

President's Message



As my term as president comes to close I look back upon the year. Our chapter has grown and has been successful in reaching out to its constituents. Monthly quarterly phone calls to general members, a record-breaking conference this year, and more people involved at the board level are all great accomplishment for our organization.

More is needed though. Nursing is at the forefront of being able to impact health care changes. We must not lose sight of our ability to impact both our profession and our patients' lives. Psychiatry is a specialty in its infancy. We are ready for it to grow!

I leave the position of presidency with new wonderful board members. Sandra Cadena, your incoming president, has a wealth of experience and knowledge and our organization is lucky to have her. Please read about the new members and reach out to them if you think our organization can make a difference. I look forward to continue to work with the organization and with my fellow psychiatric nurses!

Gratefully,

Patricia Brown

President
APNA Florida Chapter



Incoming President's Message

Dear APNA Florida Chapter members,

I am filled with excitement and humble gratitude to be your incoming President in 2014. Psychiatric/mental health (PMH) nurses throughout the state of Florida have continued to live the American Psychiatric Nurses' Association (APNA) *Core Purpose*: Be the unified voice of psychiatric-mental health nursing. We have many opportunities to integrate the eight *Core Values* of our parent organization: Empowerment, Inclusivity, Integrity, Collegiality, Innovation, Transparency and Stewardship.

The Florida Chapter is an organization that mirrors the principles of collegiality and inclusivity. Everyone can uniquely contribute to the strength of our Chapter by addressing the pressing PMH nursing care issues. Our focus is on education - of members, colleagues, patients and communities. By empowering each other, Florida members continue as the expert voice for psychiatric-mental health nursing with integrity and pride. Each of us brings creative, innovative solutions to the ever-growing mental health challenges, building on the best research, practice, and education expertise. Connect and share your unique skills and perspective with your Board of Directors!

Your Chapter supports PMH nurses at all levels to deliver evidence-based care, be admired for our collaborative efforts with organizations and consumers, contribute as core members of any health care team, be included in the regulatory standards and recognized by policy makers.

So come sit "at the table" of the APNA, Florida Chapter. You may find new colleagues and re-connect with old friends in a Chapter built on the values, goals and principles of everything that makes psychiatric-mental health nurses the unique and creative individuals that we are!

Respectfully,

Sandra J. Cadena

APNA South Florida Advanced Practice Council

An informal gathering of advanced practice psychiatric nurses that has been meeting for dinner quarterly in Broward County for years is now formalized as a council under the APNA Florida Chapter and is meeting monthly on the second Thursday of every month. Membership is open to all APNs in the Palm Beach/Broward/Dade County area and while APNA membership is not required, it is strongly encouraged. Contact Paulette Perlowin at pauleygop@aol.com or call her at 954-471-2801 for more information.

Tribute to Valerie Kolbert

By Pat Brown

July 1 will see a change in the media coordinator on our APNA Florida board. By her own account, she has served our organization in many capacities, including past president, but as the media coordinator for "more years than she can remember". (editorial comment-since 2006)

If you do not know Val, you have missed a shot in enthusiasm and professionalism. She is one of nursing's most ardent supporters. She has pushed each of us to live up to a high nursing standard.

Thank you Val for all you have done for our organization and what you will continue to do for us in what capacities you decide.

Evaluation of the Implementation of a Professional Organization for Psychiatric Advanced Practice Nurses

Capstone Project completed for the Doctor of Nursing Practice degree, Florida Atlantic University, 2014
Paulette Perlowin, DNP, PMH-NP, ARNP-BC

As a Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner, I had organized an informal quarterly dinner meeting (sponsored by a pharma company) for South Florida Psychiatric Advanced Practice Nurses (APNs) for about 3 years. I then returned to school at Florida Atlantic University (FAU) to pursue my Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) degree. Students are required to complete a major project to improve or advance patient care, the community or the profession. I chose to attempt to formalize this group of experts.

