

Fall Presidential Address



I want to thank all of our membership for your continual involvement and growth of our beloved BPA. We continue to grow and your interest continues to encourage me to further press forward. So pressing forward is what we must do. At the end of this year we have approximately 1 in every 6 black psychiatrist as a member of the Black Psychiatrists of America. There are many things that could be attributed to the tremendous growth over the past few years. One of the reasons is because the BPA continues and increasingly has become relevant to the mental health of African-Americans. We are our brother's keeper when it comes to the BPA being the cornerstone of Black mental health understanding, diagnosis and treatment.

We are looking forward toward this year's membership drive. We hope to have 400 members by the end of the 2010 year. This would mean that 1 in every 4 Black psychiatrists will be a member. We need for everyone to pay your dues for 2010. Please visit www.blackpsych.org and click on Get Involved and Join tab on the left. If you are not a member, I hope that you will soon join. We do not want anyone to be left out of the growth of the organization. Benefits of membership are to stay informed on the latest in Black mental health, receive support for the services you perform, network with colleagues and earn CME credits through our Spring Conference or the Fall Transcultural.

We invite everyone to attend our upcoming Spring Conference held in conjunction with Meharry Medical College. The Spring Conference will be held on the campus of Meharry Medical College on April 9-11, 2010. The title of the conference is "Leadership, Excellence and Service: Honoring the Life and Legacy of Lloyd Elam, MD." We are looking to have over 200 Black psychiatrists there for this wonderful event. We anxiously anticipate the gathering and we want to see you there. You do not want to miss this historical event. The call for papers is due January 15, 2010. If you are interested in presenting, please contact BPA4info@aol.com or go to www.blackpsych.org and click the link Meetings-Events.

The Fall Transcultural in Egypt was a success. We definitely had a wonderful time. I want to thank the program committee for a superb done program. I also want to thank Dr. Patricia Newton and Sebayit Tours for the land package. There were so many things to see and impressions left from the trip to Cairo and Aswan Egypt. I truly encourage those who were not able to attend to take a visit to these historical sites. Expect a video from Dr. Timothy Benson to come to you soon so that you can see the sights and scenes of the trip. I will send an overview of the Egypt trip soon.

I want to thank everyone who came to the BPA event during the Fall APA Institute of Psychiatric Services meeting that was hosted by Michael Pratts' restaurant, Tavern on Nostrand. We had over 70 persons to attend the gathering. We honored Dr. Phyllis Harrison-Ross for her service to the BPA and the psychiatric community of New York. She is truly a matriarch of Black mental health. We also honored Dr. Donna Norris for the work she has done with the APA. She was not able to be in attendance, but addressed the crowd through a pre-taped video done specifically for the BPA event.

This year is a special year for the APA. Dr. Donna Norris is running for President-Elect for the American Psychiatric Association. Voting begins on December 22, 2009. We encourage all BPA members to be members of the APA. For those who are members we encourage you to vote and let your voice be known. As you all may know is that over all the years, APA has never had a president of African-American descent. We have an opportunity to erase this legacy this year. Do not let the opportunity to vote pass without being a part of it.

As I go into my final year as BPA President, I am very hopeful. I am excited with the direction and possibilities of the BPA. We have a lot to get done this year. It is my hope to continue the growth. I need your help and participation in doing so. I want to thank the board for all of your support over the years. I appreciate everyone's encouragement and kind words. They are not without notice. I ask that everyone continue your quest to advocate for the mental health of Black persons who suffer from mental illness.

The Black Psychiatrists of America is on the move. We hope that you will be an active participant;

Be a mentor;

Be an advocate;

Be a part of a movement;

Be at the Spring conference 2010;

Be a part of the betterment for mental health of Black people;

Be a part of BPA!!!