National Dialogues on Behavioral Health

The 67th Annual Conference

Harnessing Artificial Intelligence: Innovation, Integrity, Impact

November 8-11, 2026

Renaissance Arts Hotel
New Orleans, Louisiana



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National Dialogues on Behavioral Health Partners:
The National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors (NASMHPD)
The Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education Behavioral Health Program (WICHE-BHP) and
The National Association of County Behavioral Health and Disability Directors (NACBHDD)

CONFERENCE AGENDA

Sunday, November 8, 2026 - Pre-Conference

9:00 – 9:30 **Registration and Coffee**

9:30 – 9:45 **Pre-Conference Overview**

9:45 – 1:30 ***Artificial Intelligence and Behavioral Health: Introduction and Overview***

This pre-conference is an introduction to artificial intelligence (AI) and its applications to behavioral health. The objective of this session is to provide a broad orientation to artificial intelligence and to the various ways in which AI can contribute to behavioral health programs and support services. The goal is to help attendees understand and participate in the conference sessions that will cover the same areas in greater depth and detail. An overview of rudiments of artificial intelligence and its use in behavioral health clinical and support systems, the dangers and challenges of AI application, and issues related to training and implementation of AI in behavioral health settings will be provided.

The pre-conference will also include presentations by developers of tools and apps who will describe functions, outcomes achieved, training required, and challenges in implementation.
Speakers: Frederick Reamer, Rhode Island College; Brian Hepburn, MD, Executive Director, National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors; Jessica Pollard, Ph.D. Senior Behavioral Health Advisor, National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors; Julie Hiett, Vice President and General Manager, Bells AI, Netsmart.

Monday, November 9, 2026

8:00 – 8:30 **Registration and Continental Breakfast**

8:30 – 8:45 **Welcome and Overview – Vijay Ganju, Ph.D., President, NDBH**

8:45 – 10:15 ***Artificial Intelligence and Behavioral Health: An Introduction to Basics and Tools***

This plenary session provides an introduction and an overview of the fundamentals of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in healthcare in general and in behavioral health in particular. The evolution of AI in both mental health and substance use treatment and support will be covered, and effective AI tools will be reviewed. The issues that arise in the application of AI to personalized treatment and self-help, the provision of clinical care and support, the adoption and implementation of AI at the organizational

level, and the need for governance, regulatory and accountability infrastructure will be addressed. Also addressing concerns about potential negative aspects related to data privacy, confidentiality, equitable access and algorithmic reliability will be a key aspect of this session.
Speakers: Frederick Reamer, Rhode Island College; Jeff Greenberg, Ph.D., Clarity Wellness Technologies; Jessica Pollard, Ph.D. Senior Behavioral Health Advisor, National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors.

10:15 – 10:30 **Break**

10:30 – 11:15 ***Artificial Intelligence and Behavioral Health: An Introduction to Basics and Tools (Continued)***

11:15 – 12:00 **Discussion and Dialogue**

12:00 – 1:30 **Lunch on Your Own**

1:30 – 3:00 ***Data and Predictive Analysis Using Artificial Intelligence***

AI is especially strong at detecting patterns that humans might miss. AI uses data and predictive analysis to improve behavioral health care and outcomes. These predictive models use different models including: Speech and language analysis; Behavioral data, including sleep patterns and activity logs; Social media and text analysis; Databases of therapeutic notes and records in substance use that are used for risk prediction, early warning signs and prescription monitoring. This session will describe how predictive analysis is implemented and applied, and all the precautions and safeguards that must be in place to ensure optimal outcomes.
Speakers: Shannon Wiltsey Stirman, Ph.D., Co-Director, CREATE Center, Stanford University; Jeff Greenberg, Ph.D., Clarity Wellness Technologies; Alka Menon, Ph.D., Yale University.

3:00 – 3:15 **Break**

3:15 – 4:00 ***Data and Predictive Analysis Using Artificial Intelligence (Continued)***

4:00 – 4:45 **Discussion and Dialogue**

5:00 – 6:30 ***Reception and Networking (Renaissance Arts Art Gallery)***
Join us for hors d'oeuvres and beverages in a relaxed and collegial atmosphere while having an opportunity to dialogue with today's speakers, conference sponsors, and other conference attendees to learn more about the topics discussed during today's sessions.