In late 2012, I recruited others also interested in developing a professional organization for Psychiatric ANPs. A needs assessment showed professional community support for the undertaking; there was no other such group in our area. We formed a Leadership Council with six officers, and met regularly throughout 2013. This team developed the processes, Mission Statement, Goals, offices and officer responsibilities for the larger group to implement formalization. The organization officially affiliated with the American Psychiatric Nurses Association (APNA) and received backing by Florida APNA leadership for this endeavor. Our name became The APNA South Florida Advanced Practice Council.

Formal monthly meetings began January, 2014. From that time, agenda were developed for meetings and minutes were kept. Pharmaceutical companies continued to sponsor dinners. Psychiatric Advanced Practice students were encouraged to attend and bond with practicing professionals who could be mentors and potential preceptors. A non- Continuing Education Unit (CEU) program, 'The Cost of Caring,' was presented by a colleague in February, 2014.

With each meeting, surveys were completed by attendees and collected. Over the Spring 2014 semester when data was collected, survey items showed overall improvement. For example, progress was noted in 'Strongly Agree' selections to number between 17% and 39% improvement. Measures analyzed included: collegial networking; feelings of belonging with peers; feelings of fitting in and being valued by the organization; feeling the programs met their needs and expectations; and satisfaction with the group and membership. An organizational FaceBook page was initiated, and members that visited were satisfied with this new social media portal. The group now has a G-Mail account for mailings and invitations sent out to members. Generally, attendance goals were met and group attendance appreciably surpassed previous meetings. A local hospital granted sponsorship of our Continuing Education Credits, and our first CEU program was successfully offered in May, 2014. Members are highly encouraged to join APNA; non-members will be unable to vote on issues. Legislative information was disseminated and some members increased political engagement.

Overall, this Capstone Project helped achieve advancement of its members and met its goals. The Project took over twenty months to accomplish. It succeeded and is ongoing. There is need for this professional organization to speak to the specialized needs of Psychiatric APNs. Continued success will come from all members' attendance and desire to participate.

Thank you to our new and not-so-new members for attending meetings. The Project was accomplished with incredible support from my colleagues, friends, family and Leadership Council. Special thanks to my Community Chair, Dr. Ruth Milstein, DNP and my FAU Faculty Chair, Dr. Ruth McCaffrey, DNP. Additional thanks goes to Valerie Kolbert, APN, CNS for pointing out reformed ways of looking at myself. Vanessa Long, Carole Kain and Barbara Barrett, this Project would also not be possible without your guidance and contributions towards our success. Thank you all.

The APNA Florida Board election results are in!

These are the Chapter Board members as of July 1st, 2014:

President - Sandra Cadena

President Elect - Emily Bell

Past President - Pat Brown

Secretary - Judy Flanagan

Treasurer - Nancy Newbury

Media Coordinator - Karen McNeely

Members at Large:

Nel Thomas

Florence Keane

Carole Kain

Diane Esposito

Cindy Parsons

Taking Back Healthcare From the Insurance Companies

Valerie Kolbert ARNP, PMHCNS-BC

If you are a prescriber in the state of Florida and an ARNP, not only do you have to deal with not having a DEA number, which, for example, makes calling a Pfizer a major annoyance since a DEA number is required to use their automated system, but you have to deal with the all too common scenario where you and the patient have discussed various treatment options and have come to a meeting of the minds on what medication would be the best choice, only to have their insurance company deny coverage. After much frustration, gnashing of teeth, muttering expletives under my breath, and subduing urges to throw objects across the room, I have found it much more therapeutic and effective to channel that energy into writing creative letters to the insurance companies. I have found that when used to address denial of coverage they have been quite effective, hence I will share an example with you. This particular letter is to an insurance company denying coverage for Latuda for bipolar depression (names have been changes to comply with HIPAA):

