



# VA PSYCHOLOGY LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

January 30, 2017

Dear VA Psychologists and VA Psychology Trainees:

We are very pleased to invite you to our **20<sup>th</sup> Annual VA Psychology Leadership Conference** that will be held in **San Antonio, Texas** from **Wednesday, May 17<sup>th</sup> through Saturday, May 20<sup>th</sup>, 2017**. The conference is sponsored by the Association of Veterans Affairs Psychologist Leaders (AVAPL), the American Psychological Association (APA), and APA Division 18: Psychologists in Public Service. The Offices of Mental Health Services and Mental Health Operations at VA Central Office also collaborate with the sponsoring organizations to support content for the conference. The theme this year is ***“The 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the VA Psychology Leadership Conference: Engaging partners in shaping the future of VA integrated care.”***

In line with this year’s theme, we have planned informative and engaging presentations on key topics such as the future of VA, collaborations with non-VA partners, best practices for access, measurement-based care, and the Choice program. As a tribute to the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the conference and all of the VA psychologists who contributed over the years, there will also be sessions focused on the history of VA psychology, lessons learned, and future outlooks. There are also presentations planned covering a range of topics including advocacy efforts at local and national levels, leadership development for women, psychology training and hiring of trainees, and improving morale. As in past years, some content is designed to target issues relevant to psychology leadership, whereas other content is aimed specifically at early career psychologists in VA. We have again incorporated smaller, repeated breakout sessions throughout the agenda to provide the opportunity for more informal, small group interactions that are ideal for some of the topics we have planned. We will have a keynote address from the APA President, Dr. Antonio Puente and host a panel of non-VA partners including Melissa Fitzgerald, Senior Director of Justice for Vets, and Bill Rausch, Executive Director of Got Your 6. We are also excited to have plenary talks from Michael Blecker, J.D., Executive Director at Swords to Plowshares, and Terri Tanielian, M.A., Senior Social Research Analyst at the RAND Corporation.

We are also pleased to announce that we will host a CEU workshop focused on Compassion, including training on incorporating compassion into interventions for Veterans and on use of compassion to support oneself and one’s colleagues. This workshop promises to be meaningful and informative and highlight strategies to ensure support and good self-care for both mental health providers and for the Veterans we serve. The committee is still working on additional topics and finalizing the agenda, so be sure to visit the conference website regularly to see the most updated agenda. (<http://conference.avapl.org>).

We will be hosting a poster session again this year, which has proven to be a popular feature of the conference. The theme for this year’s posters is the same as the conference theme, ***“Engaging partners in shaping the future of VA integrated care.”*** Although we invite the

submission of quality original research, descriptions of clinical programs, best practices, and implementation of programs that address the theme, we also welcome and will consider other quality presentations (research presented elsewhere is welcome). Interested presenters should submit their proposal via email to Erin Andrews, Psy.D., ABPP, Poster Session Committee Chair at [erin.andrews2@va.gov](mailto:erin.andrews2@va.gov) by **Friday, March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2017** using the “Poster Submission Form” (attached to this email or available at the conference website).

New this year is a call for proposals for an open plenary session. We invite all VA psychologists and psychology trainees to consider submitting a proposal for a brief presentation on novel or innovative best practices for improving care for Veterans. Topics may include (but are not limited to) treatment interventions for disorders for which we do not currently have evidence-based practices (EBP) in the VA, alternatives to VA EBPs, initiatives to increase access to or quality of healthcare, or lean projects designed to increase efficiency or productivity. We will select three to five proposals for this open session. Proposals should be placed on the attached “Open Plenary Proposal Submission Form” and should be sent to Ameer Patel, Ph.D., VA Psychology Leadership Conference Chair, via email to [ameer.patel4@va.gov](mailto:ameer.patel4@va.gov) by **Friday, March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2017**.

In addition, APA will be hosting **Internship and Postdoctoral Fellowship Site Visitor Training** workshops preceding the conference. These workshops will provide an overview of the new Standards on Accreditation (SoA) and serve as an opportunity for previous site visitors to update their training, as well as for those interested in becoming a new site visitor. The workshops will be held concurrently on **Wednesday, May 17 from 8:00am – 5:00pm**. See the attached flyer for details on how to register for one of these workshops.

