

## President's Column

By Phillip T. Griffin, Ph.D. ABPP



Yes, I am president of the Louisiana Psychological Association (LPA), again. I was president in 1993. Bill Clinton was in the White House. Edwin Edwards was the governor of Louisiana. Shaquille O'Neal had just won the NBA rookie of the year award. The Saints were 8-8 with Wade Wilson quarterbacking. We were listening to a lot of Whitney Houston, Duran Duran, and Sting. Eric Clapton won a few Grammy awards. *Unforgiven*, a Clint Eastwood movie was the Academy Award winner that year. We were also watching *Basic Instinct*, *A Few Good Men*, and *Last of the Mohicans*.

You are probably not aware that at that time LPA had some problems reminiscent of things going on today. We had a breakout group who were

not satisfied with the pace of LPA and the Executive Council (EC). They raised money and sponsored legislation on their own. This group saw through legislation enabling psychologists to conduct commitments (PECs) among other gains. At the same time LPA saw through a bill that enabled psychologists to order 'restraint and seclusion' on inpatients thought to be at risk. We were at that time battling other disciplines that seemed to want to do exactly what we do. It was around that time '93 or '94 that we authored the actual paragraph that identified the explicit kinds of psychological tests that LPCs could legally use. It remains in their statutes.

When I first became involved with LPA, the EC met monthly and after a few months it seemed like weekly. We had six elected officers and as many or more appointed, voting, committee chairs. All of that was changed in our by-laws revision and now we have ten elected, voting officers and directors.

My first EC meeting as president this time around was July 9<sup>th</sup> and I had some quite grandiose plans for that meeting. If you have worked in a

Medical Center, you are aware that the greatest turnover in all of medicine takes place on July 1 when new residents, interns, and medical students arrive. I have heard it said many times and it is true, "Do not take ill in July". Those demands and the fact that the EC had business to take care of, and then more business, brought me back to reality. We had less of an orientation and bonding experience than a typical work session. I wanted the new EC focused on the future and what we have ahead of us and less on what we have behind us. Bryan Gros' column makes mention of my plans for the future and I will not linger on that here.

As president, attempting to make decisions, I immediately felt some of the enormous differences between 1993 and 2011. My screw-ups occurred before, during, and after the EC meeting of July 9. I contacted my directors about Committee Chair positions during the previous week. Joseph Trantomana, Ph.D., agreed to be Chair of Public Affairs and Chair of the Public Education Campaign (PEC). Problem was that we already had a very dedicated young lady who thought she was the PEC person. Joseph

### Inside this issue:

What Really Happened at the EC Meeting? Pg 2

Public Affairs Chair... Pg 7

2010-2011 Legislative Period In Review... Pg 8

New Orleans Regional Group Forms Pg 9

New LSBEP member appointed Pg 10

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*"We had less of an orientation and bonding experience than a typical work session. I wanted the new EC focused on the future and what we have ahead of us and less on what we have behind us."*



*Membership Chair Brandon Romano, Psy.D., Federal Advocacy Coordinator Darla Burnett, Ph.D., M.P., and Director Gail Gillespie, Ph.D.*

## President's Column (continued fm pg 1)

straightened that out and she is back aboard as PEC Chair serving in Joseph's Public Affairs Committee. I was asked to approve a small amount of dues so that we could belong to a group trying to promote the interests of 'small' states. I did so without consulting my Executive Director or Treasurer... WRONG. I was advised that we needed a representative for the APA Committee on Women in Psychology. I asked, by e-mail, for volunteers or suggestions and got an immediate response suggesting someone ideal for the position. I jumped on it only to find out the following day that one of my existing officers had been

filling that position. Fortunately that officer has many other things on her plate so the new appointee will be approved. Also, I am to write a letter to the President of LAMP attempting to open up better communication and a letter to the Governor encouraging him to appoint the winner of the LSBEP election (Michael Chafetz, PhD) to that vacant position. All of this happened between the 9<sup>th</sup> and now, the 13<sup>th</sup>, as I write this column.

