

AAPL EXAMINER



American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law

FALL 2025

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Textbook on Landmark Cases Emphasizing Training Wins Guttmacher

Maya Prabhu, MD
*Chair, Guttmacher Award
Committee*



Tobias Wasser, MD and Rocksheng Zhong, MD, MHS are the winners of the APA's 2025 Manfred Guttmacher award for their book, *Psychiatry and the Law: Basic Principles*. The award established in 1975 recognizes an outstanding contribution to the literature of forensic psychiatry in the form of a book monograph paper or other work period. It is a joint award of the APA foundation and the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law. Dr. Wasser currently serves as the Chair of Psychiatry for the Frank H. Netter MD School of Medicine at Quinnipiac University and leads behavioral health services for Hartford Healthcare as the Chair of Psychiatry and Behavioral Health for Fairfield County. Zhong, MD is Associate Professor, Director of Forensic Services, and Forensic Psychiatry Fellowship Director in the Department of

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Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at the University of Texas Medical Branch, as well as Lecturer in the Law and Psychiatry Division of the Yale School of Medicine.

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2025 Isaac Ray Award Recipient: Dr. Debra A. Pinals



In 2025 Isaac Ray Award was presented to the current AAPL Medical Director, Dr. Debra A. Pinals. The Isaac Ray Award, established in 1951, recognizes a person who has made outstanding contributions to forensic psychiatry or to the psychiatric aspects of jurisprudence. It is a joint award of the American Psychiatric Association Foundation and the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law that honors Dr. Isaac Ray, one of the original founders and the fourth president of the American Psychiatric Association.

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President's Column

Transparency: Looking Ahead

Ryan C. Wagoner, MD, MBA, CPE, DFAPA

When you are a child, a year feels like forever. As an adult, the years seem to accelerate. As the President of AAPL, a year can pass in the blink of an eye. Fortunately, progress can be made during that time. By the time the annual meeting in October rolls around, we will have accomplished much as an organization, including improved communication between the Executive Council and members, operational improvements to raise member awareness of AAPL's activities, and codifying how AAPL interacts with other organizations. Each of these successes has furthered the goal of transparency, but there is still work to be done. Thus, we look toward



the future.

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Medical Director's Column

Maintaining consistency during times of change

Debra A. Pinals, MD



I began my tenure as Medical Director for AAPL in the fall of 2023, and it seems that since that time, so much change has occurred in the world. As many of you know, by way of my background, I spend a lot of time looking at state and federal policies and practices that shape mental health and substance use service delivery. Many of us in AAPL deliver those services (I still do that too) working in any number of clinical settings in communities or in institutional or carceral environments. Many of us do forensic evaluations of people impacted by those services or look at systems and render opinions on conditions of confinement or standards of care. With that in mind, as I look at the current administrative activities, there is always more to say about forensic implications of national policy. In

this column I highlight some interesting developments.

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Editor's Column

Academic Scholarship: To AI, or Not To AI?

Chinmoy Gulrajani, MD, DLFAPA



In November 2024, the University of Minnesota expelled a third-year health economics Ph.D. student in November after faculty accused him of using artificial intelligence on an exam (1). All four faculty graders of his exam expressed “significant concerns” that it was not written in his voice. They noted answers that seemed irrelevant or involved subjects not covered in coursework. Two instructors then generated their own responses in ChatGPT to compare against his and submitted those as evidence against him. And while this was the first student at the University who was expelled on account of inappropriate use of AI, this practice was found to be common. For instance, in the 2023-24 school year, the University of Minnesota found 188 students responsible of

scholastic dishonesty because of AI use, reflecting about half of all confirmed cases of dishonesty. (1)

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Rappeport Fellowship Awards, 2025-26

Britta K. Ostermeyer, MD, MBA, DFAPA and Renee M. Sorrentino, MD, DFAPA

Co-Chairs, Rappeport Fellowship Committee

The AAPL Rappeport Fellowship was named in honor of AAPL's founding president, Dr. Jonas Rappeport, MD. This fellowship offers the opportunity for outstanding senior residents with a dedicated career interest in forensic psychiatry to receive mentorship by senior AAPL forensic psychiatrists. Rappeport Fellows will receive a scholarship to attend the AAPL forensic psychiatry review course and the annual AAPL meeting, and a one-year mentorship by two Rappeport Fellowship Committee members. The Rappeport Fellowship Committee and AAPL are excited to announce the 2025-26 Rappeport Fellows: Dr. Jake Arbon, Dr. Dennis Curry, Dr. Gary Graca, Dr. Tinsley Grimes, Dr. Rathisha Pathmathasan, and Dr. Rachel Polcyn. Congratulations!

