



Vermont Psychological Association

ANNUAL
REPORT
2021





Vermont Psychological Association

Annual Report of the Association 2021

Board of Directors:

Danielle Bergeron Ingram, M.S.	President & CE Committee Chair
Andrew D. Blair, Psy.D.	Vice-President & Diversity & Social Justice Committee Chair
Jeffrey D. McKee, Psy.D.	Treasurer
Gus E. Jordan, Ph.D.	Ethics Committee Chair
Lori P. Gurney, M.S.	Disaster Preparedness & Response Committee Chair
Milton J. Marasch, Ph.D.	Insurance Committee Chair & APA Council Representative
Richard T. Barnett, Psy.D.	Legislative Committee Chair
Tedd Habberfield, Ph.D.	Member at Large
Karen J. Hack, Psy.D.	Member at Large
Ronald L. Hedgepeth, Ph.D.	Member at Large

From the President



I have been honored and fortunate to serve as VPA president this past year and look forward to serving the second year of my term in 2022. This year has been a great time to be active in VPA, which continues to make changes and evolve to meet our members' needs. VPA is in an excellent position to continue the recent positive change and growth with continuity and stability in leadership; I am also pleased to report that Lynda Marshall, our executive director, will continue in her role implementing the board's strategic plan and managing the organization's operations.

This year, VPA continued to prioritize communication with members, both in providing news and updated information on a timely basis and in communications about our CE workshop offerings. We have continued our partnership with the New Hampshire Psychological Association by combining our CE catalogs, and with Brattleboro Retreat in being the replacement for their internal continuing education program.

We are working on implementing association management software that will allow our members to control their own profiles and connect with each other directly. A new website planned for 2022 will integrate seamlessly with our CE catalog to make it easy for members to find their CE credits and register for CE.

For the first time in many years, we have engaged an outside lobbyist to advocate for prescription privileges for psychologists with advanced training using grant funds from the American Psychological Association; that has resulted in giant steps toward at least getting the issue to a vote in committee and possibly by the whole Vermont General Assembly.

As we have done in the past, VPA continues to offer the highest-quality CE events that we can produce. Although all of our events have been online this past year—and may continue to be in the coming year—we have received excellent feedback from participants in Vermont and the surrounding region about the virtual platform. The combination of a virtual platform and our partnership with Brattleboro has resulted in record attendance at our CE events—we averaged 147 participants per event in 2021!

I speak for the entire board of directors in thanking all of our members for your active and ongoing support of VPA.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Danielle". The script is fluid and cursive.

Danielle Bergeron Ingram, M.S.

WELCOME

New Members

James M. Benton, Ph.D.— Great Neck, NY

Collin Beyor — St. Albans (student)

Jennifer A. Colman, M.A. — Burlington

Mark J. Detzer, Ph.D. — White River Junction

Michael S. Fisher, Ph.D. — New York, NY

Tina Ghantous — Glover (student)

Logan P. Hegg, Psy.D. — Richmond

Grace M. Hurley — Wolcott (student)

Robyn B. Kervick, Ph.D. — Somerville, MA

Chante M. Kubs, LICSW — Wharton, NJ

Chad A. Lazzari, Psy.D. — East Arlington

Kristen A. Munson, Psy.D. — Shaftsbury

Ryan B. Noel, Psy.D. — Burlington

Denise Olin, Psy.D. — Arlington

David A. Osgood, Ed.D. — Essex Junction

Kelly R. Peck, Ph.D. — Burlington

Donna Steinberg, Ph.D. — Hanover

Elizabeth (“Beth”) D. C. Taylor, M.S. — Brandon

Aleta S. Vail, Ph.D. — Burlington

Erik J. Wheeler — Burlington (public)

Kurt L. White, LICSW — Newfane

VPA Membership

Membership Category		License Category	
Full Members	106	Psychologist-D	113
Associate Members	6	Psychologist-M	47
Academic Members	4	LICSW	4
Members Emeritus	31	LCMHC	2
Retired Members	10	LMFT	2
Lifetime Members	10	Rostered	4
Student Members	7	Student	7
Public Members	2	Other	2
Rostered Members	4		
TOTAL	181		

Community Partners



Membership Benefits

Professional Development Opportunities to meet other professionals, find peer consultation groups, and get up-to-date information for your practice or professional endeavors.

