroup on Definitions** is charged with establishing a common vocabulary for APA to use to understand racism. The workgroup crafted definitions of commonly used terms needed to understand racism and its complexity. The goal is to give members a common vocabulary to use in discussions.
 - The Board approved the definitions with minor changes as a working document. The workgroup made the changes and the document is posted on the webpage.
- **The Workgroup on Resources** is charged with identifying resources APA members can use to understand racism and its impact on patients and colleagues. Resources have been made available on psychiatry.org/Taskforce.
- **The Workgroup on Town Halls** is charged with planning 4, 90-minute Town Halls to educate members, through discussion with a diverse group of leaders, about racism and its impact on colleagues and patients. Two Town Halls have been successfully completed. The Town Hall series has its unique landing page online, accessible at psychiatry.org/TownHall. Past and future Town Halls are accessible here.
 - *Member Town Hall – APA Addresses Structural Racism, Part One*: In the introductory town hall, a distinguished group of panelists discussed the ways in which APA can address structural racism, including the role of associations and allies in supporting this work. Panelists included Danielle Hairston, M.D., Psychiatry Training Director, Howard University School of Medicine & President of the APA Black Caucus; Thea L. James, M.D., Associate Professor of Emergency Medicine, Boston Medical Center/Boston University School of Medicine & Associate Chief Medical Officer, Vice President of Mission, and Director, Violence Intervention Advocacy Program (VIAP) at Boston Medical Center; Ayana Jordan, M.D., Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Psychiatry, Yale School of Medicine & ECP Trustee-at-Large, APA Board of Trustees; Walter E. Wilson Jr., M.D., M.H.A., Member, APA Council on Minority Mental Health and Health Disparities; and Jeffrey Geller, M.D., M.P.H., President, American Psychiatric Association. Panelists shared their perspectives and participated in a Q&A

session with APA members in a dialogue about the way forward for our organization. The final registration number was 704, the count of unique viewers was 508.

- Town Hall - *APA Addresses Structural Racism, Part Two: The March Continues* featured an esteemed panel of experts. APA Past President, Dr. Altha Stewart; AMA Chief Health Equity Officer and Group Vice President, Dr. Aletha Maybank; and 2020-2021 REACH scholar, Dr. Kevin Simon; and moderated by APA President Dr. Jeffrey Geller. The Town Hall examined how structural racism plays a role in inequalities and proposed solutions to improve Black Americans' mental health outcomes. The final registration number was 730. Overall, we had 426 unique viewers; a maximum of 382 participants excluding panelists attended the entire town hall.
 - Over 90% of the 86 participants who took the Town Hall survey either “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that the Town Hall quality was excellent. 88% of survey participants felt the Town Hall met the stated learning objectives. 82% of participants believed the Town Hall content was relevant to their practice. The qualitative recommendations fell across three major areas: 1) an action plan for how APA is going to dismantle racism within APA; 2) more diversity represented on the panels; and 3) more robust marketing outreach to the APA membership, including the various caucuses, Assembly and District Branches, M/UR Representatives, AACAP, AAAP, ASAM, AACP and NMA for greater awareness and distribution of the Town Halls.
- Future Town Halls - Planning is underway for Town Hall #3, scheduled for Monday, November 16, 2020, from 8:00 p.m.-9:30 p.m. ET. Town Hall #3 will focus on Intergenerational Issues for Children, Adolescents, Adults and Older Adults. The Town Halls are open to the public and all are welcome to attend.
- Town Hall #4 is slated for Monday, February 8, 2021, from 8:00 p.m.-9:30 p.m. The final Town Hall/Presidential Symposium will be in conjunction with the 2021 Annual Meeting in May. The workgroup has continued to plan the remaining Town Halls.
- **The Workgroup on Components Review** is charged with reviewing APA's component structure, demographics, nomination and election processes to evaluate and make recommendations to improve diversity, equity, and inclusion throughout the process to ensure that APA components reflect the diversity of APA's membership and patient groups.
 - The small workgroup evaluating the components has met four times to date. They are preparing a full review of components for the Task Force to consider and have had robust discussions of both the questions posed and the review itself. Their discussions were also informed by ongoing interviews with some candidates for office, as well as an examination of current component membership and several governance documents. As part of its work, the group

will consider the possibility of interviewing some component chairs regarding the issues at hand.

