



AMERICAN  
PSYCHOLOGICAL  
ASSOCIATION

**May 5, 2010**

**TO: Members of the APAPO**  
**FROM: APA/APAPO Board of Directors**  
**SUBJECT: The APAPO Practice Assessment**

We have read the questions and comments on several lists about the practice assessment and want to share the following information.

Some history of the original special assessment for practitioners that formed the basis for the current practice assessment will be helpful. The special assessment was created by the APA Council of Representatives in 1985 as a “mandatory assessment” beyond the regular dues payment for licensed healthcare psychologists to fund additional professional practice advocacy activities.

In 1999, it was determined that the practice community needed more and different advocacy activities than APA, a 501(c)3 organization under Internal Revenue Service (IRS) rules, was by law permitted to engage in. In response, the Council created the APA Practice Organization (APAPO), which was launched in 2001 as a 501(c)6 organization free of the IRS restrictions that apply to 501(c)3 organizations. While 501(c)3 organizations must operate for the good of the public, a 501(c)6 organization can focus on advocating for the professional interests of its members. When the APAPO was created, the special assessment became the practice assessment: the funding mechanism for the APA Practice Organization with its sole focus on psychology practice advocacy issues.

The Council's action to create the APAPO did not alter the mandatory nature of the original special assessment. Payment of the practice assessment by licensed practitioner members of APA is required for membership in APAPO. Practitioners who pay the practice assessment (and the majority do) are members of both APA and APAPO.

As was true with the original special assessment for practice advocacy, we do not terminate or deny membership in APA for those practitioners who fail to pay the practice assessment. Those practitioners who do not pay the practice assessment benefit nonetheless from the work of APAPO. Fortunately, most licensed psychologists who provide healthcare services pay the practice assessment to support the advocacy activities that benefit all practitioners.

As the Board of Directors of both the APA and the APAPO we strongly believe that payment of the practice assessment is a shared responsibility the practice community places on itself to advance professional advocacy.

Since the creation of the APAPO, psychology's professional advocacy activities have greatly increased. The APA Practice Organization's many victories on behalf of professional psychology include:

- Gaining federal laws such as full mental health parity
- Advancing and protecting reimbursement for psychological services in both the private and public sectors
- Supporting successful lawsuits against abusive managed care practices
- Protecting the doctoral degree as the standard for psychologist licensure and expanding marketplace opportunities for practitioners

Without the APAPO, these and other victories may not have been possible. And while creating opportunities for practitioners, the APAPO is also confronting growing challenges to professional practice. The continued viability of the APAPO is critical to the profession and depends on your supporting the organization's professional advocacy activities by paying your practice assessment.

The manner in which APA, APAPO and Division dues have been combined on past dues statements does not make clear that the mandatory practice assessment payment is required for APAPO membership but not for APA membership. The 2011 dues statement instructions will be modified to clarify this point.

Only those practitioners who belong to APAPO receive direct benefits such as: access to premium secured content on the Practice Central website including resources such as how to use billing codes, resolving issues with insurance and managed care companies, and strategies for marketing your practice; a free listing in the Psychologist Locator; and the award-winning monthly *PracticeUpdate* e-newsletter and *Good Practice* magazine.

We strongly believe that all psychologists should embrace and sustain a commitment to professional advocacy. A critical component of this advocacy for licensed psychologists is supporting the work of the APA Practice Organization by paying the practice assessment. We greatly appreciate your continued support.