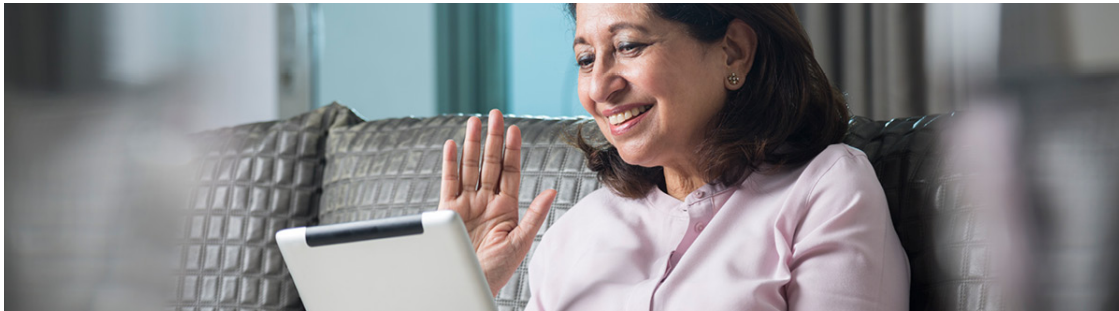


## APA ADVOCACY

# Washington Update

*APA Advocacy Washington Update is a weekly newsletter that highlights how APA is working to advance the discipline and practice of psychology on Capitol Hill and beyond. Learn more about APA's [advocacy priorities](#) for 2020.*

## In Response to Coronavirus, Reducing Barriers to Telehealth Services



As states declare health emergencies in response to COVID-19, hospitals and health-care providers are seeing renewed value in expanding the use of telehealth services. In November, APA endorsed the CONNECT for Health Act of 2019 (S. 2741), [legislation](#) that includes a waiver of telehealth restrictions during national emergencies, among other provisions. The bill was introduced by bipartisan members of the Senate Telehealth Working Group, which includes Sens. Brian Schatz (D-Hawaii), Roger Wicker (R-Miss.), Ben Cardin (D-Md.), John Thune (R-S.D.), Mark Warner (D-Va.) and Cindy Hyde-Smith (R-Miss.). Companion legislation was introduced in the House by Reps. Mike Thompson (D-Calif.), Peter Welch (D-Vt.), David Schweikert (R-Ariz.) and Bill Johnson (R-Ohio). The legislation seeks to advance the use of telehealth in Medicare, while reducing costs and increasing access. As APA requested, the bill also removes the geographic restrictions for mental health services and recognizes the patient's home as an eligible originating site for receiving telehealth services.

*For more information, contact Laurel Stine, JD, at [lstine@apa.org](mailto:lstine@apa.org) or Deborah Baker, JD, at [dbaker@apa.org](mailto:dbaker@apa.org).*

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### Calling for Oversight Hearings to Protect Immigrant Children

APA spearheaded a letter with 50 other national organization members of the Mental Health Liaison Group, calling for oversight hearings to evaluate the impact of the sharing of confidential therapy records of detained children. In the [letter](#) to the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, the House Committee on Oversight and

Reform, and the House Committee on Homeland Security, APA and the other organizations requested that the committees focus on the harm to children and whether information obtained during therapy was used against the minors. The letter was written in response to a [report](#) in the Washington Post that the federal Office of Refugee Resettlement has been sharing confidential psychotherapy notes with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement to deny asylum to some immigrant youths.

*For more information, contact Serena Dávila, JD, at [sdavila@apa.org](mailto:sdavila@apa.org) or Laurel Stine, JD, at [lstine@apa.org](mailto:lstine@apa.org).*

## **Supporting the Essential Role of Research in Improving Teaching and Learning**

As part of the Friends of the Institute of Education Sciences (IES), APA signed on to a [letter](#) supporting the Department of Education's primary research arm. The letter—sent to leaders of the House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittees on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education—encourages the subcommittees to provide \$670 million for IES in Fiscal Year 2021. That funding level would restore the loss in the agency's purchasing power over the past decade and allow IES to support additional research grants to develop and disseminate evidence-based practice for teachers. The letter emphasizes IES's critical role in developing the "research base for and examining the effectiveness of education programs and curricula."

*For more information, contact Angela L. Sharpe, MG, at [asharpe@apa.org](mailto:asharpe@apa.org).*

## **Advocating for APA's Fiscal Year 2021 Appropriations Priorities**

Last month, APA partnered with several coalitions to advocate for robust federal funding for programs of importance to the science, practice and discipline of psychology. These coalitions included:

- Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs
- Childcare & Early Learning Coalition
- Coalition for National Science Funding
- CDC Coalition
- Coalition for National Security Research
- Friends of the National Center for Health Statistics
- Friends of the Health Resources and Services Administration
- Friends of the Institute of Education Sciences
- Friends of VA Medical Care and Research
- Health Professions and Nursing Education Coalition
- Mental Health Liaison Group
- National Alliance of Specialized Instructional Support Personnel
- Student Aid Alliance

APA's coalition partnerships to support Fiscal Year 2021 appropriations coincided with several meetings with members of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education.

*For more information, contact Alix Ginsberg, MPH, at [aginsberg@apa.org](mailto:aginsberg@apa.org).*

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