- The group will submit component procedural actions later this fall for the Board's consideration on topics including transparency of the components' appointment processes, advertising and recruitment to components, and the evaluation of said candidates.
- **The Workgroup on Assembly Review** is charged with reviewing APA's Assembly structure, demographics, nomination, and election processes to evaluate and make recommendations to improve diversity, equity, and inclusion throughout the processes to ensure that APA components reflect the diversity of APA's membership and patient groups.
 - The workgroup noted that the Assembly, in general, has inadequate representation of Black psychiatrists and even less representation in Assembly leadership. The demographic data produced by APA suggests that the Assembly, among all components, is the least diverse body in the organization. We discussed how we could bring more Black psychiatrists into the Assembly as well as ensure that Black psychiatrists are appointed to Assembly Committees and have the opportunity to become Area Deputy Representatives and Area Representatives, as well as have other opportunities in terms of Assembly leadership. We reviewed the barriers at every level and came up with strategies to address the problem of lack of diversity.

Barriers for Black Psychiatrists to become Assembly District Branch Representatives

One of the issues we identified is that District Branches have elections for Assembly Representatives and that an inadequate number of Black psychiatrists are nominated. Sometimes District Branch nominating committees are not aware of the potential pool of Black psychiatrists in their communities who would be interested in becoming Assembly Representatives. The workgroup discussed that the APA Foundation has a list of outstanding Black psychiatrists who have been APA fellows, especially SAMSHA fellows and minority fellows. These psychiatrists have had the opportunity to participate in APA councils and would make excellent contributions to the Assembly.

- **ACTION 1: Will the Board of Trustees vote to approve that a list of Black APA/APAF Fellows be reported to the District Branches for consideration as APA Assembly Representatives as recommended by the Presidential Task Force on Structural Racism?**

Barriers for Black Psychiatrists to become members and leaders of Assembly Committees and Assembly Area Councils

Once in the Assembly, it is very important for Black psychiatrists to have the opportunity for advancement. The Area Councils should be conscious of the importance of the value of diversity, inclusion, and equity for the work of the APA Assembly. When Black

psychiatrists are Assembly members, the APA needs to have formal processes to support and sponsor their advancement and leadership opportunities. Opportunities for leadership might be discussed in the Assembly Orientation. In addition, there can be a formal mentoring and sponsoring program for Black psychiatrists in the Assembly. This would include how to write action papers, how to network, how to get nominated for Assembly committees and Chairs of the committees, and how to run for office and get elected. Sponsors would help the members achieve these goals throughout their term in the Assembly. We recommend that sponsors be selected from the senior leadership of the Assembly.

- We recommend that each Black psychiatrist in the Assembly be assigned a senior leader to be a mentor/sponsor who can help them navigate the complexities of the Assembly and rise to leadership. Leadership of the Assembly should solicit volunteers to serve in this role, so that the mentors will be motivated to and make time to support the advancement of Black psychiatrists. Past Speakers of the Assembly would be excellent candidates to serve as mentors and sponsors. The role of the mentor/sponsor would include how to write action papers, how to network, how to get nominated for Assembly committees and Chairs of the committees, and how to run for Assembly office and get elected.
 - **ACTION 2: Will the Board of Trustees vote to recommend to the AEC that the Assembly establish a mentor/sponsor program from senior Assembly leaders for Black psychiatrists as recommended by the Presidential Task Force on Structural Racism?**
- We recommend that the Assembly Orientation include a presentation about advancement in the Assembly and assignment of a mentor/sponsor.
 - **ACTION 3: Will the Board of Trustees vote to recommend to the AEC that the Assembly Orientation include a presentation about advancement in the Assembly and the assignment of a mentor/sponsor as recommended by the Presidential Task Force on Structural Racism?**

Barriers for Black Psychiatrists to become Assembly Leaders including Area Representatives, Deputy Representatives, and members of the Assembly Executive Committee (AEC)

The workgroup felt strongly that the Assembly needs to have term limits for serving as Area Council Representatives. This is currently true in some Areas, but not all Areas. Although experience as an Area Representative is valuable in becoming an effective leader of the Area Council and AEC and it takes a while to gain that experience, an equally important value is giving opportunities for all members to move into these positions, including Black members of the Assembly. By having term limits, interested Black Assembly members can be considered for Area leadership positions, including Area Representatives, who serve on the AEC. There is no evidence that Areas that do

have term limits suffer any decrease in effectiveness in the Assembly compared to Areas that do not have them.