[View Fellow Bios Here](#)

Obtaining National Professional Organization Support for an Amicus Brief for a State Case

Peter Ash, MD



In the fall of 2023, I received a call from an attorney I know who said he was representing a defendant charged with vehicular homicide. The defendant suffered from bipolar disorder, had a delusion that her daughter was in danger, got in her car to go rescue her daughter, drove too fast, and was involved in an accident in which a child was killed. Both a defense psychiatrist and a court-appointed psychiatrist opined that she met both prongs of the Georgia test for insanity: that she didn't know what she was doing was wrong, and that she had a delusion which, if true, justified the act - the "delusional compulsion" test is unique to Georgia (1). The prosecution did not have an opposing expert but filed a motion that there was evidence of non-compliance with medication and argued that evidence should be presented to the jury because the defendant, by not taking all her prescribed medication, voluntarily contributed to her mental state, an argument somewhat parallel to how voluntary intoxication can

negate an insanity defense. The judge granted the motion, and the defense was appealing to the Georgia Court of Appeals.

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ADFPF

Updates from ADFPF

Stephen Noffsinger, M.D., President, ADFPF



Forensic psychiatry fellowships have continued down the path of our initial use of the Electronic Residency Application Service (ERAS) and the National Residency Match Program (NRMP aka "The Match") for the 2025 application and interviewing season (for the 2026-2027 Academic Year). Beginning on July 16, program directors reviewed fellowship applications in ERAS and offered interview dates to prospective fellows. Fellowship programs began interviewing applicants as early as July 16 and will continue to do so during the remainder of the summer and into early fall. The 55 forensic psychiatry fellowships in the United States have adapted (mostly) seamlessly to ERAS and The Match, which will hopefully optimize the experience for applicants and program administrators.

Moving forward, the key dates for The Match are:

- September 3, 2025 – Ranking opens.
- September 17, 2025 – Quota Change and Withdrawal deadline.
- October 8, 2025 – Rank Order List Certification deadline.
- October 22, 2025 – Match Day. Unfilled/Unmatched Lists available.

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Ask the Experts

Medical Malpractice: Coming Changes

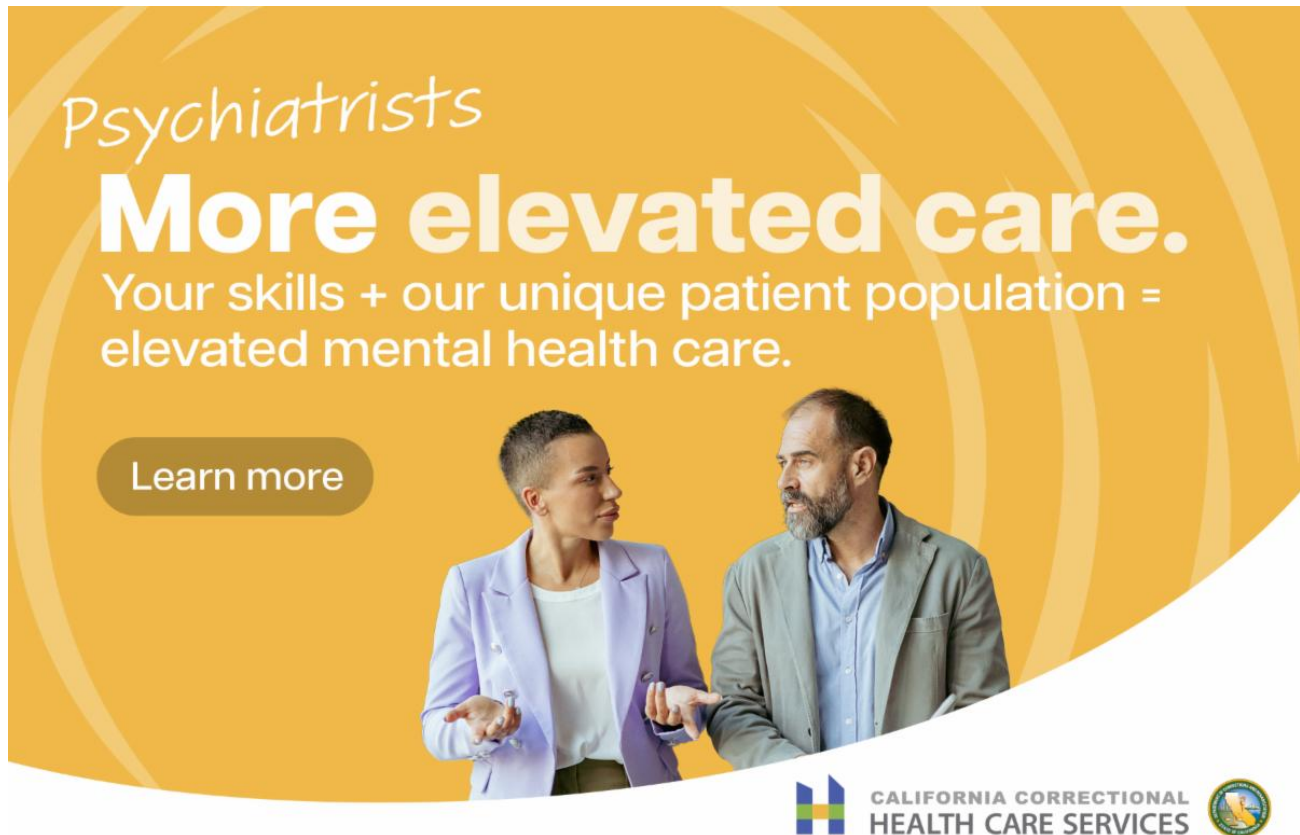
Neil S. Kaye, MD, DLFAPA; Graham Glancy, MB, ChB, FRC Psych, FRCP; Ryan C.W. Hall, MD

