Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist Relationship With Psychologists – A Third Option

As part of an examination of our relationship with psychologists, AACAP is considering whether to expand our membership to include psychologists. In listening carefully to feedback given at the Town Meeting during the AACAP Annual Meeting in October 2016, as well as to perspectives from other members, it is apparent that many people are seeking alternatives to opening membership to psychologists. AACAP could focus on a “third option,” namely more effective collaboration with psychologists.

As we face our developing practice opportunities, in both traditional and innovative service delivery models, psychologists remain our valued interdisciplinary team members. As shown by an AACAP Assembly of Regional Organizations of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (ROCAP) listserv this past summer, most participants collaborate in our daily work with psychologists, and most of us have developed collegial and mutually respectful relationships in optimizing care delivery. Many psychologists are already active in primary care offices and are involved in integrated care models, other sites of service delivery, and out into our networks of care.

Gregory K. Fritz, MD, President, AACAP, appointed me to the Task Force on Allied Membership for Psychologists (TFAM) as chair of the Assembly. To this task force, I have also brought my experience as a ROCAP delegate, an Advocacy Liaison, and as a member of AACAP Council, the Executive Committee, Healthcare Access and Economics Committee, Bylaws, as delegate to the Patient Centered Primary Care Collaborative (PCPCC), and, most importantly, as a practicing child and adolescent psychiatrist (CAP) in a variety of clinical settings. Each of these roles has influenced my thought process and search for productive and collaborative ways forward for the relationship between our specialties and our professional organizations. I want to thank Dr. Fritz for his leadership on integrated care and Tami D. Benton, MD, for her leadership of the Task Force for Allied Membership (TFAM).

Listening to Assembly delegates and serving as a panelist at the Town Meeting in October, I heard a resounding affirmation that we move forward with our collaboration with psychologists on integrated care. Dr. Susan McDaniel’s visit as president of the American Psychological Association (APA) and as an expert on integrated care, gives us further hope for the real deliverables for CAPs in this relationship.

I have further heard from members, including a wide representation at the Town Meeting – from private practitioners, from pediatricians who became child and adolescent psychiatrists, from those in teaching programs, from leadership, from Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (JAACAP), and from others—at least five ways that we could enhance and promote psychologists’ interest in and contributions to our organization, rather than a consideration for AACAP membership at this time:

1) Liaisons (at various levels of AACAP and APA).

2) Consideration of an alliance component within our organization, in which we have a body of CAP’s and psychologists collaborating on areas of mutual interest.

3) Useful projects and products supporting both of our fields and the contributors, such as joint practice parameters, policy statements, joint journal articles, etc.

4) Certificates of appreciation or acknowledgement from AACAP for special psychologist contributors to our organization.

5) Consideration to expand our JAACAP Editorial Board to include psychologists.

These considerations were also echoed and welcomed by some in leadership of the American Psychological Association, with whom I have an ongoing dialog.

Based on the feedback I noted, I recommend that AACAP add a “third option”—i.e. collaboration—to its consideration of our relationship with psychologists; I have listed several ideas above. Each member can send additional ideas to leadership, and I urge you to do so. Your suggestions will be considered as Council further deliberates on how best to enhance our relationship with psychologists—membership, traditional status, or a “third option” of wider collaboration.

We value your opinions as AACAP members and want to be sure to take into consideration your thoughts and feelings on the matter. Please send all feedback via email to communications@aacap.org. Your comments will be compiled and used in determining and defining the ongoing conversation. Also, if you have any questions, please contact the Communications Department directly via email at communications@aacap.org or by phone at 202.966.7300, ext. 119.

The deadline to submit feedback is May 5, 2017.