

AAPL EXAMINER



American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law

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Introducing the new editor of *The Examiner*



Our new editor of *The Examiner*, Dr. Chinmoy Gulrajani has been an active member of AAPL for 16 years. He brings with him a wealth of editorial experience. He sits

on the editorial board for the *Journal of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law (JAAPL)* and *Behavioral Sciences and the Law*. He has also served as a guest editor and reviewer for many national and international journals related to law and psychiatry. Within AAPL, Dr. Gulrajani also serves on the Executive Council and is Vice President of the Association of Directors of Fellowship Programs in Forensic Psychiatry (ADFPPF).

Dr. Gulrajani is the training director for forensic psychiatry at the University of Minnesota where he also serves as Medical Director for the Minnesota Department of Human Services. His scholarship interests lie within the domains of ethics, malpractice and social justice.

AAPL's 56th Annual Meeting
Ariana Nesbit Huselid, MD and
Abhishek Jain, MD

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Editor

Chinmoy Gulrajani, MD DFAPA

Associate Editors

Philip J. Candilis, MD

Ryan C. W. Hall, MD

Stephen P. Herman, MD

Neil S. Kaye, MD

Britta K. Ostermeyer, MD, MBA

Karen B. Rosenbaum, MD

Renée M. Sorrentino, MD

AAPL Photographer

Eugene Lee, MD

AAPL's 56th Annual Meeting will take place at the Boston Marriot Copley Place from October 30 to November 2, 2025 in Boston, Massachusetts. Known for its rich history, passionate sports culture, and world-class academic medical centers, Boston provides a fitting backdrop for this year's event.

President Ryan Wagoner's theme of this year's meeting will be **"Transparency: Embracing What We Know and Don't Know."** The focus will be on transparency within AAPL as an organization and in our work as individual forensic psychiatrists.

[Read more](#)

President's Column

Transparency: Looking Outside

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



A few years ago, I was sitting in an airport awaiting my flight to the annual AAPL conference. I was excited to connect with long-time friends in the organization, work on projects that were brewing at the committee level and learn new information and updates from the best educators I know. However, I was still stuck in transit. While waiting, I met a gentleman sitting next to me who struck up a conversation and we exchanged pleasantries about where we were headed. I proudly informed him that I was headed to the AAPL conference, without remembering that I needed to clarify what that meant. My acquaintance became quite excited to hear more about my trip and asked, "So, do you have information about what features the next iPhone will have?"

[Read more](#)

Medical Director's Column

Forensic Psychiatric Implications of Political Transitions

Debra A. Pinals, MD



Since my last newsletter column, there has been a whirlwind of activity both within AAPL and in the world. My last newsletter article focused on the state of affairs with the administration change at the federal level. We have now seen major shifts in the administrative and operational organization of the Executive Branch, and the Secretary of Health and Human Services, Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. has begun to make his mark. It will be important to stay abreast of what is happening at the federal level, as many of the shifts with federal dollars impact state spending. The population of adult individuals with mental disorders with criminal-legal involvement and those youth with complex serious emotional disturbances caught in juvenile justice and child welfare systems require focused attention

to help reduce their penetration into criminal and delinquency processes, respectively. One of the challenges that we see as forensic evaluators and treatment providers in carceral and forensic settings, is the challenge of the revolving door. These individuals have their health needs cared for across multiple systems, and this type of siloed care can put people at risk for ongoing symptoms, frequent symptom exacerbation, lack of continuity in managing psychotropic medications, as well as substance use relapse, houselessness, unemployment, uninsured statuses and other challenges. With this as background, a recent criminal case out of Georgia drew the attention of many mental health professionals, including those at AAPL.

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Editor's Column

Spring Forward!

Chinmoy Gulrajani, MD, DLFAPA



We're in Spring already and AAPL has been bustling with activity. From town hall meetings to VAAPL sessions, there has been a significant uptick in activities related to AAPL since the beginning of the year 2025. While I am unable to list all these in my column, today I want to touch upon three that are newsworthy.