Medical malpractice is a type of tort or wrong legal cause of action that occurs when a patient alleges that a medical or health-care professional, through a negligent act or omission, deviates from the standard of care in their profession, thereby causing injury or

death to a patient. (1) Historically, the threshold for this tort of negligence is the standard recognized and accepted by the profession. For many decades, the standard of care has been considered that a normal, prudent, similarly trained, and experienced practitioner would reasonably be expected to deliver in similar circumstances (2, 5). For many decades, the standard has been considered a “national” standard, with the prior local standard having been rejected as technology, training, and communication allowed for more uniform access to knowledge and care. Specialists are expected to have increased skills and knowledge commensurate with their qualifications beyond those of a generalist and, therefore, to practice at—and be held to—a higher standard than a generalist.



The American Law Institute (ALI) is a private, independent, nonprofit organization that publishes restatements of the law, principles of the law, and model codes to further its mission to clarify, modernize, or otherwise improve the law to promote the better administration of justice. (3, 4) While ALI's publications are persuasive authorities, not controlling law, they are frequently cited in judicial opinions and often used to aid the interpretation of the law and to provide a basis for legislation. In 2024, the ALI revised the legal standard for assessing medical negligence. It is important for clinicians and forensic experts to understand and appreciate these changes and their potential effect on medical malpractice litigation.

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AAPL Artificial Intelligence Survey

Thomas G. Gutheil, MD; Leon Ravin, MD; Jasmine Brooks

The rise of artificial intelligence in every aspect of your lives is by now unmistakable. The authors of this IRB-exempt preliminary study decided to survey AAPL members about the role, if any, that AI played in their professional work. The survey was based on 5 questions

indicated above the pie charts illustrated.

The results are represented graphically in those pie charts, which should be self-explanatory. Clearly, as noted, this must be considered a very preliminary study, in part because of the newness of AI in general and the fact that, as time goes on, more members may find AI useful.

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Belonging and Recovery – Does Everyone Deserve to Belong?

Susan Parke, MD

Diversity and Recovery Committees

I have long avoided commenting about what diversity means to me personally because talking about differences, lived experiences and insights while maintaining a culture of critical reflection is difficult. But what I love about forensic psychiatry is we can achieve both; we seek to understand differences, and we study biases, inequities and inequalities and their impact on justice and recovery. In the current political and world climate, with President Trump's dismantling of federal diversity, equity and inclusion mandates and global conflict, I appreciate forensic psychiatry even more and have thought a lot about what makes humans determine who to include and who to exclude, who belongs and who is unworthy.

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A Closer Look at the Canadian Academy of Psychiatry and the Law Guidelines for Sexual Offender Assessment

Kathryn Baselice; Abhishek Jain; and Renee Sorrentino

AAPL Sexual Offenders Committee

The Canadian Academy of Psychiatry and the Law (CAPL) released their *Canadian Guidelines for Forensic Psychiatry Assessment and Report Writing: Sexual Behaviour and Risk of Sexual Offending* (1) in 2022. Here, we summarize these guidelines and differentiate aspects that may be unique to the U.S. We first briefly examine the value and intention of such guidance from professional medical organizations.