This has all reinforced my awareness that things can happen lightning fast even when they don't have to. We have gotten accustomed to immediate information and immedi-

ate answers but my recent experiences cautions me to slow down a bit. It also convinces me that when things go at a snail's pace in today's technology, it's because somebody wants it that way.

Thank you Darla for bringing me back into the fold. Thank you Kelly for being the essence of strength and calm during trying times. Thank you Jessica for helping to craft a tenth round TKO when our backs were against the wall. Thank you EC for giving so much of your time and thank you LPA members for keeping the faith.



## What Really Happened at the EC meeting

By President-elect Bryan Gros, Ph.D.

The Executive Council has begun a new year with several new officers. As it has in the past, the first meeting of the year included an orientation for new officers followed by the formal EC meeting. So this column will be a bit longer than usual. Bear with me please.

Our new President, Dr. Phil Griffin called the orientation meeting to order at 9:00 A.M. and introduced the new EC members. These included Directors, Drs Wes Brockhoeft, John

Fanning, Joseph Tramountana, and Secretary, Alicia Pellegrin. Our other EC members are, Dr. Phil Griffin, President, Dr. Bryan Gros, President-elect, Dr. Thomas Fain, Treasurer, Dr. Darlyne Nemeth, APA Council Representative, Dr. Kim VanGeffen, Director, and Dr. Robert (Bob) Storer, Director. Ms. Gail Lowe continues to serve as our Executive Director, in a wonderful capacity I might add.

Dr. Griffin explained that the purpose of the orientation was not only

to outline the history of LPA, procedures, requirements, and guidelines for EC meetings, but also for members to get to know each other more personally. We enjoyed snacks brought by Drs Van Geffen and Fanning from the previous evening's New Orleans Regional Meeting. In the "get to know" session members revealed the following personal tidbits.

Dr. Griffin loves to shoot pistols (So watch out!). Dr. Fain attended graduate school with



## What Really Happened... (continued from pg 2)

“Dr. Phil” of The Dr. Phil Show fame. Dr. Nemeth has a “new and first” grandson, Colin. She helped set up the first neuropsychological laboratory in Louisiana. Dr. Fanning participates in running and swimming competitions. Dr. Tramountana has published two books on hypnosis. He spends a lot of time on “the coast”. Dr. Storer used to race bicycles and now enjoys flying radio controlled helicopters. Dr. VanGeffen enjoys needlework. Prior to Hurricane Katrina, she had a cross-stitched hurricane tracking chart. Although it was destroyed in Katrina, she has now completed a new one “which will definitely accompany me on any future evacuations!” Dr. Brockhoeft enjoys surfing in other countries and has a ranch. Dr. Pellegrin previously sold radio advertising. She is one of the few who actually enjoys doing child custody evaluations. She writes poetry and short stories for stress relief. Gail Lowe runs her “association and meeting management company” and has worked in this area for 25 years. She has been married “forever”. She has special interests in genealogy and painting. Me?—I have attended 17 of the past 18 Kentucky Derby races (and have yet to pick a winner).

Dr. Storer gave a pres-

entation on Robert’s Rules of Order, which, according to our by-laws, are followed during EC meetings. He also passed out a helpful primer on Robert’s Rules. The EC agreed that while such rules are necessary to formally conduct business, protect the rights of members, and ensure a fair deliberative process, we don’t want to get bogged down by too much formality.

Dr. Griffin discussed potential issues that may arise during the upcoming year. These included 1) Physician and Psychologists Emergency Certificates, specifically as it relates to children. As it stands now, the Louisiana Children’s Code states that only physicians are allowed to complete PEC’s on children. Most believe this was an oversight. 2) Bulletin 1508- Pupil Appraisal, 3) Coroner’s Officers and Appointments, specifically exploring the feasibility of the appointment of psychologists, 4) State Licensure Issues-- the ability to become licensed after completion of internship. There seems to be some national discussion about this. 5) LPC Initiatives.

Discussion of the latter centered around House Resolution 169 from the Regular Session of 2011, which resolved that the “House of Representatives of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby

*express support for health policies which acknowledge the right of persons suffering from serious mental illness who retain mental competency to determine what treatment of consultation may be necessary to meet their health needs, and which acknowledge the requirements that persons must provide informed consent for such treatment or consultation”.*

After a brief break, the EC meeting was called to order. Minutes from the previous meeting were read and unanimously approved without amendment.