First, the AAPL Council met for the first time under the leadership of our new President – Ryan Wagoner, MD MBA. Dr. Wagoner's theme for this year is Transparency, and his focus is on strategic partnerships within and outside the profession. In this vein, Dr. Wagoner has initiated two new task forces - the Strategic Partnerships Task Force and the AAPL / APA Membership Task Force. Additionally, Dr.

Wagoner announced the formation of a new committee – the civil forensic psychiatry committee that will be chaired by Dr. Ryan Shugarman. You can read more about the blueprint for these task forces and Dr. Wagoner's vision in the President's column in this edition.

[Read more](#)



AMERICAN ACADEMY OF
PSYCHIATRY AND THE LAW

**BOSTON
2025**

AAPL Annual Meeting:
October 30 – November 2

Forensic Psychiatry Review Course:
October 27 – 29

Register Now

Early Bird Deadline is **August 31, 2025**

ADFPF

Forensic Psychiatry Fellowships Transition to ERAS and The Match for 2025 Application Season

Stephen Noffsinger, M.D., President, ADFPF



Forensic psychiatry fellowship program directors of the Association of Directors of Forensic Psychiatry Fellowships (ADFPF) have chosen to use the Electronic Residency Application Service (ERAS) in the 2025 forensic psychiatry fellow selection process for the 2026-2027 Academic Year. The key dates for the 2026-2027 Academic Year application process are:

- July 2, 2025 – Applicants may apply to forensic psychiatry fellowships via ERAS.
- July 16, 2025 – Forensic psychiatry fellowship programs begin to review applications on the ERAS platform.
- July 16, 2025 and after – Forensic psychiatry fellowship programs interview applicants via Thalamus (or other optional platforms).

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Ask the Experts

Ask the Experts

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

Neil S. Kaye, MD, DLFAPA and Graham Glancy, MB, ChB, FRC Psych, FRCP (C), will answer questions from members related to practical issues in the real world of Forensic Psychiatry. Please send questions to nskaye@aol.com.

This information is advisory only, for educational purposes. The authors claim no legal

expertise and should not be held responsible for any action taken in response to this educational advice. Readers should always consult their attorneys for legal advice.

Q. What are your thoughts on psychiatric clearance for medical procedures (organ transplants, sterilization, implants for stimulators, bariatric surgery, prophylactic oophorectomy or mastectomy, gender reassignment surgery, etc.)?

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Behind the scenes of AAPL's eLearning

Kaustubh G. Joshi, MD, Co-Chair

Annette Hanson, MD, Co-Chair

AAPL Education Committee

eLearning, i.e., electronic learning, is a type of online learning that encompasses the delivery of education and training through digital means, such as the internet. eLearning can include texts, videos, audio clips, animation, and virtual environments. eLearning courses are meant for people with a good internet connection, and these courses can be accessed through a variety of eLearning platforms. These platforms are web-based applications that allow users to design online courses and then deliver or share them with learners without the users needing programming knowledge.(1)

Why does this matter? When the COVID-19 pandemic put a temporary halt to the in-person annual conferences, an alternative mechanism to deliver educational content was developed, i.e., Virtual AAPL (VAAPL). VAAPL consists of livestreamed events, such as the Expert Series, panel discussions, and courses, as well as on-demand annual meeting conference recordings and recordings of the livestreamed events. The VAAPL Subcommittee reviews virtual submissions and coordinates the calendar of events. Along with the VAAPL Subcommittee, the Education Committee ensures that the virtual sessions meet the American Council of Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) requirements to offer Continuing Medical Education (CME) as we do for the in-person annual meetings.

