

# Capitol Notes

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## **LEGISLATURE INTRODUCES OVER 2000 BILLS FOR CONSIDERATION IN 2013; HEALTH CARE REFORM IMPLEMENTATION AND ACCESS TO MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT AMONG KEY BILLS**

As of last Friday's deadline, the Senate and Assembly introduced 2,189 bills for consideration in 2013. This number is lower than in years' past but still represents a diverse number of subject areas, interests, and issues for the year. The 80 members of the Assembly introduced 1376 bills, while the now 37-member Senate introduced 813 bills. The Senate has three vacancies due to member resignations.

Legislation to be considered this year include many bills related to health care reform: determining eligibility for state benefits, implementing market reforms, and expanding the scope of practice for certain practitioners. There are also many bills related to gun control and reform of laws of ammunition sales and gun bans. While not directly impacting the profession of Psychology, there are hundreds of bills being considered on education reform, water policy, transportation projects, and election laws reform.

CPA staff, the Government Affairs Steering Committee, and the full Government Affairs Committee will be discussing CPA Priority Support and Oppose bills in the coming weeks. A more complete list of bills and issues we are following in 2013 will appear in the next issue of Capitol Notes.

As previously reported, the 2013-2014 Legislative Session welcomed 38 new Assemblymembers and 10 new Senators to the California State Legislature. This also marks the first term since voters approved changes to term limits, allowing new Assemblymembers and Senators to serve in either house of the Legislature for a maximum of 12 years. The large freshman class of the Assembly will likely be the leaders of this Legislature for the next decade.

CPA's lobbyists have been working around the clock to meet with these new members, learn more about their backgrounds, and introduce CPA to them. As always, please continue reading Capitol Notes to learn more about CPA's legislative priorities.



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## . AFFORDABLE CARE ACT CORNER

From now until 2014, every Capitol Notes newsletter will feature an “Affordable Care Act” corner to keep everyone up to date on the changes and decisions related to implementation of the federal health care reform. In addition to the work of the appointed California Health Benefits Exchange Board, now referred to as Covered California, our elected legislative officials are taking an active role in the implementation of the Affordable Care Act.

### **Assembly and Senate Consider Bills to Implement Federal Health Care Reform**

Earlier today, the Senate and Assembly each met and passed legislation during the Special Session on Health Care that move one step forward to implementing health care reform in California. ABX1 2 (Pan) and SBX1 2 (Hernandez) are identical bills that will implement marketplace reform for the individual health care market in California. Consumer protection reforms in these bills include banning denials for pre-existing conditions, prohibiting price discrimination due to health status (including smoking), and limiting differing charges based on age, etc. Last year, the Governor vetoed two similar bills, [AB 1461 \(Monning\)](#) and [SB 961 \(Hernandez\)](#), which would have prohibited a health insurer from discriminating or denying coverage against potential enrollees with preexisting conditions.

The bills now move to the opposite house for further debate. The major issues left on the table are the following:

**Geographic Regions:** The Legislature will determine the number of regions in which insurers can base premium costs. Federal rules allow states to have up to 7 geographic regions, although there may be exceptions for large states. Covered California (former the Exchange), the Department of Managed Health Care (DMHC), and private insurers are asking that the 19 regions that are currently being used by the small group market be used in the Exchange Market.

**Federal Tie-Back Language:** Also being discussed is the Governor's proposal to “tie-back” health reform implementation bills in case the federal law is changed or repealed. DMHC joined insurers in suggesting that legislation should make the insurance reforms conditioned on the federal law. There is some skepticism among legislators about the ACA ever being repealed, thus no strong justification for legislation to repeal all reforms made.

**Summary of Benefits and Coverage:** Additionally, state legislation will allow consumers to make apples to apples comparisons of health insurance plans’ Summary of Benefits and Coverage. The State will likely implement federal standards to make it easy for consumers to understand what benefits they are getting and how much it will cost them.

**Risk Adjustment:** This is a process where insurers with healthier patients will make payments to those with sicker patients, thereby creating a mechanism to ensure that insurance companies will not only enroll healthy candidates. The state previously opted to allow the federal government to perform this function for California, but legislators and health care advocates are now lobbying to have state-specific legislation.