Gail Lowe passed out a packet of information for EC members. This included an *Anti-Trust Avoidance Statement, Editorial Policies and Public Disclosure Guidelines of LPA, Electronic Voting Procedures. 990 Compliance Policies (Conflict of Interest Policy, Whistleblower Policy, Document Retention and Destruction Policy, Policy on the Process for Determining Compensation, Joint Venture Policy), Treasurer’s Report, Minutes from previous meeting, Agenda, Association Facts, Responsibilities of the Executive Council, Committee Purposes and Standing Committees, Standing Rules, LPA By-laws, and House Resolution NO. 169 by Representative Barrow (Regular Session, 2011)*



*“Dr. Griffin discussed potential issues that may arise during the upcoming year... Physician and Psychologists Emergency Certificates... Bulletin 12508... Coronerr’s Officers and appointments... State licensure issues...”*

## What Really Happened... (continued fm pg 3)



*Dr. Jessica Brown briefly attended the EC meeting to speak in her role as Chair of Legislative Affairs.*

The *Conflict of Interest Policy* was discussed and signed by members. There was some discussion as to the definition of conflict of interest as it applies to this policy. Some members interpreted this as not only a financial conflict of interest, but also any potential political conflicts of interests or conflicts on others issues or stances. This is good to keep in mind. LPA defined conflict of interest as "when a person in a position of authority over the Organization may benefit financially from a decision he or she could make in that capacity, including indirect benefits such as to family members or businesses with which the person is closely associated". This policy focused upon material financial interest of, or benefit to, such person. According to this definition there were no conflicts of financial interests.

It is important to note the defined responsibilities of the Executive Council. These include 1) Manage the organizations resources, 2) Determine, monitor, and strengthen programs and services for members, 3) Promote LPA's image, 4) Ensure legal and ethical integrity in the organization, 5) Help recruit new leaders, 6) Assess and measure organization performance..

Dr. Jessica Brown briefly attended the EC

meeting to speak in her role as Chair of Legislative Affairs. She reviewed House Resolution 169 noted above, and stated that this could indicate that LPC's may want to include psychological testing in their practice act as well as explore the consultation requirements of SB 268. Dr. Brown and the EC also discussed the need to monitor the sunset session and explore proactive avenues with LSBEP. Other potential issues discussed were the practice of licensed addiction counselors and applied behavior analysts as it might relate to practice acts.

Dr. Brown recommended a Political Action Committee (PAC) and Dr. Griffin indicated that this is of high priority for LPA. EC members overwhelmingly agreed. Dr. Griffin asked for volunteers to be involved in the PAC. Dr. Griffin recommended a PAC work group to make recommendations to the EC regarding potential legislative and lobbying issues. After several volunteered, the group was formed and included; Drs. Brockhoeft, Brown, Griffin, Nemeth, Pellegrin, and VanGeffen. Dr. Griffin asked Dr. Brown to find out from our lobbyist, Kevin Hayes, how much it would cost us to have his firm oversee our PAC.

Dr. Brown suggested that LPA decide whether

they want to work with LAMP and Coursen and Nickel in proactive legislation. Dr. Griffin and others stated that we hope to be able to work with LAMP and Coursen and Nickel when there are mutual interests, but with oversight and not as LPA's lobbyist.

Dr. Griffin discussed the "Presidents report" during a working lunch. He efficiently gave reports from standing committees. Federal Advocacy Report (Dr. Burnett) - Dr. Burnett continues to forward action alerts from APAPO Government Relations to members. Membership Report (Dr. Romano) Via Dr. Griffin's report, Dr. Romano recommended the following applicants for membership, both of whom were approved unanimously - Mallory Jordan Bonnette, B.S. (Affiliate) and Christine T. Murphy, M.S. (Associate). Welcome aboard! Currently LPA has 221 members with 143 of those being Full Members (16 first year and 9 second year). We have 22 Life Members, 1 Life Member at 50%, and 4 Honorary Members. Our 23 Century Members contributed \$3,325.00 in additional funds during the past year. LPA graciously thanks those of you who did so. We also thank all members for their continued participation. Without you, we would cease to exist.

