

PROFESSIONAL

Need for Psychiatrist Leaders and Administrators Greater Than Ever

SY ATEZAZ SAEED, M.D., M.S.

Published Online: 21 Jul 2023 | <https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.pn.2023.08.8.53>

Need for Psychiatrist Leaders and Administrators Greater Than Ever | Psychiatric News



04:43



Psychiatry should not abdicate leadership to nonclinical administrators or nonpsychiatric physicians. We need to equip a future generation of psychiatrist leaders to advocate on behalf of providers and patients.

Psychiatrists often participate in the design, creation, direction, assessment, and maintenance of various mental health enterprises. These tasks and responsibilities transcend their traditional professional roles as direct care providers. Typically, the skills needed to fulfill these obligations are not part of a psychiatrist's formal residency curriculum, but they are critically needed.

Administrative psychiatry focuses on the role of psychiatrists within and outside health care organizations and systems. This role requires collaboration with other professionals, fiscal managers, insurers, governments, community organizations, and patients with the triple aim of achieving optimal treatment quality and outcomes, reducing costs, and enhancing the patient experience. There is a natural good fit between psychiatrists and leadership positions. Psychiatrists who are further trained in an administrative track tend to be better prepared for value-based care and quality focus.

Why does a focus on administrative and leadership matter so much? The fact is that the current cadre of psychiatric administrators and leaders are aging out, and we not only need to replace them but also augment their number. Promoting the presence of psychiatrists in leadership positions has the potential of exponentially optimizing the quality of care for patients. In these positions, however, psychiatrists must have the flexibility to shift from focusing on clinical care to addressing systemic and population-based health issues. This aspect is of particular importance as it highlights the ethical responsibility that health care enterprises owe to society as a whole.

How do you learn to be a psychiatric administrator and leader? There are professional organizations that offer seminars, training, or curricula in psychiatric administration and leadership. There is literature that highlights the overlap, as well as the differences, between managers, administrators, and leaders. There are also descriptions of personal attributes and competencies required of an administrative psychiatrist. For sure, there are degree programs, courses, training workshops, and webinars that focus on this area.


A psychiatric organization that is active in this area is the Group for the Advancement of Psychiatry. Its Committee on Administration and Leadership focuses on facilitating the creation and dissemination of knowledge in the field of administration and management, on advancing the field by the creation of innovative ideas that can clarify key issues for the public and leaders in organized psychiatry, and on serving the profession by advancing its body of knowledge through the synthesis and distillation of the key issues in psychiatric administration.

Learning about administration and leadership and, even more importantly, becoming an effective administrator and leader require mentorship to acquire the requisite knowledge and practice (experience). Textbooks written by a select group of authors can provide the framework for increasing the knowledge of both the aspiring and established administrator and leader. For example, the recently published *Textbook of Psychiatric Administration and Leadership* from APA Publishing was co-edited by me, John Lauriello, M.D., and Laura Weiss Roberts, M.D., M.A., and brought together over 50 leaders in the field from across the nation and the globe to synthesize information from basic concepts about leadership and program development to specific information on outcome assessment, malpractice, and health information technology.

Inspiring and training future administrators and leaders is critical to a healthy psychiatric system. Ceding all leadership to nonclinicians risks having important decisions being made by individuals with primarily financial backgrounds. ■



Sy Atezaz Saeed, M.D., M.S., is a professor and chair emeritus in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Medicine at the Brody School of Medicine at East Carolina University in Greenville, North Carolina; founding director of the ECU Center for Telepsychiatry and e-Behavioral Health; and founding executive director of the North Carolina Statewide Telepsychiatry Program (NC-STeP). He is the lead editor of *Textbook of Psychiatric Administration and Leadership, Third Edition*.



POCKET GUIDE TO EMERGENT AND SERIOUS ADVERSE EVENTS IN PSYCHOPHARMACOLOGY

Order @ appi.org or call 1-800-368-5777

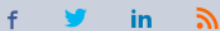


PSYCHIATRIC NEWS

[About](#) | [Content Archive](#) | [Submit a Letter to the Editor or Article](#)



[Contact Us](#) | [Alerts](#) | [Subscriptions](#)



American Psychiatric Association Publishing
Powered by Atypon Literatum

Information

[For Libraries & Institutions](#)
[For Advertisers](#)
[Subscriptions](#)
[Media & Journalists](#)
[Reprints & Permissions](#)
[Copyright & Legal Disclaimer](#)

<https://psychnews.psychiatryonline.org/doi/10.1176/appi.pn.2023.08.8.53>. Accessed August 8, 2023