[Read more](#)

Behavioral Addictions: Understanding Their Impact in Legal and Clinical Domains

Sanya Virani, MD, MPH, Elie Aoun, MD, Karen B. Rosenbaum, MD,

Abhishek Jain, MD

Addiction Psychiatry Committee

At the October 2024 AAPL Meeting, members of the AAPL Addiction Psychiatry Committee presented "*Can't Stop? Won't Stop? Legal and Ethical Considerations of Behavioral Addictions.*"

The panel considered how behavioral addictions represent an overarching framework encompassing a poorly delineated group of conditions marked by maladaptive, compulsive, and repetitive behaviors. (1) This concept refers to patterns of gambling, gaming, internet use, shopping, eating, or engaging in sexual behaviors. While some questions may arise regarding the legitimacy of these conditions as psychiatric disorders—such as criticism of the medical model as an excuse for unlawful acts or an attempt to pathologize socially objectionable behavior—these behaviors also carry tremendous societal importance.

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**The Yale Department of Psychiatry is recruiting for a
forensic psychiatrist for an appointment at the
Associate/Assistant Professor level as a
Consulting Forensic Psychiatrist.**



* Paid advertisement – AAPL does not express any opinion regarding the content of this advertisement.

I Owe My Career to the “Cocaine Bear”

James B. Reynolds, M.D.

Law Enforcement Liaison Committee

It was September 11, 1985, and a routine morning in the life of a 4th year medical student doing his “junior internship” in Surgery at the University of Tennessee Medical Center in Knoxville, TN. I had finished ward rounds and was headed to the operating room when one of the surgery attendings, whom I knew doubled as the Knox County Medical Examiner and a reserve police captain, asked if I wanted to help him with an interesting case. My curiosity piqued higher as we bypassed the surgery suite and headed to the morgue. I saw a body on the table looking not too worse for wear, just a trickle of blood from the corner of his mouth.

The “victim” had apparently parachuted out of a small plane (which flew on pilotless about an hour into North Carolina and crashed), experienced some sort of malfunction, and landed hard in a citizen’s back yard. His spine breaking on impact, he apparently died almost instantly. If I recall correctly, his aorta was torn as well. Not helping his situation was landing on a duffel stuffed with 35 kilos of cocaine strapped to his waist. This fellow was no novice thrill-seeker. He was dressed in black with a bulletproof vest, high-end night vision goggles, a belt of South African gold Krugerrands, and two handguns, one loaded

with armor-piercing rounds. In his pockets were a membership card to the Jockey Club of Buenos Aires and an epigram: "There is only one tactical principle not subject to change: it is to inflict the maximum amount of wounds, death and destruction on the enemy in the minimum amount of time." Sadly, besides helping with the autopsy, I had no opportunity to participate further in the investigation. But our decedent, one Andrew Carter Thornton, II, ex-paratrooper, decorated war veteran, law school graduate, and former narcotics officer turned international drug smuggler, certainly led an interesting life. A lowly medical student will rarely be an eyewitness to such a unique event.

[Read more](#)

"Pig Butchering" Scams and the Growing Role of Geriatric Forensic Psychiatry in the Digital Age

Lauren K. Robinson, MD, MPH

Geriatric Psychiatry and the Law Committee

By now, all of us have encountered at least one type of online scam attempt: an accidental text from a "wrong number," a suspicious Facebook friend request, an email claiming you owe an unpaid toll, or even a phone call purporting to be from your state medical board, threatening action unless you immediately pay a fine. Although these schemes may appear obvious to some, online fraud has become a sophisticated and burgeoning industry, one that I argue geriatric forensic psychiatrists need to understand better, both personally and professionally. I suspect it is only a matter of time before we begin regularly receiving financial capacity consults following instances of digital exploitation.

I myself came unnervingly close to becoming a victim. Over the course of weeks, a coordinated team exploited my fears of identity theft, calling from what appeared to be the Chicago Police Department's number on my caller ID and threatening a warrant for my arrest unless I complied with the payment. The scam was meticulously timed to coincide with an Amazon message about a suspicious purchase. I had also recently replaced several debit and credit cards, as their information had been stolen, which made the incident even more believable. Ultimately, I pieced it all together without incurring any financial losses, but the experience left me rattled and deeply concerned about older adults who may not be familiar with these tactics.

