

# BPA News

Black Psychiatrists of America, Inc.



## 2021 BLACK PSYCHIATRISTS OF AMERICA (BPA) VIRTUAL CONFERENCE

THE RE-EMERGENCE AND  
ADVANCEMENT OF BLACK MENTAL  
HEALTH: THRIVING AND BUILDING  
WELLNESS.

DATES: NOVEMBER 12-14, 2021

PRESENTATIONS FROM EXPERT SPEAKERS ON:  
EQUITY & SOCIAL JUSTICE  
RESTORATION, REBUILDING, REVITALIZATION  
SOLUTIONS & COMMUNICATIONS  
HISTORY & IMPACT  
SELF-CARE

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Register today here: [www.blackpsychiatrists.org](http://www.blackpsychiatrists.org)

• Students register for free!

Become a member and registration is 50% off!



**BPA News**



With Dr. Patricia "Nana" Newton's passing, I was indeed in a state of shock and confusion. I took a step back and thought about all the work she had done and dedicated her life to in Black psychiatry. I thought about how much I benefited from her leadership and mentorship.

I want to thank the Board of BPA for voting me in as Executive Director. I genuinely look forward to this opportunity, and I do not take the possibilities lightly. With this team, I see great things in the near future. The board has stood firm during this time of adversity. With the loss of our fearless leader, Dr. Newton, the pandemic, George Floyd, and Insurrection, the BPA Board has stood firm despite the multitude of the past 1 ½ years. I stand hugely impressed by the leadership of Drs. Ben Roy and Cynthia Turner-Graham (Pres. and Pres. Elect, respectively) see their dedication to the BPA. I look forward to working with the entire board and membership.

BPA will serve as an independent voice to express our thoughts, ideas, and demands. We will also look forward to collaborating and teaming with like-minded groups and organizations. Since BPA's inception in 1969, the needs are as much needed now as they ever have been before.

1. Growth in membership
2. Support of membership and programming.
3. Conduit for all that is mental health and Black psychiatry.
4. Leader in Black mental health thought, ideas, and advocacy.

"Lifting Minds" since 1969

Napoleon B. Higgins, Jr. MD  
Executive Director, BPA

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## **President's Letter**

**by: Benjamin F. Roy, M.D.**

In 1969 a group of psychiatrists created the Black Psychiatrists of America (BPA) to confront the racism that impacted their colleagues and patients. The BPA was not about self-interest but the protection of patients' hopes and dreams from assault. American psychiatry has been complicit; it weaponized the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Health Disorders (DSM) and allowed the lumping of African American patients and civil rights activists as paranoid schizophrenics as a dismissive defense mechanism not to do the work sorely needed for patients of color. The BPA pointed then to the contribution of social determinants to mental health disorders that mental maladies and patterns of behavior are more than skin deep.

Racism and its micro-aggressions are strategies to induce fatalism and defeatism, make you voluntarily get out of the game, not organize your communities, not organize outside of your professions, not organize outside your race, leave academia, leave research, leave policymaking, and surrender the C-suite. The strategy presupposes the slave and their descendants will accept the inevitability and the powerlessness to change its future and either not fight back or, over time, submit. As Arthur Ashe presciently stated, the cost is a loss of time that might have achieved miracles. One less on an institutional review board is devastating when there is only one. There is no one there to protect human resources when you are gone. To you and our patients, the message should be clear: You are not alone. You have a place to call home. The authoritarian rule will neither protect our patients' and colleagues' mental health or their lives. The philosophy of the BPA has not changed since its inception: 1. Mental health care is a right, not a privilege 2. The poor and patients of color are not a liability. 3. Mental health is an issue of social justice. 4. A healthcare system or provider cannot choose whom it will protect or not. 5. Culture is a therapeutic modality. The BPA advocates the production of new knowledge and applying and utilizing existing knowledge in new ways. The production of new knowledge requires new science and social innovation, which means the BPA needs YOU to call it home to carry out its mission.