

ALABAMA PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION
Statement on Priorities
November 11, 2009

Priority One

The current health care system is economically untenable and too many of Alabama's citizens are unable to access adequate care. Accordingly, some form of health care reform is needed. Scientific research has documented that mental health is essential to overall health. Therefore, reform must address the artificial distinction between mental health care and physical care and the appropriate inclusion of psychological interventions such as support of smoking cessation, treatment of obesity, stress management, and care of the chronically ill. Health care reform needs to maintain an appropriate focus on prevention and comprehensive, interdisciplinary care, including psychologists as members of any comprehensive health care effort. Health care reform should also include increased access to mental health care for the population with special attention to rural communities. Reform should promote funding and actual payment of promised reimbursement by public and private entities. Reform should also work to increase funding that supports continued research in best practices for integrated health care.

The Association maintains the position that health care reform at both state and federal levels should be supported and pursued by the organization. Our concept of health care reform includes increased access to quality healthcare for all Alabamians, an integrated health care system with mental health providers involved in primary care, and fair and just implementation of mental health parity. To be able to affect public policy for the benefit of human welfare, the Association will work to establish relationships with policy makers--legislators, leaders in the various healthcare disciplines, and other key figures involved in defining, developing, and providing health care to Alabamians.

Priority Two

The Association will support and protect the profession of psychology in all scientific, educational, and practice endeavors. In this effort, the Association will promote psychologists as relevant and essential to health care, education, and human development. One effort in this domain will be focused on reviewing the current act governing psychology in Alabama with an eye toward identifying and subsequently addressing deficits in how it relates to a changing health care delivery system. An effective working relationship with the licensing board is essential in order to achieve a balance between protecting the status of psychologists as evaluators and providers in the health care marketplace with an interest in provision of quality mental health care to all citizens who need it. In addition, the Association will support improved funding for state mental health programs and services, and acquiring prescriptive authority for properly trained psychologists. The Association encourages collaboration and consultation among state and national psychological associations to ensure that psychologists in the state of Alabama are practicing in a way consistent with national models.