



West Hudson Psychiatric Society  
of the American Psychiatric Association  
serving Rockland, Orange, Sullivan & Delaware Counties



P.O. Box 741  
Pomona, N.Y. 10970-0741  
Tel/Fax: (845) 638-6992  
www.rfmh.org/whps

---

# eSynapse: August 30, 2010

## Editor's Comments

James Flax, MD, MPH, DFAPA

This is our 8<sup>th</sup> issue of eSynapse, meant to be a brief, summer issue with only announcements. But, it's turned into a full publication thanks to Dr. Abdullah who has again written a wonderful historical description. Please read everything else to get to his essay then enjoy the enlightenment about a past medical giant – Maimonides. Last issue I pleaded with you all to contribute news from your local area. Alas, the only one who responded is the same Dr. Brand who has contributed in the past. I again issue the same plea:

***PLEASE SEND ME ANY NEWS, ADS, COMMENTS, ARTICLES. I WANT THIS PUBLICATION TO BE AN ACTIVE SOURCE OF INFORMATION FOR THE MEMBERS.***

My goal in publishing is to increase communication between and among all of our members. I can only do this with your participation. I want a psychiatrist from every organization, clinic and institution in the counties of Rockland, Orange, Sullivan and Delaware to send me an article, of any length, describing any events, news, changes, presentations or opinion. That means that YOU can contribute by designating someone at your place of employment, or volunteering yourself, to send me something about where you work, how you practice, opinions about anything of relevance to psychiatrists, etc.

There are a myriad of opportunities for you to become involved in your community through your district branch. The advantages are numerous in addition to the pleasure of giving back. There is the true pleasure of working with your colleagues in psychiatry and/or in other mental health fields. There is the opportunity to be creative in developing a program around your interests. There is the joy of learning something new. One of the best opportunities to do this is at the annual depression screening.

# **SAVE THE DATE FOR** **DEPRESSION SCREENING**

October 10th @ the Nyack Street Fair.

Anyone interested in volunteering please e-mail Dr. Mary Mavromatis at [markmavromatis131@hotmail.com](mailto:markmavromatis131@hotmail.com). This will be a fun opportunity to network with your colleagues, to reduce stigma and to interact with hundreds of those attending this busy event.

**If you are curious about what happens at the executive council meetings, PLEASE JOIN US.** Our next meeting is Friday, September 17<sup>th</sup>, 2010, 12 noon @ il Fresco Restaurant in Orangeburg. Contact Dr. Ferro if you are planning to come ([drferro@optonline.net](mailto:drferro@optonline.net)). We have a new twist on the agenda beginning with the September meeting. We are adding a brief Journal Club following the business meeting and I'll be the first to discuss an article.

## **West Hudson Psychiatric Society** **Next Executive Council Meeting** **Il Fresco Restaurant, Orangeburg, NY** **Date: 9/17/2010 12 Noon**

**Business Agenda followed by Journal Club hosted by Dr. Flax**

If you speak to your colleagues who are not members of the APA, remind them to become members. If members, tell them you've received your eSynapse and ask if they received theirs. If not, tell them to email me at [DrFlax@aol.com](mailto:DrFlax@aol.com) with their email address so I can add them to the list.

While some have indicated it is too costly to join the APA, I want to remind them of the many benefits of membership (<http://www.psych.org/Resources/Membership.aspx>). Membership in your district branch is one of the least costly in the nation and we hope to keep it that way. The benefits are numerous.

# **PRESIDENT'S COLUMN: TIGHT BELTS**

**Dominic Ferro, MD**

The big news of the summer for our DB is the passage of a motion not to increase our dues. Last summer, facing a budget shortfall and the expense of reincorporation, the Executive Counsel reluctantly resolved to increase our 2011 dues. In the meanwhile, Lois Kroplick, D.O., our outgoing treasurer pulled together the financial information for our most detailed budget in at least 10 years.

Using that information, we laid out a proposed budget that would allow us to continue to have our two dinner meetings and to remain a presence in the local yellow pages. We tightened our belts for our meeting, coming in under budget. In addition, our eSynapse, which costs close to nothing to publish, generated more advertising revenue than we anticipated.

We found ourselves this August with a treasury virtually equal to last August, so it was an easy decision to hold off on any dues increase for next year. Our DB has a long history of serving our members and our community with some of the lowest dues in North America, and happily, that will not change.

