

## CPA protects contracting rights

The California Psychological Association (CPA) warded off a threat from a bill in the state legislature that could have severely restricted psychologists' rights to contract with each other and other mental health entities.

The association's CEO, Jo Linder-Crow, Ph.D., said CPA's lobbyist and "the robust grassroots effort of CPA members" persuaded the bill's author, Lorena Gonzales, D-San Diego, to exempt psychologists from the bill's provisions.

Gonzales introduced Assembly Bill 5 to bring state law in line with a decision by the California Supreme Court in a case involving a courier service, Dynamex Operations West Inc.

The court ruled that Dynamex improperly classified its drivers in 2004 as independent contractors in a cost-savings measure. The court ruled the drivers are employees and spelled out strict conditions for meeting the definition of contract work.

Without the exemption, that could have classified many psychologists contracting out their services as employees and made them subject to employer tax withholding and labor law provisions.

Linder-Crow said gaining the exemption "demonstrates the results that state psychological associations achieve in advocating for psychology and psychologists." The bill initially

exempted some health care providers – physicians, podiatrists and dentists – but no mental health care providers.

–Jo Linder-Crow, Ph.D.

"We need every psychologist to support their state association," Linder-Crow said. "There is power in numbers when it comes to legislative action, so a robust membership allows us to continue to do work like this."

Both houses have passed the bill. Gov. Gavin Newsom has until Oct. 13 to sign it into law or veto it.

## Same-day services come to VA

The Department of Veterans Affairs recently outlined resources to make it easier for veterans to obtain mental health services, including same-day 24/7 access to emergency mental health care, but acknowledged that the greatest difficulty is getting those in need to reach out for help.

A press release noted, "The military cultural standards of 'never surrender' and self-reliant 'can do' attitude, so integral on the battlefield, are ingrained in every veteran. Yet, this defining character asset from military service often presents a barrier to veterans seeking treatment."

VA Secretary Robert Wilkie said all 172 VA medical centers can now provide same-day services for a veteran in crisis or with another need for mental health care by connecting the veteran with a provider or another appropriate clinical staff member through an in-person appointment or by telephone.

Help is also available via smart phones, telehealth or secure messaging.

In addition, specially trained responders are ready to help through the



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