Dr. Levy forwarded the





## What Really Happened . . . (continued from pg 4)

Election Committee report. Drs Desselle and Fanning had graciously agreed to run for the open Director's term (one year). Dr. Fanning was voted as Director. LPA thanks both candidates. I urge interested members to run for elections. I can personally say being on the EC has been extremely rewarding, both professionally and personally.

Dr. Griffin and EC members reviewed the report from the Convention Committee. What a successful and fun convention we had. One hundred and twenty-two psychologists and others from the community attended. Thirty-five hours of CE were offered. Five exhibitors displayed their products or services and there were also several very generous sponsorships in support of LPA. Seventeen posters were presented by faculty and students from around the state. Thank you to Phil and the convention committee members. As this year's convention committee chair, I obviously have a tough act to follow.

Dr. Fain presented the Treasurer's Report. While we are not swimming in money, we are doing okay. Members can request a copy through Gail Lowe.

The Executive Council

approved the following positions of appointment. Dr. Broeckhoeft will join Membership Chair, Brandon Romano on his committee and also be on the Finance Committee. Dr. Fanning will be the Chairperson of the Continuing Education Committee. Dr. Gros, as President-elect, will chair the convention committee. Dr. Storer will remain as Publications chair. As this will be his last year as Director, Dr. Storer is looking for someone interested in taking over as the newsletter editor. Please consider this opportunity. Dr. Burnett will continue as Federal Advocacy Coordinator. Dr. Griffin initially volunteered to chair the Elections Committee, but after concerns were voiced that the President has a number of critical tasks already during the election period, Dr. Tramontana volunteered to chair this committee. He was also tagged for Public Affairs.

There was a good deal of discussion regarding the Legislative Affairs committee. Several members endorsed the belief that the chair should be a voting EC member, as decisions must often be made "on the fly" and at a moments notice. Dr. Alicia Pellegrin volunteered for this position and was nominated by Dr. Broeckhoeft. Her nomination was approved unanimously. With her

wealth of experience as the past Legislative committee chair, it was recommended that Dr. Jessica Brown be asked to assist as an advisor to Dr. Pellegrin. Dr. Van Geffen was nominated and approved as Chair of the Professional Affairs Committee.

The EC discussed ways to identify election ballots. Several options were discussed including ballots with numbers or some other form of pre-printed identification or keeping ballots as they are. The EC agreed to keep it as is. We may, however, clarify the directions for identification during the next round of elections.

The EC attended to "Unfinished Business". The Louisiana Healthcare Commission frequently requests that LPA appoint or recommend someone to serve on this commission, which involves a few meetings throughout the year. Dr. Warren Lowe previously served in this position and we are thankful for his service. Dr. Fain eagerly volunteered and there was no opposition. In fact, some members seemed relieved that another had volunteered.

The EC had previously discussed ways to make the LPA newsletter more accessible. Dr. Storer recommended making the current issue available on the public section of LPA's website (which would



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## What Really Happened... (continued fm pg 5)



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make the current issue available to anyone) and archiving previous versions in the “For Members” section. He suggested that this would both make the newsletter more easily accessible for members, and enhance LPA’s image with the public and with potential members. This motion was approved by the EC.

At the last EC meeting, a motion was made for revisions to the Electronic Voting Policy of LPA. Due to other pressing concerns, the motion was tabled to this meeting. In the interim, EC members ended up continuing to discuss the need for this policy to be revised (via the EC listserv). The current procedures were simply too cumbersome and, at times, led to delays on issues that would normally be handled swiftly without such restrictions. Dr. Storer presented new policies which we hope will be more seamless and foster more efficient business between face to face EC meetings. This revision was approved by the EC.

As the clock turned after 1:00 PM, the EC tended to “New Business” – the membership’s motion to explore bringing the regulation of psychology by MPs back under LSBEP. The EC discussed the importance of fostering a working relationship with LAMP and

“putting 251 behind us.” We agreed that forming healthy communication with LAMP leaders is critical in addressing the resolution that was overwhelmingly passed at the Town Hall Meeting.