- The workgroup did not come up with a definitive recommendation for the term limits, except that the term limits should be consistent for all Areas and should not be more than 6 years (2 three-year terms) in any position (i.e. Representative or Deputy Representative). The workgroup felt that the term limits could be much less but would like the decision to be made in the Assembly by the Assembly members balancing the value of experience with the value of giving leadership positions to more members, especially diverse members.
 - **ACTION 4: Will the Board of Trustees vote to recommend to the AEC that the Assembly adopt consistent term limits for all Assembly Area Representatives and Assembly Area Deputy Representatives as recommended by the Presidential Task Force on Structural Racism?**

Barriers for Black Psychiatrists to become Speaker-elect and Recorder

The nominating committee for the Speaker-elect and Recorder positions need to be reminded of the importance of the values of diversity, equity, and inclusion. In its charge, the nominating committee should be formally instructed to attempt to nominate a diverse pool of nominees. Additionally, Black Assembly members should be encouraged to put themselves forward as candidates for open positions on the AEC, including Speaker-elect and Recorder.

- The M/UR Caucus and the M/UR Committee of the Assembly should be involved in the nomination process by directly submitting nominations for Speaker-elect and Recorder. The charge to the Nominating Committee of the Assembly should include instructions about the importance of nominating a diverse pool of nominees. In addition, the M/UR representatives to the Assembly should be involved in the nomination process by directly submitting nominations to the nominating committee.
 - **ACTION 5: Will the Board of Trustees vote to recommend to the AEC that the Assembly Nominating Committee be given instructions about the importance of nominating a diverse pool of nominees as recommended by the Presidential Task Force on Structural Racism?**
 - **ACTION 6: Will the Board of Trustees vote to recommend to the AEC that the Assembly include the M/UR Caucuses and the M/UR Committee of the Assembly in the Assembly nomination process by having them submit nominations directly to the Assembly Nominating Committee as recommended by the Presidential Task Force on Structural Racism?**

The Workgroup discussed the value of Equity Advisors

The workgroup discussed the value of appointing Equity Advisors for the Assembly. We recommend that the AEC identify Equity Advisors in the Assembly to help ensure that diversity and equity are considered in all aspects of Assembly processes. These Equity Advisors for the Assembly should be Assembly members and can be identified by the APA Caucus of Black Psychiatrists, the M/UR Committee Representatives, and by DDHE leadership.

- Several Equity Advisors should be appointed by Assembly leadership to advise about all aspects related to diversity and equity. Although achieving diversity and equity is everyone's responsibility, these advisors will have the explicit role of ensuring that diversity and equity is always considered.
 - **ACTION 7: Will the Board of Trustees vote to recommend to the AEC that the Assembly leadership identify "Equity Advisors" to advise the Assembly on all aspects related to diversity and equity as recommended by the Presidential Task Force on Structural Racism?**
- **The Workgroup on Board Review** is charged with reviewing APA's Board structure, demographics, nomination, and election processes to evaluate and make recommendations to improve diversity, equity, and inclusion throughout the process to ensure that APA components reflect the diversity of APA's membership and patient groups.
 - During August to October 2020, the workgroup plans to interview and learn from the experiences of recent Past Presidents, particularly in their capacity as nominating committee participants, and M/UR Trustees. The workgroup is reviewing demographic data, Operations Manual and Bylaws sections relevant to the operations of the Board, and recommendations from the 2014 M/UR Task Force. The workgroup plans to provide a report and recommendations to the wider Task Force by October 2020.
 - The workgroup recommends starting each Board meeting with the strategic priorities, or at a minimum handing them out at each Board meeting, so that the Board's deliberations can be informed by the strategic priorities and remain consistent with them.

Future Areas of Review:

The Task Force plans for workgroups to review APA Publishing's selection of publications, the APAF's selection of Fellows, and the Scientific Program Committee's selection of information for the Annual Meeting, and plans to provide recommendations for improving diversity, equity, and inclusion in their processes. The Task Force also plans to meet with the DSM Steering Committee to discuss ways in which DSM has contributed to racism in health care and poor outcomes and to recommend changes for them to consider.