Discounts \$45 off on VPA CE workshops
NHPA member rate for CE workshops sponsored by the New Hampshire Psychological Association
Discount on webinars through the National Register of Health Service Physicians

FREE Consultations with the VPA Ethics Committee when you have ethics questions or dilemmas—the VPA Ethics Committee will help you find the right path

Consultations with the VPA Insurance Committee when you have questions or difficulties with insurance, billing, and reimbursement

Listing on the VPA “Find a Therapist” web page and referrals through the VPA office, including clinical supervision

Hard-to-find direction, resources, and information from our Executive Director

Information Access to our exclusive members-only section on our website, providing links to resources, information, VPA activities, the latest research, and other useful information

VPA newsletter, including psychology news and information you need to know

Access to the VPA listserv, connecting you to other members

Advocacy VPA advocacy & lobbying (Congress & state legislature) for your interests through the VPA Legislative Committee

Committee Reports



Diversity & Social Justice Committee **Andrew D. Blair, Psy.D., Chair**

The Diversity and Social Justice Committee continues in its efforts to serve the needs and interests of the VPA membership as well as consumers of psychological services in the state of Vermont. One of the projects that has been undertaken by the committee was compiling and distributing educational resources to the membership through the VPA website and the listserv on topic related to systemic racism, anti-racism, and working with cultural competency/humility with clients. The committee was also tasked with crafting a diversity statement for VPA that could be prominently featured on the VPA website and in other association materials. In May of this year, the Diversity and Social Justice Committee co-sponsored a workshop with the Continuing Education Committee by Nnamdi Pole, PhD, a leading expert in traumatic stress in racial minorities. Our committee is looking forward to obtaining further consultation from Dr. Pole in the upcoming year to further clarify our mission and select our next projects for VPA.



Ethics Committee **Gus E. Jordan, Ph.D., Chair**

The ethics committee has been active this year responding to member requests for consultations. To date, these have included seven formal consultations for such issues as competence to provide services, appropriate advertising, teletherapy (and out of state licensing guidelines), and appropriate referral processes. The committee meets quarterly in addition to member requests for consultations. The ethics committee members include Martha Coulter, Richard Finkelstein, Adam Grundt, Gus Jordan, Kirke McVay, and Jessica Metcalf.



Insurance Committee

Milton J. Marasch, Ph.D., Chair

The year 2021 has continued to prove busy for the VPA Insurance Committee consultation service. Consultation topics included the topic of sole proprietors shifting from social security numbers (SSNs) to employer identification numbers (EINs), Cigna and telehealth denials earlier this year, psychologist-masters and Medicare enrollment, and new requests from Reveleer for BCBSVT medical records. Other issues in progress include consulting with APA Services about Vermont Medicaid use of evaluation add-on codes, and passing along member concerns about Optum provider payment policies.

Here are several tips based on consultation questions:

- In the event of records requests (charts or parts of charts) from an insurance company or an agent acting on its behalf, it is helpful to review your contract with the company on how much time you have to respond to the request, and also to ensure that you are getting signed authorization from patients that allows both billing and compliance with insurance company record requests. Generally, insurance company provider agreements require the ability to audit records. The Trust has templates on their website that are often helpful.¹
- It is helpful to keep a list of your various insurance company provider representatives on hand. They are going to be able to provide definitive answers to insurance questions that VPA or I cannot.

If you are a sole proprietor still using SSNs instead of EINs on your claim forms/systems, I recommend booking an hour into your calendar to set up an EIN for yourself. The IRS online is an authoritative source on this. The BCBSVT deadline for its providers is the end of this year.²

Thanks to Connie Galietti of APA Services for her availability as a consultant and coordinator on various state and national insurance issues.

REFERENCES

¹ <https://parma.trustinsurance.com/Resource-Center>

² <https://www.apaservices.org/practice/business/finances/employer-identification-numbers>

Committee Reports (cont'd)



Legislative Committee

Richard T. Barnett, Psy.D., M.S., Chair

VPA has made significant progress on the prescriptive authority bill and on the passage of PSYPACT this year. I met with VPA Lobbyist Theo Kennedy throughout the summer and fall, and we completed and submitted an application for a sunrise review process with OPR to expand scope of practice for prescribing psychologists. OPR held an open meeting regarding prescriptive authority on October 29, 2021, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. with 16 people in attendance. Three psychiatrists (one from NJ and two from VT) offered strong opposing testimony. Three psychologists offered supportive remarks. OPR requested impact statement and written comments via email by November 9 or no later than November 23. Another online public meeting to take testimony was held on November 9 from 5:00 p.m. through 7:00 p.m. If OPR deems this an appropriate Scope of Practice expansion, they will refer their favorable findings back to House Committee on Government Operations with a favorable recommendation to take up H.392 in the 2022 session.