### **SENATOR MICHAEL RUBIO RESIGNS IMMEDIATELY FROM STATE SENATE**

Leaving the Democrats in the Senate without their Supermajority (until other positions are filled), Senator Michael Rubio resigned from the California State Senate effective as of Friday February 22nd. The Kern County Democrat had served on the Kern County Board of Supervisors (since 2004) before being elected to the State Senate in 2010. Senator Rubio was the Chair of the Environmental Quality Committee and the Vice-Chair of the Agriculture Committee. The Senator resigned immediately to accept the position of Director of Government Affairs for Chevron Corp. His departure will leave the Senate without their super majority; there has already been much speculation about a potential replacement.

To read more about his departure, please click here: [Capitol Alert](#)

To read about potential replacements, please click here: [Capitol Alert](#)

### **LOS ANGELES VOTERS: ELECTION ON TUESDAY**

If you are registered to vote in Los Angeles County, please exercise your right to vote in Tuesday’s county and city-wide elections. For more information on the candidates or to find your polling place, please click here:

[SMART VOTER: LOS ANGELES ELECTIONS](#)

Note: CPA has not participated in, or endorsed, any candidates for office in Los Angeles County or City elections.

## SPECIAL TO CAPITOL NOTES

# STUDENTS AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF CPA'S LEADERSHIP AND ADVOCACY DAY

Michi Fu, Ph.D., Tony Ngo, and Malia Sanchez

Every year, the California Psychological Association hosts a Leadership Advocacy Day as a culmination of events that occur during Leadership Advocacy Conference. This is an opportunity for those in the field of psychology to advocate on behalf of the public and our profession. This event is not just for practicing psychologists, however. The success of this advocacy effort involves the active participation of *emerging psychologists* as well. Students can be an integral part of advocacy efforts.

In 2012, two students joined their professor to attend CPA's Leadership Advocacy Day and were "bit by the (advocacy) bug." Below are testaments of their experiences. We urge all students to consider attending the upcoming LAD's so that they can educate their representatives on issues that are pertinent to public safety as well as benefiting our profession.

### **Malia Sanchez's Reflections of CPA's 2012 Leadership Advocacy Day**

Each year hundreds of individuals from different organizations throughout California have the opportunity to meet with their senators and assembly representatives in Sacramento for Advocacy Day. On this day, organizations send individuals to gain support or oppose current policies that are important to the organizations and their missions. Every year the California Psychological Association (CPA) brings psychologists and graduate students from all over California together to advocate for important mental health policies.

I had the fortunate pleasure of participating in Advocacy day 2012 as a part of the CPA. We were seeking support on the full mental health parity bill (AB 154) and the extension of the Board of Psychology's sunset (SB 1238). The day consisted of a few hours of preparation which involved reviewing the bills and the reasons for supporting them. We then gathered in groups according to our demographic areas, organized our day and then it was off to the Capitol! The day surprisingly went by quickly as groups went from meeting to meeting visiting different senators, assembly-persons, and staff representatives. The meetings went smoothly; we met with the different representatives, introduced ourselves, expressed our position and reviewed our supporting arguments on the twobills, and then thanked them for their time.

Advocacy Day turned out to be a more rewarding experience than I anticipated. It provided me an opportunity to network with other graduate students and psychologists from all over California that I may have not otherwise met. It also provided me the opportunity to fight for important a policy that will affect the field of psychology in the future; which is of great importance for graduate students such as myself looking to enter the field. Most importantly, it enables psychologists alike to fight for clients and patients on a higher and more impactful level.

### **Tony Ngo's Reflections of CPA's 2012 Leadership Advocacy Day**

When I first started my classes as a graduate student, I was taught all the roles we would have as a psychologist. We would be able to conduct assessments, diagnose others, do therapy, and implement advocacy. Although I had heard about the first three, the one that I was not too familiar with was with the idea of advocacy. The little that I heard about this role was that we were to help implement policies to help better serve our clients. It was only when I had attended the Leadership and Advocacy Conference and Day that I learned how advocacy also extended to the policies and laws that affect us and allow us to do our jobs and do them well.