We reminded ourselves that the membership mandated that LPA tend to this resolution. Gail Lowe read the resolution “that LPA begin a dialogue with the Louisiana Academy of Medical Psychology, the Louisiana Medical Society, and the Louisiana State Board of Examiners of Psychologists to begin discussions of mutual interest and to discuss the continued concerns regarding the independent regulation of psychology.” For those in attendance at the Town Hall Meeting, we know this also means exploring the feasibility of having the practice of psychology (less prescription privileges, medical orders, etc.) be solely regulated by LSBEP. We agreed that a reasonable starting point would be for the president of LPA to contact the current president of LAMP, Dr. John Bolter to begin a dialogue of mutual interests, barriers, and so forth. Dr. Griffin will report back to LPA on this issue. I can assure you all that as an EC member, I will not lose sight of this resolution. I genuinely believe all EC members are on board.

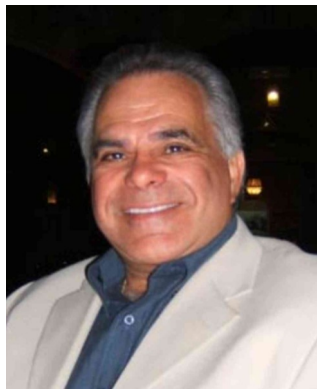
As the meeting neared

a close, we discussed the legislative approach used in this past session. The EC discussed a more pro-active and offensive approach in our legislative and lobbying efforts. This would certainly require more additional funds, which brought the EC back full circle to the need for a PAC.

And so it goes--the first EC meeting under the guidance and direction of Dr. Phil Griffin. I must say that I am most pleased. Dr. Griffin ran the meeting efficiently and we accomplished everything on the agenda and then some. In my second year on the EC, I remain as excited and motivated as ever. If I can leave you with one message, it would be “Get (or stay) involved with LPA. It can be quite rewarding”.



## Director & Public Affairs Committee Chair; Joseph Tramontana, Ph.D.



My first board meeting since elected to the LPA Executive Council (EC) was both an interesting experience and, I believe, a very productive meeting. While I expected to attend quarterly meetings of about 3 hours duration, we voted to meet every two months instead. I believe this to be a positive change since so much can happen in 3 months.

Further, I was appointed by our President, Dr. Phil Griffin (after having accepted to do so) to be Chairperson of the Public Affairs Committee. Then I was told that as part of this committee, I would also be chair of the Public Education Campaign, and later it was recommended that the Elections Committee be under Public Affairs, so I agreed to be chair of this committee as well. I left the meeting feeling like a “pack mule” (Executive Direc-

tor Gail Lowe’s words, not mine).

Later, I learned of Dr. Sherry Desselle’s interest in chairing the Public Education Campaign (PEC), as well as how much time and energy she had already invested. She has been working on development of an LPA Facebook page as well as a twitter account. So in consultation with Executive Director Lowe and President Griffin, it was determined that the Public Education Campaign was really under the general auspices of the Public Affairs Committee. So Dr. Desselle will chair the PEC but answer to me, as Public Affairs chair, and as a voting member of the EC, I will report her activities and reports to the EC.

I have already become a member of PEC Connect, through which APA disseminates Public Education information. My understanding is that all psychologists can join that web site. I know that Drs. Desselle, Burnett, Levy, Speier, and Van Hook are already members, and there may be others in the state of whom I am not aware.

In addition, APA has requested all State, Territorial, and Provincial Associations (STPA) to ap-

point a representative to the Committee on Women in Psychology (CWT). Dr. Darlyne Nemeth, our state representative to the APA Council of Representatives (COR) did it in the past, but is quite overloaded with her other responsibilities. I recommended Dr. Karen Slaton from Covington, and she indicated she would like to serve in this capacity. EC members agreed that Dr. Slaton would be a good person to do this. President Griffin then appointed her.

