

APA Federal Advocacy and Policy Update

Week of November 10, 2025

Federal Advocacy & Policy Update: Key Highlights From APA Services

October brought historic disruptions at the federal level, most notably a record-breaking government shutdown that halted critical operations impacting psychological science, education, training, and patient care. Despite this uncertainty, APA Services continued strong federal advocacy across research, practice, education, and health equity.

Federal Government Shutdown: Impacts on Psychology

Throughout October, Congress remained deadlocked over Affordable Care Act premium tax credits, leading to an extended federal government shutdown. APA's Advocacy Office urged Congress to reopen the government—without taking a position on the policy dispute—while emphasizing the urgent need to:

- Resume peer review and federal research funding opportunities
- Restore stability for graduate and early career training programs
- Reinstate Medicare telehealth rules in place prior to Oct. 1
- Permanently repeal the in-person visit requirement

A detailed analysis is available in APA's **Response Center**.

Supreme Court Case: Colorado Ban on Conversion Therapy

APA Services submitted an amicus brief in *Chiles v. Salazar*, a case examining Colorado's ban on conversion therapy for minors. The Court is contending with a core tension:

- Does the ban constitute unconstitutional viewpoint discrimination?
- Or is it a legitimate regulation of harmful professional conduct?

Justices appeared conflicted, and a final ruling is expected by June 2026. APA resources on the harms of conversion therapy and recent media coverage featuring Lynn Buffka provide further context.

APA Policy Updates

Psychological Research & Digital Mental Health

APA advanced science-focused advocacy across multiple fronts:

- Presented at the Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute on digital mental health regulation, including best practices for measurement-informed care and behavioral health tech.
 - Supported a coalition letter urging Congress to fund NIH at no less than \$47.2 billion, with additional resources for ARPA-H.
 - Participated in the inaugural PEER Hill Day advocating for protections for animal research—especially critical as NIH transitions new funding announcements toward non-animal “New Approach Methodologies.”
 - Met with House Science, Space and Technology Committee staff to address concerning changes to NSF’s Graduate Research Fellowship Program, which now excludes clinical psychology programs and restricts eligibility to first-year students.
 - Presented at Inside the Lab in Austin on the regulatory landscape for AI and digital behavioral health tools, underscoring APA’s leadership in shaping ethical, evidence-based innovation.
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Practice of Psychology & Workforce Policy

APA continued to advance key practice priorities, including:

- A national webinar for state associations introducing the Medicaid Advocacy Toolkit, focusing on work requirements, coverage protections, and high-impact state-level opportunities.
 - Ongoing collaboration with behavioral health partners to shape federal and state implementation of new mandatory Medicaid work requirements.
 - Congressional meetings supporting the COMPLETE Care Act, integrated primary-behavioral health services, and stronger Medicare valuations for psychological and neuropsychological testing.
 - Participation in Mental Health America's 2025 Policy Institute on digital behavioral health innovation.
 - Support for the Sickle Cell Disease Comprehensive Care Act, enabling states to develop Medicaid Health Homes for individuals with SCD.
 - Advocacy to protect the VA's integrated health system—vital for training psychologists and delivering high-quality mental and behavioral health care for veterans.
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Education & Training Policy

The Department of Education continued negotiated rulemaking related to the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, with the definition of “professional degree” emerging as the most impactful issue for psychology. APA Advocacy:

- Engaged directly with negotiators, coalitions, and Members of Congress to ensure psychology is fully included in new federal student loan limits.
 - Joined a health professions coalition urging DHS to exempt health professions—including psychology—from the new \$100,000 H-1B visa fee for new applications.
 - Signed onto a coalition statement objecting to large-scale layoffs within the Department of Education that threaten the well-being of students with disabilities.
 - Participated in an American Board of Professional Psychology webinar outlining policy challenges facing international students and scholars.
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Health Equity & Social Justice

APA advanced equity-focused policy through:

- A meeting with Colorado psychologists and APA's Committee on Disability Issues in Psychology (CDIP) to address concerns around how Individualized Education Plans align with school safety preparedness for students with disabilities.
- A virtual advocacy training for the National Latinx Psychological Association, covering legislative strategy, messaging, and APA's ongoing immigration policy efforts. Over **110 registrants** attended the session.