PSYPACT is still in need of much support. H.391 is our PSYPACT bill which would allow interstate practice with over 26 other states. Please reach out to Rep. Tanya Vyhovsky and your local legislator to ask to take up H.391 and pass it into law.

On other issues, VPA also took an active role in opposing CMS' proposed rule that would cut reimbursement for behavioral health care. The issues raised by VPA, APA, and many other entities resulted in CMS re-examining the rule, but the final result has not yet been determined.

VPA also joined APA nearly 75 other organizations in adding its signature to the position statement of the Coalition for the Advancement and Application of Psychological Science (CAAPS) opposing the use of Rapid-Onset Gender Dysphoria (ROGD) and similar concepts for clinical and diagnostic application given the lack of rigorous empirical support for its existence and the lack of evidence that ROGD aligns with the lived experiences of transgender children and adolescents.

APA Council Report



APA Council Representative Milton J. Marasch, Ph.D.

I attended both of APA's Council of Representatives (COR) meetings this year as the Vermont Representative. The February session was virtual, and the October session was hybrid this year.

The February session was noteworthy for passed resolutions opposing efforts to change peoples' gender identity, approving standards for accrediting master's-level program in health service psychology, denouncing racism, and affirming APA's support for human rights. I voted along with the majority in favor of all passed resolutions. Here is an excerpt from APA president Dr. Jennifer Kelly's statement from the APA COR overview:

As the only psychology accreditor recognized by both the U.S. Department of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation, APA is at the forefront of accreditation trends in psychology and the creation of quality accreditation standards. . . . This action addresses changes in the field of psychology accreditation and the increasing demand from the public for psychological services. It is our responsibility to ensure that psychology programs provide the highest-quality training.¹

The second COR session was held in October. While the official summary of the session has not yet been published, two passed resolutions stand out. The first one was by far the major one - an apology to people of color for APA's role in promoting and failing to challenge racism through the years. The second one was the passing of term limits for council representatives. Individuals will be limited to 12 years of service on the COR.

There is a waiver that can be requested for small states, provinces, or territories where willing or eligible candidates for the position may not be as plentiful.²

I have one more year remaining in this three-year term, with my current term ending at the conclusion of 2022. Psychologists willing to serve in this role for the subsequent term are invited to reach out to me or VPA Executive Director Lynda Marshall if they wish to learn more about serving and being included in next year's ballot for the 2023-2025 term.

REFERENCES:

¹ <https://www.apa.org/about/governance/council/summary-february-2021.pdf>

² <https://www.apa.org/about/policy/racism-apology>

Financial Report



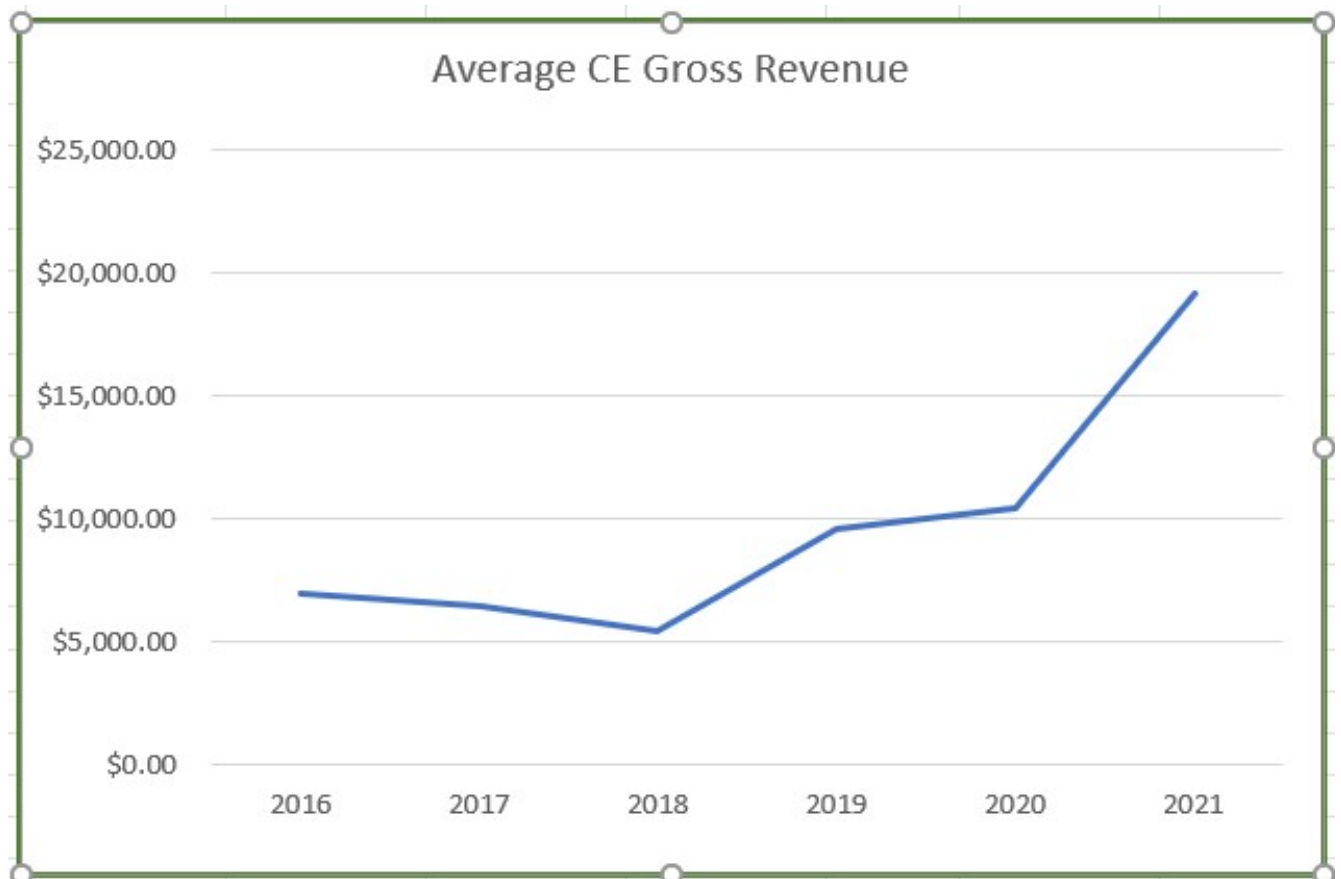
VPA Treasurer

Jeffrey D. McKee, Psy.D.

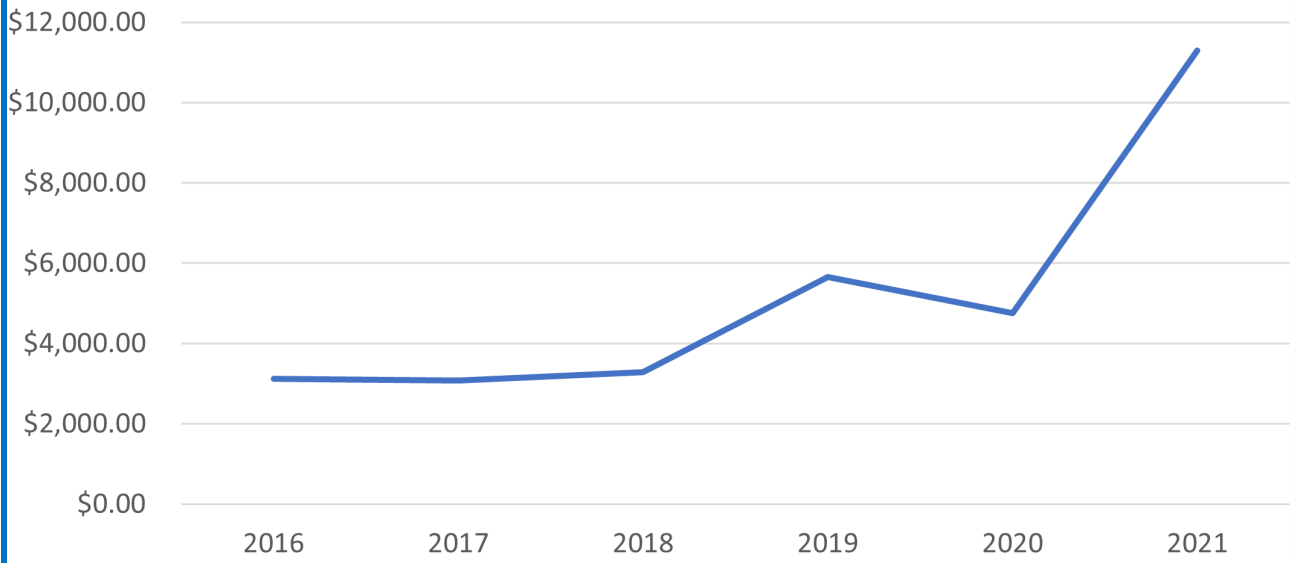
VPA's partnership with Brattleboro Retreat has significantly boosted attendance at our CE events (see the CE charts below), with the result that VPA's financial position is more stable and secure than ever in recent history. As of November 30, 2021, we have exceeded the net gain for which we budgeted due to these CE events.