In addition, changes in APA have caused NYSPA to study possible changes for the district branches in New York. Most district branches are state organizations. New York is one of only three states with more than one DB. APA has cut New York's representation in the Assembly, so our district branch is currently sharing a representative with the Mid-Hudson DB. Given these changes and possible future changes, our Executive Counsel has decided to hold off on reincorporation, since it is not clear how our state organization will be reorganized during the next couple of years.

Whatever the organization, we are fortunate to have a dedicated group of psychiatrists serving on our Executive Counsel. Our next meeting will be on September 17<sup>th</sup> at noon. Please contact me ([drferro@optonline.net](mailto:drferro@optonline.net)) if you would like to attend and add your energy to the leadership of our DB.

# CORRESPONDENCE

*(editors note: I vowed when I started this publication to publish anything sent to me, so I am again publishing correspondence from Rick Brand, MD, this time as links to the letters in the Rockland Journal News. I happen not to agree with the logic of his reply or with his characterization of the current administration as a "kakistocracy". I did learn a new word. Kakistocracy means 'Government under the control of a nation's worst or least-qualified citizens'. I might apply this word to Slobodan Milosevic and his cronies who ran Serbia full-tilt into a religious/ethnic war, or Hitler and his group of extremists, or the Taliban who ran Afghanistan until we decided to throw them out. I invite others who might have a response to Dr. Brand to please send it to me for publication.)*

Rick Brand, MD. Hey, they put my article in the Rockland Journal News today, Sat Aug 14. It discusses the misuse of psychiatry in politics, and might therefore be appropriate and interesting for inclusion in eSynapse.

The first url is the original Commentary from Tim Rutten, an LA Times writer, reprinted in RJN on Aug 7. He used sham psychology to rationalize why America is rejecting the Obama agenda. The second url is my reply.

It was placed above the fold on the opinion page, a more formal, headline Reply, rather than a letter, boosting my ego and surprising me that our local, generally liberal, paper would do this. It suggests an emerging market for common sense. Either that, or they liked the word 'kakistocracy'.

The Tim Rutten article may be found at:

<http://www.lohud.com/print/article/20100807/OPINION/8070312/-Hysteria-an-apt-way-to-describe-2010-politics>

My reply, at:

<http://www.lohud.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=20108140313>

**SAVE THE DATE FRIDAY, OCTOBER 22**  
**FOR THE**  
**FALL DINNER MEETING**

APA President, Carol Bernstein MD, will speak on "The Changing Face of Medicine and the Next Generation of Psychiatrists". She urges us to encourage as many young members as possible to attend! The fall dinner meeting will be at La Terrazza, New City on Friday, October 22. Watch for further announcements.

# **Maimonides: The Scientist, Sage and Physician**

Syed Abdullah, M.D.

Maimonides was born in Cordoba, Spain in 1135. His writings carried the imprints of Greek and Islamic traditions melded into Jewish conventions. Spain in the twelfth century was the center of scientific and religious scholarship, where there was free exchange of topics, and cross-fertilization of opinions.

Maimonides was a legendary figure, visionary, a prolific writer on subjects ranging from physics to Jewish laws, from Biblical exegesis to theology to psychology and from philosophy to medicine. "Guide for the perplexed" is a primary text which has been well translated and commented on in English and is a good window into the mind of the great philosopher. Shlomo Pines' "Translator's Introduction" to his edition of the Guide, a well known and commonly cited essay in which he addresses the Greek and Islamic sources at play in Maimonides' thoughts. His philosophy is deeply imbued with Neoplatonic metaphysical notions such as emanations and Divine transcendence.

Maimonides was interested in understanding the relationship between philosophy and religion. Following on Biblical, Neoplatonic and Aristotelian insights, Maimonides' God is an absolutely simple, necessary, and completely uncaused unity. In this respect, he follows on the Islamic and Neoplatonic traditions envisioning God as the purest of the unlimited being that transcends any internal divisions. God, as a subject defies the normal parameters of language and conceptualization.

Maimonides' first major work, begun at age twenty-three and completed ten years later, was an Arabic commentary on the Mishna. His other writings included a monumental code of Jewish Law called the Mishneh Torah (in Hebrew) and a classic work of religious philosophy, the Guide of the Perplexed (in Arabic), which was influenced by the teachings of Aristotle and called for a more rational approach to Judaism. It also sought to reconcile science, philosophy and religion.

