Personal Statement

Statement for WPA Secretary-General - 2023-2029
Saul Levin, M.D., M.P.A., FRCP-E, FRCPsych

As a South African psychiatrist, it is a great honor to be nominated for WPA Secretary-General. Growing up in Johannesburg, I embraced the vision and inspiration of Nelson Mandela and witnessed, at long last, the end of apartheid. After completing medical school at the University of Witwatersrand, where I worked with and treated a diverse patient population, I went on to the United States to complete psychiatry residency training as an international medical graduate. Later, as the President and CEO of Medical Education for South African Blacks (MESAB), an anti-apartheid education trust, I forged partnerships between South Africans and Americans to provide scholarships to South African Black students to become physicians, nurses, substance abuse counselors, and other healthcare professionals.

While in the United States, I worked with federal, state, and local governments, private companies, public institutions, and medical organizations. As a special expert appointee to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), I led the initiative to integrate primary care, substance abuse, mental health, and HIV/AIDS response. As the Head of the Washington, DC Department of Health (DOH) and as the Senior Deputy Director of the Addiction Prevention and Recovery Administration (APRA), I promoted substance abuse and illness prevention efforts in addition to healthy lifestyles, protection from public health threats, and equal access to quality healthcare services. As the Vice President for Science, Medicine, and Public Health at the American Medical Association, I oversaw programs related to evolving health delivery systems, including areas of prevention and healthcare disparities, and improved the interface between clinical medicine and public health. Since 2013, I have been the CEO and Medical Director/Secretary General of the American Psychiatric Association, a WPA member society composed of psychiatrists, trainees, and students from over 100 countries. I work with the board and executive staff to implement the strategic goals and objectives of the organization and to ensure transparency in governance. Throughout each of these roles I have worked to promote greater diversity and inclusion within programs and policies and foster collaboration and partnership. I welcome the opportunity to bring my passion in organized medicine to the WPA. As WPA Secretary-General I would share my knowledge and skills in governance and administration working with the WPA Secretariat to ensure that the goals, vision, and objectives of WPA leadership and member societies are met.

I am an Honorary Member of the South African Society of Psychiatry, an International Advisory Member of the Japanese Society of Psychiatry and Neurology, and a Fellow of the Royal College of Psychiatrists and the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh. I have been a member of the WPA Planning Committee since 2015 and a member the WPA Advisory Committee on Response to Emergencies (ACRE) since it was established in 2020. It has been a great privilege to serve the WPA and, if elected, I will work through the WPA Secretariat to support our colleagues, our profession, and the communities we serve around the globe.