As VPA's financial position continues to stabilize and grow, we intend to put available funds towards member benefits and new or existing work within the Vermont community, while maintaining a suitable operating reserve.

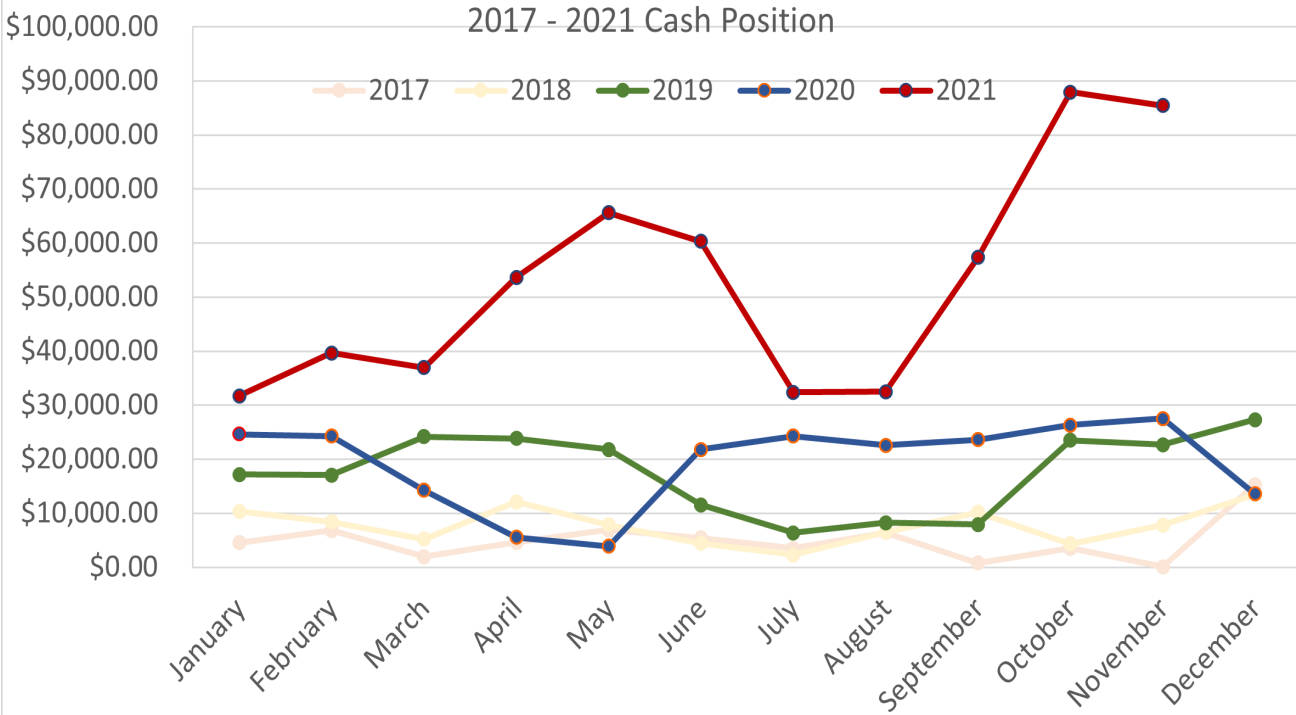
You can see from the charts below how the gross revenue from CE events, the net proceeds from those events, and the association's cash position have grown throughout the last year and in comparison with previous years.



Average CE Net Proceeds



2017 - 2021 Cash Position



VPA President's Award

Each year, the president of VPA may bestow the President's Award to an individual or individuals who have shown exemplary dedication, commitment and/or service to the Vermont Psychological Association and the advancement of mental health in Vermont. The first President's Award was given in 2006.

The President's Award for 2021 goes to James M. Benton and Kurt L. White, new VPA members, who initiated VPA's partnership with Brattleboro Retreat and have been crucial to the functioning of that partnership and to its continuance. Kurt and Jim also joined the VPA CE Committee upon becoming members, adding some experienced voices to our CE planning process. The partnership between VPA and Brattleboro Retreat has benefited VPA enormously and has established another link between VPA and the Vermont community. We are grateful for Jim and Kurt's ingenuity, service, dedication, and collaboration.



Kurt L. White, LICSW, LADC, CGP, MAC



James M. Benton, Ph.D.



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