I find it interesting that your denial letter starts out “All pharmacy reviews are completed in accordance with the following: FDA Guidelines and National Guidelines.” As you should know, there are only three FDA approved medications for bipolar depression: Symbyax, Seroquel and Latuda. Your reason for denial says that the patient has not met the plan’s step therapy requirements that she has tried and failed risperidone, which is NOT FDA approved for bipolar depression; olanzapine, which is NOT FDA approved for bipolar depression; ziprasidone, which is not FDA approved for bipolar depression; or quetiapine, which is the ONLY drug on your list that is FDA approved for bipolar depression. I have tried Mary on quetiapine at a low dose several years ago for sleep and she was unable to tolerate even low doses. It made her feel hung over at 25 mg and the target dose for bipolar depression is 300 mg so that won’t work. Besides, weight is an issue with Mary and despite being an active Weight Watchers member her BMI is still 28.7 which puts her at risk for metabolic syndrome. Seroquel and Symbyax are well known for weight gain and orthostatic hypotension so even if she could tolerate a higher dose, they would not be appropriate in this 85 year old female.

I can’t believe you are asking me to go off label to treat this serious illness with a higher than normal risk of suicide so that you can save a few bucks. I have started Mary on a low dose of Latuda with samples three weeks ago and she is already feeling “better than she has in years” and without side effects! We have been battling this bipolar depression for years and have tried innumerable antidepressants and

antipsychotics without therapeutic effect and have finally found something that works well. I am sure the state insurance commissioner would be interested to know that you are not approving the only FDA indicated treatment that this patient can safely tolerate. Surely you realize that paying for the medication is more cost effective than hospitalization. I am also giving Mary and her family a copy of this letter so they will understand it is your shortsightedness being penny-wise and pound-foolish that is denying her the medication she needs. Please reconsider your decision not to cover Latuda for this patient.

Sincerely,

Valerie Kolbert ARNP, PMHCNS-BC

I have been successful in overturning denials in about 95% of the cases I have appealed with letters such as this one. Feel free to use it as a template for your own patients. And to avoid not being reimbursed for the time used to compose the letter, the patient and I write the letter together during their session which shows the patient what is involved in overturning a denial of coverage and saves time reviewing reams of records to remember what the patient has tried in the past.

Good luck taking back healthcare from the insurance companies!

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Active APNA members get a 50% discount on ads!

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Contact Media Coordinator Valerie Kolbert ARNP

Phone 561-213-7955

Fax 561-368-0459

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<p>President <i>Patricia Brown</i> PhD, ARNP PBrown2550@aol.com 407-425-3670</p>	<p>President-Elect <i>Sandra J. Cadena</i> PhD, ARNP, PMHCNS-BC, CNE drsjcadena@gmail.com</p>	<p>Media Coordinator <i>Valerie Kolbert</i> MS, ARNP-BC ARNP11@aol.com 561-347-1112</p>	<p>Secretary <i>Judy Flanagan</i> ARNP Judy.flanagans@gmail.com</p>
			
<p>Treasurer <i>George Byron Peraza-Smith</i> DNP, ARNP-BC, GNP <i>Gperaza-</i> <i>smith@southuniversity.edu</i> 813-393-3731</p>	<p>Member-at-Large <i>Nel Thomas MA,</i> MSN, RN Nel.Thomas@fhchs.edu 407-303-7747, EXT 110-6477</p>	<p>Member-at-Large <i>Janet King MA,</i> RN-C Janet.king@adu.edu</p>	<p>Member-at-Large <i>Florence Keane</i> DNS, MBA, ARNP, ANP-C, PMHNP-BC keanef@fiu.edu flokeanes6@gmail.com fk601@aol.com</p>
			
<p>Member-at-Large <i>Carole Kain, PhD, ARNP,</i> PMHS, PPCNP-BC, FAANP ckainnp@earthlink.net</p>		<p>Member-at-Large <i>Elizabeth</i> <i>MacDermott</i> MSN, ARNP 407-246-6620</p>	

2013-2014 APNA Florida Board Members