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Cultural Competence: The importance of exposure and training in fellowship

Ashley D Maestas, DO
Fellow's Corner

During residency, I sought an elective that offered an opportunity to provide culturally informed mental health care to immigrant and refugee communities. The idea of providing care for my community in such a meaningful way excited me, and I jumped in without hesitation. It quickly became apparent that my experience would be more challenging than anticipated. Despite having experiences with translator services, I faced challenges involving cultural interpretation, differing views on treatment (including feelings of stigmatization), and an overall misunderstanding around diverse cultures and values.

Learning how cultural differences impact symptom presentation, challenges with recognition and interpretation of these differences, and how they impact my psychiatric opinion, was an experience that had me considering the true meaning of cultural competence. It became clear that, as medical trainees, we can do better when preparing to provide culturally informed care.

Bidirectional Education: Forensic Fellows in General Psychiatry Education

Liad Maslaton, MD; Raina Aggarwal, MD

Forensic Training of Psychiatry Residents Committee

Forensic psychiatry fellows represent a valuable yet underutilized resource in general psychiatry education at institutions lacking forensically trained faculty. The Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) requires that forensic psychiatry fellows engage in scholarly activities, which may include clinical teaching. (1) Simultaneously, the ACGME requires general psychiatry residents to gain forensic experience, which the ACGME describes as “experience evaluating patients’ potential to harm themselves or others, appropriateness for commitment, decisional capacity, disability, and competency.” (2) However, forensic education within general psychiatry residency programs faces a significant challenge – availability of resources. There are over 300 ACGME-accredited general psychiatry programs in the U.S., and only approximately 50 forensic psychiatry fellowship programs. (3,4) In the 2024 AAPL Forensic Training of Psychiatry Residents Committee meeting, attendees expressed concerns about the shortage of forensic faculty in their training programs and discussed ways to improve access to forensic resources.

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AAPL and Advocacy for Education

Logan Graddy, MD, DFAPA

In his Presidential address at the 2024 AAPL meeting, Dr. Dike challenged AAPL members to think about whether AAPL should add advocacy to the mission of AAPL. Advocacy is defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as, “the action or an act of advocating something.” Is taking on the issue of advocacy in the criminal justice system a mantle that AAPL, as an organization, is ready to take up? Personally, I think that AAPL should consider it, and I have a suggestion for an issue that AAPL could support.

I emphasize that the decision for AAPL to add advocacy to our mission statement is a decision that should not be taken lightly. The current mission statement on the AAPL website states AAPL is an organization, “...dedicated to excellence in practice, teaching, and research in forensic psychiatry.” Up to now, AAPL has not undertaken advocacy for some very good reasons. But, as (now former) AAPL president Dr. Dike expressed in his presidential address, times change, and organizations mature, and it may be time for our organization to consider adding advocacy as one of AAPL’s core missions.

[Read more](#)

Faces of AAPL

Faces of AAPL: Sanya Virani, MD, MPH

Philip Candilis, MD

Born in Mumbai within a multi-generational household, Sanya Virani is an artist: painting, sketching, dancing Bollywood style and ballroom. Good enough to reach



the finals of a popular TV dance competition, Dr. Virani is more appreciative of the Shakespearean canon: the Scottish play (she knows not to mention MacBeth), the Merchant of Venice, and other thrillers.

The first physician in the family, Dr. Virani tells of her grandparents meeting in an orphanage. A dramatic figure in the family history, her great-grandfather became the captain of a merchant vessel, going down with his ship in a catastrophic storm. It was her mother who fostered Sanya's interest in science, working as a pathology laboratory technician and influencing her children to advance their education. Matching her ambition, Sanya's brother became a materials science engineer, while Sanya entered medical school on scholarship.

Sanya Virani, MD, MPH

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