In 1148, when Maimonides was only thirteen years old, due to

political and religious upheavals and regime changes, he along with many others, had to drift from town to town in search of peace and safety. After twelve years of wandering the family finally settled in Fez, Morocco. During this period he wrote a treatise on the Jewish calendar and began his commentary on the Mishnah, a codification of the Jewish oral Law, arranged according to subjects. After a few years he left Fez for Palestine arriving at Accre in 1165, he visited many holy places of ancient Jewish history. His sojourn in Palestine was brief. The next year the family moved to al-Fustat (old Cairo, Egypt), there he was to remain for the rest of his life.

After the death of his father in 1166, the family was supported for a time by Maimonides' younger brother, David. David died by drowning while on a business voyage to the Indies. The loss of the family resources as well as those of other investors, forced Maimonides into a career of medicine in which he soon excelled. He became the personal physician of al-qadi al-Fadil the Vazier of Saladin. It is said that King Richard "the Lion-hearted" had offered Maimonides to become the royal physician in his court in England but he declined the offer. He, however, accepted the appointment as head of all the Jewish community in Egypt, a position that he held until his death in Cairo on December 13th 1204. After a period of mourning, his body was transported from Egypt to Palestine and buried at Tiberius in Galilee.

The major work of Maimonides, *The Guide of the Perplexed*, was completed in 1190 and published in Arabic. In this work Maimonides tried to reconcile faith and reason. It was written for those who possessed the knowledge of the Jewish faith, mathematic, and logic but who, having little or no knowledge of physics and metaphysics, believed that religion and philosophy contradicted each other. Maimonides believed that philosophy, properly understood and used, supported rather than destroyed the faith. In order to demonstrate this, he incorporated many of the arguments for the existence of God and the nature of the human soul found in such Arabian philosophers as al-Farabi and Avicenna. Where philosophical demonstration was inconclusive, as in establishing the concept of eternity or the doctrine of creation, he relied on the surer teachings of revelation, in the scriptures.

His *Guide* became the fundamental text for the medieval Jewish philosophy. Here a quote from the Sage will be appropriate: "Teach thy tongue to say I do not know and thou shalt progress."

Maimonides' full name was Moshe Ben Maimon. In Arabic he is fondly called: Abu Imran Musa Bin Maimun Ibne Abdullah al-qurtubi al-Israili. However, he is commonly known by his Greek name, Moses Maimonides, which means Moses son of Maimon.

Despite a busy medical practice, Maimonides continued to pursue his religious and philosophical studies. In the Mishneh Torah he organized, edited, summarized and codified the immense collection of laws, customs, opinions and regulations found in the existing Jewish scripture. This work of fourteen books remains one of the major sources of Jewish theology. Most of his works were written in Arabic, however Mishneh Torah was written in Hebrew.

A total of ten medical works of Maimonides, all written in Arabic, have been well preserved and authenticated. In the Journal of Islamic Medical Association Vol 38, 2006- pages 23—26 the following list of his medical writings, has been compiled by H.M. Raddawi, M.D, Clinical Associate Professor of Medicine, University of Illinois College of Medicine:

1. al-Mukhtasarat: The extracts. These are selected compilation of the works of Galen.
2. Fusul Musa Fi al-tibb: The medical aphorisms of Moses. Composed between 1187 and 1119, was Maimonides' most popular medical composition, consisting of 25 chapters, including over 1,500 aphorisms. In this he quotes Galen, and writers such as ibn Zuhr, al-Tamimi, Ibn Wafid, Ibn Rizwan, and al-Farabi. The book was translated from Arabic to Latin and Hebrew.
3. Sharh Fusul abugrat: Commentary on the aphorisms of Hippocrates. It was divided into seven books
4. Fi al-jima: On coitus/intercourse. Two treatises were written on sexual hygiene and aphrodisiac remedies.
5. Fi al-bawasir : On hemorrhoids. Composed in 1187 on the management of hemorrhoids.
6. Maqala fi al-Rabw: A discourse on Asthma. Written in 1190, it outlines symptoms, treatment and prevention.
7. Kitab al-sumum wa al-mutaharriz min al-adwiya al-qattala: A book on Poisons and Protection against Lethal drugs. Written in 1198, it discusses organic and inorganic poisons, their toxicity, anti-dotes, and remedies as well as general advice on emergency measures.
8. Sharh asma al-uqqar: Commentary on the names of drugs. This work, which was cited by ibn Abi Usaybia, was recently discovered in the library of the Aya Sofia in Istanbul. It contains 2,000 names

of drugs listed alphabetically in Arabic.