During LAC, I learned how much of the advocacy was done by certain groups, such as the California Professional Association (CPA) and the Government Affairs Committee (GAC). Although each group had different specific roles, all of them were involved in advocating for policies that would be beneficial to psychologists and those they served.

To be honest, at one point I felt that I did not belong in the conference. I had become a psychologist to help people, not to become some politician that would fight for my own rights! Yet, as I continued to listen to the many psychologists that spoke about their cause, I realized it was far more than just politics. I was sitting in a room full of psychologists that had taken time from their jobs as assessors, therapists, and professors to fight for and speak on behalf of the thousands of psychologists in our state. They were fighting for psychologists that may have never joined CPA, contributed any donations, or even heard of the organization to begin with. In California, we have raised less money for our association compared to MDs, psychiatrists, and MFTs. In fact, we have raised less money than six other states.

These problems do not just affect psychologists. It also has a huge influence on us as doctoral students. Budget cuts to our programs are preventing us from gaining access to APA and APPIC internships. If certain policies pass or are not acted upon, our education may be severely affected. For example, during Leadership and Advocacy Day, we argued for the extension of the Board of Psychology's sunset (SB 1238), which would support the existence of the BOP for another few years until the next expansion bill. If this bill

was to pass, our BOP would no longer exist and there would no longer be a regulation on doctorates and licensing. Therapists with masters would be able to lobby and argue that they are just as competent as psychologists and subsequently be hired over psychologists, ultimately leading to the annihilation of our degree.

Yet, I also learned that there was still hope. More and more campuses have heard about CPA and have become involved. During one of our reception parties, we had far more legislators appear than we had ever had in the previous years. On Leadership and Advocacy Day, we had nearly thirty students that had showed up for the event.

So what can students do? We don't have licenses or even doctorates, how can we make a difference in our profession when we are still in school? Those were my initial thoughts and questions when I had first entered the conference. It is surprising how important we actually are in advocacy efforts. During LAD, I learned that legislators did not view our group by our degree. They viewed us as constituents and were more concerned about whether or not we would support and vote for them. I was personally able to share my thoughts and opinions on how the extension of the Board of Psychology's sunset would impact us as students.

Overall, my experience at LAC/LAD was both informative and rewarding. I learned about the different organizations that were lobbying for our rights and the problems that our associations faced from a lack of support. Yet, I also learned about the increase in students that were becoming involved with advocating as well as the power that we held in talking to legislators. No matter if we are students or licensed psychologists, we are constituents who have the power to affect the course of history of our profession.

### **What's in it for me?**

Would you like higher reimbursement rates for mental health services? Have an opinion regarding whether or not clinicians from other disciplines ought to be administering psychological assessments? Care about prescription privileges for psychologists? This is the conference to attend! Use your voice as a tool to educate your legislators on what you think is best in regards to topics affecting our scope of practice and public safety.

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Join us in our State's Capitol to discuss California's ever-changing political climate. Together we will examine current issues that face our state and how these issues will affect the practice of psychology. The conference will emphasize the importance of developing a strong advocacy plan and maintaining an activated grassroots network.

## **2013 LEADERSHIP AND ADVOCACY DAY-MARCH 19, 2013**

Learn about CPA's Legislative Agenda  
Network with other CPA members from around the State  
Meet with your State Representatives to express your views on important issues

**Tuesday March 19, 2012**

**8:00am – 5:00pm**

**The Sterling Hotel**

**1300 H Street**

**Sacramento, CA 95814**

**\*Please note the new location**

For more information and to sign up, please visit:

[LEADERSHIP AND ADVOCACY CONFERENCE](#)

Click here to download a [LAD Fact Sheet](#).

**FEBRUARY 28, 2013 IS THE LAST DAY TO REGISTER!!!**

[LEADERSHIP AND ADVOCACY CONFERENCE](#)

Click here to download a [LAD Fact Sheet](#).

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