



Celebrating 70 Years of Service: 1950 - 2020

August 3, 2020

Dear Dr. Fellow Maine Psychologist,

I have been actively involved in MePA since 2012 and been given the opportunity to learn from many leaders and professional mentors. Now in our 70th year of service, and practicing in the age of a global pandemic, we see opportunities and critical challenges ahead. The ability to grow and strengthen our membership is more important than ever.

MePA is promoting networking among psychologists through a variety of outreach efforts. The listserv provides an invaluable resource for connecting providers across a geographically expansive state. Another vital tool is the website (mepa.org), which continues to evolve as a membership portal with resources on telehealth, insurance and reimbursement, other practice updates, and a searchable provider directory for the greater public.

Most importantly, our individual committees and committee members (see page 3) dedicate hours of their time to advance psychology as a field and ensure that Mainers receive the mental health services they need. Committees provide opinions on laws that affect psychologists, offer ethical consults, address reimbursement and insurance issues, work to address peace and social justice issues, and strive to find opportunities for networking and collaboration.

The focus of my presidency is to continue to promote the great work of our committees while navigating the unique demands of a post-COVID-19 world. We are considering ways to increase involvement, modernize how we connect with membership and the greater community, and strengthen our leadership pipeline.

I hope you will consider joining MePA during this important anniversary year to strengthen psychology in our great state. Join on our website at <https://mepa.org/membership/> or contact Executive Director Amy Safford at asafford@mepa.org. In these changing times of economic uncertainty, workplace stress, and pressures to balance a home and work life, our profession has never been more important to overall health and wellbeing. Please contact me at tom@coopercounselingllc.com any time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Thomas Cooper", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Thomas Cooper, PsyD
President



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Year 2020 (January to June)

- Maintained consistent communications with the Governor's Office, successfully advocating for the waiver of regulations to telehealth during the state of emergency.
- Our collaboration with lobbyist Robert Howe enables us to advocate for important legislation, including Telehealth, PSYPACT interjurisdictional practice across state lines, Alzheimer's and dementia research, opioid crisis response, community and home-based service growth, behavioral health workforce shortage, expansion of broadband internet access across the state, and mental health disorder treatments.
- President Tom Cooper's Op Eds were Published in the Bangor Daily News: *Leaning toward Objective Calm Optimism in the Face of a Pandemic* and *Ending the Rhetoric of Violence in the Pandemic of Racism*.
- Senator Angus King's office reached out to MePA for a quote from President Thomas Cooper to include in the Press Release announcing introduction of the Mental and Behavioral Health Connectivity Act legislation.
- Past presidents Dr. Ron Breazeale and Dr. Jeff Matranga have compiled MePA's history. Our 70th Anniversary books will be available for purchase in September or sooner.
- Dr. Diane Tennes, chair of the Legislative Committee, and Dr. Diana Prescott, Federal Advocacy Coordinator and Recording Secretary for the APA, met with Senators King and Collins and Congressional Representatives Golden and Pingree to advocate for eliminating unnecessary physician oversight of psychologists' services in Medicare facilities and other legislation.
- MePA held its first Webinar on Telepsychology with four panelists: Dr. Julie Quimby, Dr. Diane Tennes, Dr. Kendra Bryant, and Dr. Marshall Robinson; moderated by President Tom Cooper.

Year 2019 Review

- Our membership grew by 11% in 2019, from 227 to 252.
- We hosted one of our largest annual conferences in November with 140 attendees, including six students from the University of Maine System.
- The Policy Council voted to invite students to join MePA at no charge to encourage young people to join and continue their membership after graduation.
- The new website continues to attract new visitors with a directory of member psychologists, and also offers online registrations for conferences and webinars, and a Bulletin Board.
- Advocacy efforts in the Maine legislature continued with Howe, Cahill & Company representing MePA on several successful bills in the 2019 session.
- MePA continues to work with the APA to advocate for better access to care nationally. Senator Susan Collins was an original co-sponsor of S.2772, the Medicare Mental Health Access Act to increase seniors' access to psychological treatment and ensure psychologists can provide mental healthcare in all Medicare treatment settings.
- Sheila Comerford, Executive Director for 26 years, retired after a long and successful tenure. Sheila has been instrumental in the leadership transition to Amy Safford.



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- The Policy Council hired a consultant to provide strategic planning focusing on Membership Growth, Advocacy, Continuing Education Programming, and Community Engagement.

New Committees and Chairs 2020

Community Engagement: Chair Carly Rodgers, PhD

Combine the efforts of the Peace and Social Justice, Public Education, and Psychologically Healthy Workplace Committees to engage the public and promote human welfare.

Continuing Education: Chair Susan Maataoui, PhD

Continue to oversee MePA's continuing education initiatives.

Ethics: Chair Farhana Shah, PhD

Continue to provide consultation and education on ethical issues related to the practice and conduct of psychologists.

Finance: Co-Chairs Howard Kunin, PsyD and Rosemary McCullough, PhD

Combine the efforts of the Reimbursement, Compensation, and Audit Committees to address member challenges with third party payers and review fiscal policies and staff compensation.

Legislative: Co-Chairs Diane Tennes, PhD and Doug Kimmel, PhD

Combine the efforts of the Legislative and Peace and Social Justice Committees to monitor legislative issues affecting psychologists and advocate for legislation that supports MePA's mission.

Membership: Co-Chairs Tom Collins, EdD and Elyse Corbett, PhD

Combine the efforts of the Early Career, Technology, and Membership Committees to promote engagement of all MePA members in the organization.

Personnel: Chair Open

Address any HR related issues, complaints, concerns, and compensation changes

Special Interest Groups:

To encourage collaboration among members with special interests (e.g., psychopharmacology and school psychology), MePA may consider supporting member-initiated and operated special interest groups.