9. Fi tadbir al-sihha: On the regimen of health.

10. Maqala fi bayan bad al-a rad wa al-Jawab anha: A treatise in elucidation of symptoms and the response to them. A compilation of detailed answers to specific questions posed by the ailing King al-afdal ibn Saladin.

The last two treatises are available in original manuscripts at the Bodleian Library in Oxford.

References:

1. Rosner, F: Maimonides the physician. Arch of Internal Medicine 1986 Aug;146(8):1637

2. Bloch, S: Moses Maimonides' contribution to the biopsychosocial approach in clinical medicine. Lancet. 2001 Sept 8; 358 (9284): 829-32.

3. Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.

Other references available upon request.



## NEWS FROM THE APA

### **The Oklahoma Experience: Disaster Planning Made Manageable**

W. Rousseau, M.D., became president of the Oklahoma Psychiatric Association (OPA) just ten days before a bomb exploded in front of the Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City on April 19, 1995. At the time, it was the largest terrorist attack ever to take place on American soil. It killed 167 people, including 19 children, and injured another 500. The OPA didn't have a disaster plan in place. Its executive council had previously asked for input on a plan, but the task was overwhelming and the idea was tabled. Dr. Rousseau details the Oklahoma City experience from the perspective of the OPA in the first chapter of the *APA Disaster Psychiatry Handbook*.

When faced with a real crisis, the OPA tapped into existing networks for help and used systems established by local hospitals, which he describes in detail in the handbook. Based on the Oklahoma experience, Dr. Rousseau offered four tips for district branches and state associations for preparing for a disaster:

- Keep it simple. Do not try to over organize.
- Have co-chairs for your disaster committee in different geographical areas. This will provide a coordinator closer to any potential disaster site as well as a resource located outside the crisis area.
- Learn how your local area's disaster system works and investigate national disaster systems.
- Do not try to reinvent the wheel. If you try to start from scratch, you may become overwhelmed and give up in frustration.

Read about lessons learned from Oklahoma City and other insights into handling the psychiatric dimensions of disasters in the [Disaster Psychiatry Handbook](#), which is among a variety of [disaster psychiatry resources](#) developed and assembled by the APA Committee on the Psychiatric Dimensions of Disasters and the Office of International Activities.

### **Submission Site Open for 2011 APA Meeting**

The submission site is open to propose presentations for the [2011 American Psychiatric Association Annual Meeting](#) in Hawaii. The Hawaii meeting will be May 14-18, 2011. The APA is accepting [online submissions](#) for symposia, scientific and clinical reports, workshops and other scientific sessions. The last day to submit a session proposal is Sept. 14, 2010. Please share this information with colleagues who may be interested in proposing a scientific session for the APA, and watch for the opening of submissions for new research posters in Nov. 2, 2010.



### **APA Fellowship Applications Due Sept. 1**

The [application deadline](#) for APA members who want to be recognized as fellows by the APA is Sept. 1. The eligibility criteria to become an APA fellow are five years as a general member, board certification, and two letters of recommendation from APA fellows or distinguished fellows.

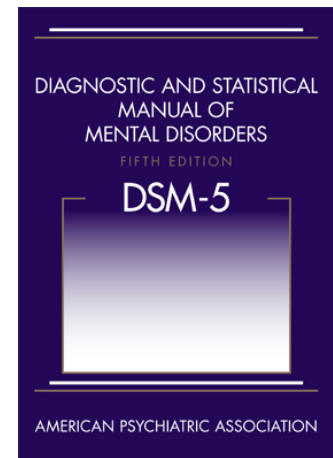
To ensure you can vote in the 2011 elections, make sure the APA has your current email address. The APA is transitioning to an all-electronic balloting process for national elections. Electronic ballots will be sent to those with valid email addresses. Login to [Members Corner](#) on

the APA website to update your email address and profile.

