

**MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT
JENNIFER I. DOWNEY, M.D.
WINTER-SPRING 2018**

Dear Academy Members,

Since becoming President of the Academy in May of 2016, I've made an effort to use these *Forum* and *Newsletter* messages to share important developments in our organization. Some of these things were "in the works" the last time I wrote to you. I'm happy to say that a number of initiatives have been accomplished. Here's what's happened!



First of all, you will remember that we resolved as an organization to change our name. To change the name of a non-profit organization in the state of New York is a surprisingly complicated task. I'm happy to say the legalities of this have been completed. We are now officially The American Academy of Psychodynamic Psychiatry and Psychoanalysis! This required that we adopt a new logo. For several months an artist was working with us and presenting prototypes. Executive Council discussed this in December and recently met to make a decision. By formal vote, we chose a more modern logo, which still incorporates a simplified version of the seal previously represented on our official documents. The logo will be seen soon on our website, our letterhead, and programs. Keep an eye out for it.

Secondly, we have been working on an affiliation with the American College of Psychoanalysts, an honorary group of senior psychoanalysts. Aply led by a negotiating team of Doug Ingram, Richard Friedman, and David Lopez, the Academy negotiated an agreement with the College to join us. It was signed by the Presidents, myself and Mark Unterberg, in December 2017. The name of our larger organization will remain the same—the American Academy of Psychodynamic Psychiatry and Psychoanalysis. All College members have been invited to join the Academy. The College will bring its funds to the Academy. There will be a Committee for the Advancement of Psychoanalysis initially headed by Dr. Unterberg. The Committee will contribute special proposals to the

Program Committee for Academy meetings and may engage in other projects. All of us will be invited to participate. I'm excited that the College brings a

group of scholarly clinicians devoted to the practice of psychoanalysis and its theories. They will enrich the Academy.

Thirdly, our involvement in psychiatric residency education is growing. The original Teichner program, started eleven years ago when Sherry Katz-Bearnot was President (funded by a grateful patient of Victor Teichner, an Academy member who was voted in as President but was never able to take office because of illness), provided funds to a deserving US psychiatric residency training program to support a Teichner Scholar's visit of several days to teach trainees and faculty about psychodynamic approaches to psychiatry. The Program chooses a scholar from a roster of Academy member volunteers. This year we had eight applicants for the award and we were able to offer two prizes.

In the course of managing this competition, we became aware that psychiatric training programs in the US are struggling to provide training leading to competency in psychodynamic psychiatry. We know that programs need more than the single scholar's visit, no matter how inspiring. This year, one of our members, Allan Tasman, agreed to lead a project funded by the Academy to provide ongoing teaching via distance-learning technologies to residency training programs in need. Jeff Katzman, our Chair of the Committee on Education, who has already been testing the idea, will work with him. The Distance Learning Project will start out "small" and use as the first groups programs that received the Teichner in the past or applied for the prize. A number of Academy members already have experience with teaching psychodynamic concepts over the internet and others of us could acquire this expertise. If this idea interests you, I hope you will contact Allan Tasman for further information.

Finally, the Academy has had the opportunity this year to join in advocacy for important issues that affect our patients. The political climate in the US right now is hostile to people who need help, whether they are immigrants, people without insurance, people with mental illnesses, or sexual minorities. This year we formed an Advocacy Task Force to advise the President on the issues the Academy is called upon to support. Working quickly, because often there is little time before a decision is needed, members of the Task Force have advised me on several issues this year; and the Academy became a signatory in support of several initiatives coming from the APA. With the approval of the Executive Council, we also gave our support to the Coalition for Psychotherapy Parity, which prepared an outstanding report on discrimination by insurance companies against people who need mental health services. The Coalition is headed by Dr.

Susan Lazar, and our own Eric Plakun from the Academy is a founding member. You can find our name and the very compelling report on the group's website--psychotherapyparity.org.

This is my last Presidential message in the *Forum* and the *Newsletter* This is my last Presidential message in the Forum and the Newsletter before Gerry Perman takes office. I come to the end of my term with the belief that as Academy members there is much we can do for our discipline, our colleagues, and our patients. I hope you will be inspired to join with us in some of the initiatives we have begun and others yet to come.

Warmly,

(by hand—Jennifer)

Jennifer Downey, MD