

# News RELEASE

American Psychiatric Association, 1000 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 1825, Arlington, VA 22209

**For Information Contact:**

Amy Levey, 703-907-8534  
[alevey@psych.org](mailto:alevey@psych.org)

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## **American Psychiatric Association, New York State Psychiatric Association Laud Oxford Decision to Terminate Audits of Providers**

The American Psychiatric Association (APA) and the New York State Psychiatric Association (NYSPA) are pleased with the announcement by Oxford Health Plans that it will terminate its audits of behavioral health care providers. According to Marcia Kraft Goin, M.D., Ph.D., APA President, instead of carrying out its demands for the return of monies based on what its audits defined as inadequate documentation, Oxford will join with APA, NYSPA, and the New York State Society of Clinical Social Work to "develop and adopt mutually acceptable standards for office medical record documentation." In a November 7 letter to Oxford Health Plans President and CEO Charles Berg, APA had expressed concerns regarding the audits.

"APA is pleased with this solution. It is a good example of what we can achieve through thoughtful and targeted collaboration between APA and a state association like NYSPA," says James H. Scully, Jr., M.D., APA Medical Director.

Oxford had audited medical records of approximately 80 APA members going back to 1996. Its unidentified reviewers maintained that many of the records lacked sufficient documentation to support the claims paid by Oxford. Oxford then extrapolated the percentage of claims it felt were not justified by the records to the entire universe of the physician's Oxford payments and demanded paybacks based on the extrapolation.

"Given the nature and scope of the audits, the results declared by Oxford were clearly improper and could not be allowed to stand. We commend Oxford for choosing the correct path to resolution," says Irvin "Sam" Muszynski, J.D., Director of APA's Office of Healthcare Systems and Financing. Muszynski's office worked closely with Seth Stein, J.D., executive director of NYSPA, and Barry Perlman, M.D., president of NYSPA, to elicit this remedy from Oxford.

"We aggressively advocated for our members and Oxford has taken appropriate action to discontinue the audits, refund any settlement payments, and return all copies of patient records. However, several issues remain, including the qualifications of reviewers and the use of extrapolation. We look forward to working with Oxford to resolve these issues," Stein says.

APA and NYSPA will meet with representatives from Oxford Health Plans in the near future to begin the process of developing documentation standards for its providers.

The American Psychiatric Association is a national medical specialty society, founded in 1844, whose 38,000 physician members specialize in the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of mental illnesses including substance use disorders. For more information, visit the APA Web site at [www.psych.org](http://www.psych.org).

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