



Message from the President



April 2018

Colleagues,

It's difficult to imagine so many weeks have passed since we met in Berlin. The year thus far has been a busy one. Our Thematic Congress in Melbourne in February provided a successful start to the new Meetings Program and we had some great opportunities there and elsewhere to meet with key supporters of WPA's goals. We've commenced the groundwork on the key priorities of the Action Plan (in which I hope you can participate in various ways) and I invite you to read more about how we are implementing the plan in the article I wrote for the next issue of World Psychiatry.

As many of you will be aware, a number of new policies were ratified at the WPA General Assembly meeting during the 2017 World Congress in Berlin. More recently, at a meeting of the Executive Committee in Melbourne, we took the opportunity to review those policies and to clarify what the changes in each will mean for our member societies. We identified a number of amendments we want to ensure you are aware of and, over the next few months, will share these with you in turn.

This first update will focus on some of the exciting modifications to our *Meetings Policy* and also some of the changes we will be making to how member societies and partners can apply to co-host or co-sponsor a WPA event.

At a time where we see an increasing number of meetings and events from fellow societies, business organisations, pharmaceutical companies and academia, we need to ensure more than ever that the program run by WPA remains distinctive, high-quality and relevant. Accordingly, we have worked to streamline our meetings program to ensure the events we offer not only meet the evolving needs and demands of participants, but that they are also deemed "not-to-be-missed" on the annual events calendar. We have worked to clarify the differing goals of each event type and to simplify the work processes surrounding them.

Going forward, WPA will have two main types of meeting: Congresses and Co-Sponsored Meetings.

WPA Congresses

WPA Congresses will fall into three categories: World Congress of Psychiatry (WCP), Regional Congress and Thematic Congress.

1. WPA World Congress of Psychiatry (WCP)

The World Congress of Psychiatry (WCP) is WPA's flagship event. Traditionally, it has been held every three years, marking the change of the WPA Presidency and general elections. An "International Congress" has been hosted on the off years. Moving forward, a World Congress **will be held annually** and we will no longer host International Congresses. In making this change, we will cement the WCP's role as WPA's key face-to-face activity. Furthermore, it allows us the opportunity to partner more regularly with member societies for the benefit of global psychiatry. General elections will continue to be held every three years.

2. WPA Regional Congress

On the years that a region is NOT hosting a World Congress, it will have the option to organize a Regional Congress. In this way, each part of the world has the opportunity to co-host a WPA event every year. No more than two (2) Regional Congresses will take place annually.

3. WPA Thematic Congress

Thematic Congresses will focus on one or more topics of interest. The purpose of these Congresses is to address special issues that WPA wishes to pursue (e.g. special topic, coverage of a specific region).

They can take place in parts of the world at a time and using a format that does not compete with any of the other organized WCP activities. Thematic Congresses may be organized one or more times a year worldwide.

WPA Co-Sponsored Meetings

Where WPA is involved in the development of meetings with national member societies, WPA components or other reputable organizations such as educational institutions, but is not responsible for the meeting's organization or finances, the event is known as a *Co-Sponsored Meeting*. In these instances, participation of WPA will be subject to its approval of the content of the activity. WPA will offer professional and scientific advice as requested and appropriate.

Previously, it was a WPA requirement that those meetings requesting co-sponsorship include a WPA Board member on their Scientific Committee (or equivalent) and that they also cover all costs associated with that member attending the event. This is no longer the case. Any agreement to co-sponsor a meeting is entered into without any financial commitments from either party.

Applying to Co-sponsor a Meeting

Currently, all applications to co-host a WPA Congress or requests for WPA to co-sponsor a meeting must be made in writing to the WPA Secretariat. The Secretariat then works with the Executive Committee to determine the suitability of the application and to advise the applicant of a decision or to request further information where required. This can be a time-consuming and onerous process for all involved.

Going forward, it is envisaged all co-hosting and co-sponsoring requests will be made via the WPA website and subsequently managed online until a decision is reached and communicated to the applicant. This will improve transparency, shorten turnaround times and drive efficiencies in the event-management process.

Member Societies and other stakeholders will be advised when this tool is available.

More information, including a full copy of the WPA Meetings Policy and a table showing the characteristics of WPA Meetings can be downloaded from our website.

I look forward to being in touch again soon with further news on our work. See you in Mexico!

Best wishes
Helen

Professor Helen Herrman AO
President, World Psychiatric Association