In an October 2022 survey of AAPL members, more practice resources and guidance stood out as one of the most important areas for our organization. Conducted by the Membership Engagement, Recruitment, and Retention (MERR) Task Force, the survey was completed by 341 AAPL Members, representing an 18.9% response rate. One of the questions was "What can be done to optimize your AAPL membership value?" and respondents were asked to rank their top five choices among 15 options. "More practice guidance/resource documents" was the top-ranked choice by the plurality of respondents (n=51) and was in the top five for about half of all survey respondents (n=165). Further, "Learning from annual meetings, publications, virtual offerings, etc." was identified as "Extremely Important" by 63% of respondents.

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Integrating Mental Health Expertise into Mass Violence

Prevention

Tyler Durns, MD and Stu Newman, MD
Law Enforcement Liaison Committee

Acts of mass violence have markedly increased over recent decades (1). These events have garnered substantial media attention and provoked public concern. Many institutions and governmental agencies have responded with the implementation of Threat Assessment Teams (TATs) and Crisis Intervention Teams (CITs).

TATs operate proactively with the primary aim of preventing targeted violence as soon as a potential risk is identified. Whereas CITs serve a more reactionary function with the goal of de-escalating and diverting mental health crises. Both are multidisciplinary teams comprised of mental health professionals, law enforcement officers, security experts, and legal advisors, trained to systematically evaluate threats and target interventions in order to prevent and reduce violence to self and others (2). TAT and CIT groups have become increasingly utilized in schools, workplaces, and community settings across the country (3-5). However, TATs and CITs represent an underutilized opportunity for forensic psychiatrists and psychologists to apply their training towards prevention, rather than reactionary assessment.

[Read more](#)

Report of APA Assembly and Annual Meeting

Ariana Nesbit Huselid, MD, MBE
AAPL Representative to the APA Assembly



The American Psychiatric Association (APA) held its 2025 Annual Meeting in Los Angeles, California, from May 17 to 21. The theme, "Lifestyle for Positive Mental and Physical Health," emphasized the importance of nutrition, social connection, physical activity, avoiding harmful substances, and stress reduction in promoting overall wellness. The meeting offered both in-person and virtual participation, with the virtual experience providing access to more than 100 livestreamed sessions, a virtual poster hall featuring over 350 posters, and opportunities for virtual networking and activities.

The meeting was the end of the presidential term for Dr. Ramaswamy Viswanathan and marked the start of the term for Dr. Theresa Miskimen Rivera. Dr. Miskimen Rivera announced that her presidential focus will be addressing workforce challenges in psychiatry, particularly the mismatch between increasing demand for psychiatric services and a national shortage of psychiatrists. Her key priorities include promoting psychiatrist-led team-based care, advocating for

better reimbursement rates for collaborative care models, and supporting additional funding for graduate medical education (GME) to train future psychiatrists.

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Highlights from the AMA Annual Meeting

Jennifer Piel, MD, JD, Delegate; Patricia Westmoreland, MD, Alternate Delegate; Jason Barrett, Young Physician Delegate

The American Medical Association (AMA) House of Delegates HOD met in June 2025 in Chicago. We welcomed Jason Barrett to our team as the new AAPL Young Physician (YPS) Delegate to the AMA. We thank former YPS delegate, Kathryn Skimming, for her years of service.

The meeting focused on issues related to public health and advocacy. During this meeting, several resolutions of import to psychiatry were considered and adopted. Summarized, here are some examples of resolutions from the meeting:

Emergency Resolution

On June 8, U.S. Secretary for Health and Human Services (HHS) Robert F. Kennedy Jr. dismissed all 17 members of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), saying a "clean sweep" is needed to rebuild public confidence in U.S. vaccine policy.¹ The dissolution of ACIP, a federal advisory committee comprised of medical experts and public members that develops evidence-based recommendations on the use of vaccines in the United States, prompted action by the AMA HOD to consider an emergency resolution due to concerns about changes to vaccine recommendations and cost of vaccines. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) sets the U.S. childhood and vaccine schedule based on recommendations by the ACIP, and the vaccines recommended by the CDC are covered under the preventive services mandate of the Affordable Care Act (ACA).

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