All VA psychologists and trainees are invited to the VA Psychology Leadership Conference. The schedule for the conference is similar to those of recent years; activities will commence on Wednesday, May 17<sup>th</sup> with an informal evening social hour and registration from 4:00 – 6:00pm. The social hours have always been an ideal time to meet and network with fellow psychologists. Participants should plan to arrive on Wednesday in time for that first social hour. In addition, we are hosting a 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration banquet dinner with informal retrospectives from past leaders and lots of making merry! The main conference agenda starts the morning of Thursday, May 18<sup>th</sup> with breakfast at 7:00am and goes through the end of the day on Friday, May 19<sup>th</sup>. A social hour will follow each of the Thursday and Friday sessions. Our conference CEU Workshop will be held from 8:00am to noon on Saturday, May 20<sup>th</sup>, again beginning with breakfast at 7:00am.

We will again be offering two \$300 scholarships to VA trainees (i.e., VA predoctoral interns and/or VA postdoctoral fellows/residents) who are planning to pursue a career in the VA and who are willing to assist with the behind-the-scenes tasks of running the conference. Selection for these scholarships will be done randomly among those who indicate on the conference registration form that they would like to be considered for the scholarship. Those selected will be expected to be present for the entire conference (through Saturday) in order to fulfill their duties. Those who would like to be considered for the scholarships should register for the conference by **March 10<sup>th</sup>, 2017**. A random selection of the scholarships will be announced by **March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2017**.

This year's conference will be held at **The Westin Riverwalk – San Antonio**, located at 420 West Market Street, San Antonio, Texas, 78205. The phone number is (210) 224-6500. Please click the Westin logo below to go to the custom online room reservation webpage.



If you call the hotel, please note that you are calling as part of the “2017 VA Psychology Leadership Conference.”

The cost of registration is unchanged from recent years and is as follows:

- AVAPL, APA, and Division 18 members: \$250
- Non-members: \$330
- Postdoctoral fellows: \$150
- Predoctoral interns: \$115

The post-conference workshop will be \$75 for all who wish to attend. Costs for the Wednesday night banquet dinner to celebrate the conference's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary range from \$48 to \$102 based on entrée selection. The conference registration fee includes breakfast, lunch, and refreshments on Thursday and Friday; dinner is on your own. In addition, you will receive approximately 12 hours APA-approved CE credits (subject to change) for attending all of the sessions on Thursday and Friday. Those staying for the Saturday workshop will receive a continental breakfast and 4 additional APA-approved CE credits. The cost of the hotel will be \$121/night + 16.75% tax, but please make sure to bring the Texas tax exempt form with you; otherwise, you may be charged at the non-federal rate. This form can be downloaded at:

<https://www.comptroller.texas.gov/forms/12-302.pdf>

Per the updated VA Financial Policies and Procedures, Volume XIV, Chapter 10 dated December 22, 2016, non-federal conferences no longer require ACES approval! Accordingly, you will not need to register with ACES for this conference.

For individuals seeking travel funding, information for the conference is as follows:

Course name: *VA Psychology Leadership Conference*

Vendor's mailing address:

*Association of VA Psychologist Leaders*

*4150 Clement St. (116B)*

*San Francisco, CA 94121*

Telephone number: *601-364-7871*

Email: *amee.patel4@va.gov*

Please share all of the above information widely with all VA psychologists (administrators, clinicians, and researchers) and trainees at your station. Information on how to join AVAPL or APA Division 18 prior to the conference (to receive the price break for registration) and additional conference information can be obtained from Ameer Patel, Ph.D., Chair,

VA Psychology Leadership Conference Planning Committee ([amee.patel4@va.gov](mailto:amee.patel4@va.gov)).

This is a wonderful conference energized by the dedication, expertise, and vision of VA psychologists nationwide. We are certain you will find it both informative and inspiring, and we look forward to seeing you in San Antonio!

Sincerely,



Ronald J. Gironda, Ph.D.  
President, Association of Veterans Affairs Psychologist  
Leaders

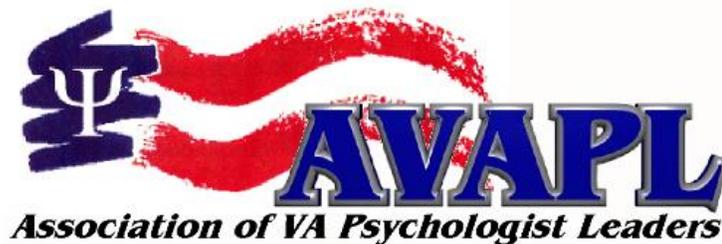


Heather O'Beirne Kelly, Ph.D.  
Senior Legislative & Federal Affairs Officer  
American Psychological Association



Monica Roy, Ph.D.  
Chair, VA Section, Division 18  
American Psychological Association

#### Sponsoring Organizations



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