### **DSM-5 Moving into Field Trial Stage**

The Fifth Edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* is moving into the field trial stage. The first draft of criteria developed by the *DSM-5* Task Force and Work Groups was published on [www.dsm5.org](http://www.dsm5.org), and comments on the proposed revisions were accepted through April 20. The work groups have been reviewing comments and, and in some cases, publishing proposed changes on the *DSM-5* website.

The next phase of *DSM-5* development will focus on the implementation of field trials, which are scheduled to begin in fall 2010, with pilot studies already underway. Work groups identified diagnostic criteria sets that are most in need of field testing. The overall aim of the first phase of field trials is to assess the feasibility, clinical utility, reliability, and (where possible) the validity of the draft criteria and the diagnostic-specific and cross-cutting dimensional measures being suggested for *DSM-5*. A second phase of field trials, scheduled to take place in 2011, may be useful for testing criteria that have undergone further revisions as a result of their performance in the first wave of field trials. For more information, visit [www.dsm5.org](http://www.dsm5.org).



### **American Psychiatric Publishing, Inc. Offers New Online Bookstore**

American Psychiatric Publishing, Inc. (APPI) has updated its online bookstore. [APPI online](http://APPI online) offers special discounts for APA Members and Members-in Training, provides a detailed description of more than 700 titles and subscription products. The site is fast and easy to navigate with an enhanced search engine. Visit today and check out the list of new titles from APPI below!

### **Therapy office in Pomona, NY (Rockland County) for Sublease**

in Dr. Flax's suite. Available all day Saturdays, Sundays after 11:00, and other times by arrangement. Office is right off of Exit 12 of the Palisades Parkway. It is furnished, quiet and sunny, in a suite of four offices with a shared waiting room and separate exit, with beautiful art work throughout. If interested, contact Lorraine Schorr, [lorrainesara@aol.com](mailto:lorrainesara@aol.com) or 845 354 5040.

Professional Risk Management Services, Inc. (PRMS) invites you to...

## LET THE NUMBERS - AND OUR EXPERTS - DO THE TALKING

About The Psychiatrists' Program

Medical Professional Liability Insurance Designed for Psychiatrists

### Our Claims Numbers Talk...

- We have handled more than **16,000** psychiatric claims. More than any other company in the world.
- In 2009, **100%** of the cases that were tried to a verdict resulted in a decision in favor of the insured.



“ Risk management provides our insureds with the knowledge and the tools they need to handle not only the routine risk management issues but also to prevent potentially risky clinical situations from escalating into claims or lawsuits. With our extensive experience, we are able to provide this support through a variety of resources including **one-on-one** telephone consultation, written materials and educational presentations. **Donna Vanderpool, JD, MBA**  
*Assistant Vice President,  
Risk Management  
With PRMS since 2000*”

**And here is one more number - and one more expert - that is talking: (800) 245-3333, ext. 372**

Yes, that's right - call the president of Professional Risk Management Services, Inc. directly. How many other companies give you direct access to their president? You can also email him at [tracy@prms.com](mailto:tracy@prms.com). Best of all, he will respond to you.

“ In my 11 years at PRMS, I have handled over **2000** events, claims, administrative actions and lawsuits against psychiatrists. You can rest assured that if the unfortunate does occur, your claim will not be outsourced to a large anonymous insurance entity like many other insurance programs. Instead, I will work with you and the defense attorney every step of the way. **Denny Rodriguez, JD**  
*Assistant Vice President, Claims  
With PRMS since 1999*”



### Our Risk Management Numbers Talk...

- Last year, over **1,600** psychiatrists heard one of our risk managers speak in a psychiatric risk management educational program.
- Through our Risk Management Consultation Service Helpline we assisted our insured psychiatrists with over **3,500** risk management issues in 2009.

“ I encourage you and those insured with other companies to reach out and contact me directly with their comments and questions. On behalf of the entire PRMS team, I thank you for your continued support of The Psychiatrists' Program. It is our pleasure to serve you. **Martin G. Tracy, JD, ARM**  
*President and CEO  
With PRMS since 1986*”



## The Psychiatrists' Program

Medical Professional Liability Insurance  
Designed for Psychiatrists

Managed by:  
Professional Risk Management Services, Inc.  
for over 25 years.

(800) 245-3333  
[TheProgram@prms.com](mailto:TheProgram@prms.com)  
[www.psychprogram.com](http://www.psychprogram.com)