In closing, I would like to request that if any other LPA members are interested in serving on the Public Affairs Committee or PE Campaign or elections committee, I would appreciate all the help I can get. If interested, please e-mail me at [jtramont@cox.net](mailto:jtramont@cox.net).



## The 2010-2011 Legislative Period In Review

By Jessica Brown, Ph.D.



*“Originally, SB226 proposed to merge LSBEP and the LPC Board but was completely replaced by Senator Mount with a second version of the bill that allowed counselors full diagnostic and treatment scope.”*

As I rotate off and close out my time on the Executive Council, I forward to members a quick summary of the past legislative session and some general suggestions for thought. The 2011 session proved to be yet another year of defensive legislation relative to counselors continued attempts to expand practice, i.e. SB226 and later SB268.

Originally, SB226 proposed to merge LSBEP and the LPC Board but was completely replaced by Senator Mount with a second version of the bill that allowed counselors full diagnostic and treatment scope. In its final form, now known as SB268, this second version was amended and included language that restricts counselors' capacity to diagnose and treat persons with serious mental illness that is defined as Schizophrenia, Bipolar Disorder, Panic Disorder, OCD, Major Depressive Disorder, Anorexia/Bulimia, Intermittent Explosive Disorder, Autism, Psychosis NOS, Rett's Disorder, Tourette's Disorder, and Dementia. In these cases, counselors are to maintain a consultative and collaborative relationship with a provider who is authorized to prescribe medications in the management of psychiatric illness. This is a compelling compromise under the circumstances, as it maintains some protection to the public, but it also means that psychology is no be ascribed as the sole

entity locked horns with the counselors on this type of issue.

Although driven by the urgency of the legislative session, the events of the 2011 session provided an opportunity to have LPA and LAMP work together on this legislative issue. Although there will always be differences of opinion on strategy and the "best fix" for a specific issue, there is little doubt that psychology benefited and could continue to benefit from a united front and collaborative relations between LPA and LAMP. LAMP maintains a strong political infrastructure and provided heavy political lifting in this session, but LAMP's leadership welcomed the sharing of resources and provided candid discussions regarding political strategies/approaches with regard to this issue. There is the beginning of a foundation for future collaboration with LAMP that could be pursued in the coming year within the new EC.

There are issues on our horizon that are compelling and add to this need for continued development of LPA political infrastructure as well as continued need for collaboration regarding legislative issues. On the last day of 2011 session, a House Resolution (HR 169) was authored on

behalf of the counseling association that alluded to counselors' intent relative to psychological testing. Although not entirely particularly logical, the resolution contains the following language (see below), which challenges counselors' prohibition against administering psychological tests. This is likely a foreshadowing of a more direct challenge in the coming session, wherein counselors may attempt to expand scope once again - this time into testing. As a further complication, psychology will also need to simultaneously support LSBEP as it undergoes sunset review in the 2012 session.

*WHEREAS, in the practices of psychology and licensed professional counseling, "assessment" means selecting, administering, scoring, and interpreting instruments designed to gauge an individual's aptitudes, attitudes, abilities, achievements, interests, personality characteristics, and disabilities; and mental, emotional, behavioral, and addiction disorders; and*

*WHEREAS, in the practice of licensed professional counseling assessment involves the use of methods and techniques for understanding human behavior and mental disorders that may include evaluation*







## The... Legislative Period In Review... (continued fm pg 8)

*and testing, but does not include the use of standardized projective techniques or permit the diagnosis of a physical condition or disorder.”*

In all likelihood, psychology may again be faced with some challenging times again this coming year. The Executive Council will weigh in on critical decisions relative to defin-

ing how psychology will meet and overcome some of these challenges.

## New Orleans Regional Group Forms!

Psychologists in the Greater New Orleans area have come together to form a regional association. The first meeting of this group took place on Friday evening, July 8, 2011 at the home of Kim VanGeffen. Twelve psychologists attended the first meeting. While New Orleans had a previous association of psychologists, this organization dissolved a number of years ago. Carolyn Weyand, a psychologist and psychoanalyst in New Orleans, served as the facilitator for the first

gathering. During a dinner meeting, the group discussed goals for the organization which hopes to include both LPA members and non LPA members in its membership. Participation in the organization may also be extended to psychology graduate students and interns. It is hoped that the organization will attract academic psychologists as well as those in practice. The organization will serve as an opportunity for area psychologists to socialize and network. It is anticipated

that the meetings will also allow for professional development and dissemination of information relevant to the science and practice of psychology. The next meeting of the Greater New Orleans area of psychologists will likely be scheduled for late August or early September. Those in attendance were asked to invite other area psychologists who may not have been aware of or able to attend the July meeting.

