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CANDIDATE FOR AREA 1 TRUSTEE

The American Psychiatric Association must remain a strong advocate for the treatment of our patients. To achieve this goal, we must strengthen our alliances with medical societies, with patient advocacy groups, and with those who make public policy. From the halls of Congress and our state legislatures to our neighborhoods, there is greater awareness of the vulnerabilities of ordinary citizens and particularly our children to traumatic events and the value of mental health care. This has never been clearer than with the tragedy of 9/11. We and the American people have seen the vital importance of mental health professionals in the recovery process of the nation.

With significant challenges ahead of us---- parity and access to care, new HIPPA regulations on privacy, scope of practice, fair and equal pay for psychiatry with the rest of medicine, and litigious attacks on psychiatry, our national APA must redefine its priorities and refocus resources on strengthening the local organizations. The District Branches of Area 1 are distinguished by proactive parity initiatives and recognize that future actions needed to address these challenges to the delivery of quality medical care will focus in the state legislatures. Our patients are counting on us and our members expect the leadership of the APA to be prepared and responsive on their behalf. Many states anticipate that they will need APA support to mount the necessary legislative and/or legal fight ahead.

Over 10 years ago, the Assembly called for a litigation fund to challenge the systematic inequities and abuses of managed mental health. Greater coverage of these concerns in the media, awareness by the general public, and receptivity by the courts offers optimism that change is coming. As a member of the APA's Advocacy and Litigation Committee, I support initiatives to provide financial support to the District Branches and State Associations.

I began my work in the Massachusetts District Branch as the chair of the Legislative Committee which helped to enact a law defining the duty to protect. For over twenty-five years, I have been actively involved in my community and at the Area 1 and national level of the APA focused on advocacy for patients and the impact of impact of the regulatory, legislative, and the political process on the practice of medicine. As Speaker of the Assembly I demonstrated my willingness to listen, to foster consensus building, and to focus on achievable goals. I have also maintained a practice of child, adolescent, and adult psychiatry and am very much aware of the pressures faced by private practitioners.

Our rich diversity of members includes young members-in-training and those early in their careers with their tremendous energies, members of various ethnic and underrepresented groups, subspecialty interests, and senior psychiatrists, all of whom can help fight for quality, cost-effective psychiatric care for patients. All are encouraged to contribute their voices and creative energy to the challenges facing APA and, in turn, to help the APA become more responsive to their specific member needs.

It is an honor to be nominated to run for the office of Area 1 Trustee. I appreciate this opportunity to represent you on the Board of Trustees and to continue to advocate for the mental health needs of our many patient groups.