Tuesday, November 10, 2026

8:00 – 8:30 **Registration and Continental Breakfast**

8:30 – 8:45 **Overview of the Day**

8:45 – 10:15 ***Artificial Intelligence in Behavioral Health Clinical Care and Support***

AI-driven tools including chatbots, virtual therapists, and diagnostic accuracy aids are transforming how behavioral health clinical care and support are delivered. These tools are being used in early detection and diagnosis, treatment planning, addiction treatment, and for reducing symptoms of depression and anxiety. Popular apps (e.g. Apple's Health and Mindfulness App, Woebot's AI-driven mental health support, WYSA's AI-powered Cognitive Behavior Therapy, LYSSN's motivational interviewing app) are universally and easily available. At the same time there are specific apps that help behavioral health organizations scale access and improve care. This session will describe the various ways AI is augmenting care with a focus on how clinicians can learn to capitalize on these tools and how organizations can support uptake and training. Implementation challenges and issues related to data privacy and confidentiality will also be addressed.
Speakers: Phillip Olla, Ph.D., University of Detroit, Chris Kennedy, Ph.D., Harvard Medical School; Reactant: Johnny Crowder, CRPS, CEO and Founder, COPENOTES.

10:15 – 10:30 **Break**

10:30 – 11:15 ***Artificial Intelligence in Behavioral Health Clinical Care and Support (Continued)***

11:15 – 12:00 **Discussion and Dialogue**

12:00 – 1:30 **Lunch on Your Own**

1:30 – 3:00 ***Artificial Intelligence and Behavioral Health: Governance, Regulation and Accountability***

While AI provides opportunities and efficiencies covered in the other sessions, there are also serious risks and ethical concerns. AI chatbots may provide inaccurate, misleading or harmful responses. Besides issues related to safety and harm, there are also issues of transparency and autonomy. Users may not know how decisions are being made or whether they are interacting with AI rather than a clinician. There can also be algorithmic bias and inequity. Several states such as Illinois, Nevada, and Texas have developed state-level legal and regulatory frameworks. Some states like Colorado have enacted AI laws. Consensus and Best Practice Guidelines have been and are being developed; and there are a range of accountability mechanisms. Despite these efforts, there are significant gaps, especially because state laws vary widely. This session will review the advances that have been made in the different areas and the future directions of work that are needed to ensure appropriate implementation.

Speakers: Alka Menon, Ph.D., Yale University; Christian Hyde, M.P.H., NASMHPD Research Institute; Kim Corace, Ph.D., Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction.

3:00 – 3:15 **Break**

3:15 – 4:00 ***Artificial Intelligence and Behavioral Health: Governance, Regulation and Accountability (Continued)***

4:00 – 4:45 **Discussion and Dialogue**

Wednesday, November 11, 2026

8:00 – 8:30 **Registration and Continental Breakfast**

8:30 – 8:45 **Overview of the Day**

8:45 – 10:00 ***Artificial Intelligence and Behavioral Health: Impact on the Workforce***

Given the potential benefits, AI is likely to have a major impact on the workforce. In clinical support, AI is being used for symptom screening, measurement-based care, and clinical support. AI is also being used for automated documentation and note taking, for scheduling, intake and insurance verification and for prior authorization support. AI is also used for psychoeducation, between-session support and in stepped-care models. All these uses will result in clinicians spending less time on paperwork and more time on human connection, resulting in task redistribution. At the same time, the advent of AI will require new roles in behavioral health organizations. These include digital mental health specialists, AI-informed care coordinators and clinical supervisors overseeing AI-enabled care. Clearly AI will redefine the workforce. This session will cover the changing roles entailed by AI, the organizational support needed for the uptake of AI, and the training resources needed for the implementation of an increasingly AI-driven system of care. Examples of best practices will be provided.
Speakers: Shannon Wiltsey Stirman, Ph.D., Co-Director, CREATE Center, Stanford University; Elisa Borah, Ph.D., University of Texas; Sam Dorison, Co-founder and CEO, ReflexAI; Kevin Tanner, Commissioner, Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities.

10:00 – 10:15 **Break**

10:15 – 11:30 ***Artificial Intelligence and Behavioral Health: Impact on the Workforce (Continued)***

11:30 – 12:00 **Discussion and Dialogue**

12:00 – 12:15 **Wrap Up and Closing**

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We hope to See You Again Next Year for Our 68th Annual Conference! Be sure to check our website at https://nationaldialoguesbh.org for updates



National Dialogues on Behavioral Health (formerly the Southern Regional Conference on Mental Health Statistics) is one of the longest running mental health conferences convened annually in the United States!

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