*“The next meeting of the Greater New Orleans area of psychologists will likely be scheduled for late August or early September.”*



Pictured from left to right: Drs. Micheal Chafetz, Lucinda DeGrange, Elaine Salzer, and Conni Patterson.



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## Louisiana Psychological Association

Jul 07, 2011

Governor Bobby Jindal Announces the Appointment of Dr. Marc Zimmermann to the Louisiana State Board of Examiners of Psychologists  
BATON ROUGE – Today, Governor Bobby Jindal announced the appointment of Dr. Marc Zimmermann to the Louisiana State Board of Examiners of Psychologists.

The Louisiana State Board of Examiners of Psychologists serves to regulate the issuance of licenses and conduct hearings on complaints concerning discipline within the field.

According to statute, the board is comprised of five gubernatorial appointments, subject to senate confirmation. Members are selected from nominations submitted by the Louisiana Psychological Association .

**“The mission of LPA is to support and advance psychology as a science, as a profession, and as a means of promoting health, education, and human welfare.”**

*Members, the election to fill LSBEP vacancies is conducted by LPA as stipulated by statute. The governor is provided the names of the two top candidates and the vote tally. We at LPA have no way of knowing what goes into the governor's selection but this marks the second time in three years that Governor Jindal has ignored the wishes of the licensed psychologists voting in the LSBEP election by failing to appoint the winner. I have no doubt that Mark Zimmerman PhD, M.P. is very capable and will do a fine job. Michael Chafetz Ph.D. had 70% of the votes cast in the election but was not appointed. Curious.*

*LPA President, Phillip Griffin, Ph.D.,*

## Injury to Brain More Than Doubles Risk of Later Dementia

July 18, 2011, *USA TODAY*

A brain injury more than doubles the risk of dementia, according to new research.

A large study of older war veterans suggests those who experienced traumatic brain injury (TBI) during their lives had more than two times the risk of developing dementia, according to scientists from the University of California-San Francisco. The researchers presented their findings today at the Alzheimer's Association's annual International Conference in Paris.

"We're now getting a much better understanding that head injury is an important risk factor for developing dementia down the road," says lead researcher Kristine Yaffe, director of the Memory Disorders Program at

the San Francisco VA Medical Center.

Yaffe and colleagues looked at medical records of nearly 300,000 veterans, all 55 or older. None had dementia at the study's start. About 2% had had a TBI. All had at least one inpatient or outpatient visit between 1997 and 2000 and a follow-up sometime between 2001 and 2007.

A diagnosis of a concussion, post-concussion syndrome, a skull fracture or some non-specific head injuries are considered TBIs, she says.

The risk of dementia was 15% in those with a TBI diagnosis, compared with almost 7% in those who had never had a TBI, Yaffe says. Other studies have shown that TBI can increase the risk of dementia: It might

hit earlier, and symptoms could worsen, says Douglas Smith, professor of neurosurgery and director of the Center for Brain Injury and Repair at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia.

About 1.7 million people experience a TBI each year, mostly because of falls and car accidents. TBI also is referred to as the "signature wound" of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, where TBI accounts for 22% of casualties overall and 59% of blast-related injuries, Yaffe says. Smith says that with so many soldiers returning from war affected by blasts, the relationship between TBI and dementia needs to be sorted out.

It's unknown at this point how many soldiers have a history of brain injury, he



says. "I'm even worried for people psychologically. People worry a lot about, 'Am I going to get Alzheimer's disease?'" Yaffe says more research is needed to explore whether early rehabilitation can help reduce the risk for dementia. "If you know you've had a head injury and you are approaching older age, one has to be carefully monitored and screened for cognitive dementia."