

OUTREACH

September/October 2024

ISSUE 05, VOLUME 41

California Association of Psychiatric Technicians

40

YEARS STRONG!

**CAPT Celebrates its 40th
Anniversary at its Annual Meeting
in Beautiful South Lake Tahoe**

INSIDE:

- CAPT's Annual Report
- Association Business
- Special Guest: CAPT Founding Consultant Ken Murch
- CAPT Awards
- Activist Training
- Tony Myers Memorial PT Scholarship Awards

Welcome.

California Association of Psychiatric Technicians

The California Association of Psychiatric Technicians is a non-profit corporation serving as the exclusive representative of all employees in Psychiatric Technician Bargaining Unit 18 in California State Civil Service. CAPT is also the professional association for approximately 11,000 state-licensed Psych Techs who work in California programs serving people with mental illnesses and developmental disabilities. CAPT is represented by Lyles, Wiesmann, Pizzotti and Associates, Inc. The *Outreach* is CAPT's official publication and is printed at least six times each year. A digital archive of the *Outreach* is maintained at www.psychtechs.net.



After sharing reflections on CAPT's grassroots origins and history, CAPT Founding Consultant Ken Murch receives a standing ovation from the delegation at CAPT's 40th Annual Meeting; see the full meeting recap on page 12.

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You may contact your state and chapter officers directly. Their contact information is listed on page 4. Be sure to leave your name, work location, and phone number, as well as a short explanation of your issue.



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Important Reminders

Audit of fiscal records and annual reports

As a CAPT member in good standing, you have a right to request copies of the State Association's Operating Policies, Constitution and Bylaws, and Articles of Incorporation, as well as your chapter's CBLs and annual financial report. To obtain copies of union documents, you must complete and sign an Access Request Form, which can be obtained by contacting CAPT Headquarters at 1-800-677-2278. CAPT headquarters will mail the requested documents within one week of receipt of the Access Request Form.

CAPT Board Meeting

The CAPT Board of Directors will meet for its fourth quarterly meeting on December 17 and 18 at CAPT headquarters in Sacramento, 1220 S Street, Suite 100. The meeting will begin at 11:00 a.m. (meeting times are subject to change). CAPT board meetings are open to all CAPT members. For more information or to RSVP, please contact State President Eric Soto at (909) 364-2486 or at eric.soto@psychtechs.net.

Planning to retire soon?

Don't forget that CAPT offers its retired members insurance benefits similar to what it provides its active members. As a retired member, CAPT will continue to provide – \$5,000 in Accidental Death and Dismemberment coverage and \$5,000 in Life Insurance – without any age term.

Important: For your insurance to continue after your retirement – for only \$5 per month – you must contact CAPT Headquarters at (800) 677-2278 within 31 days of the last day in the month in which you retired. If you fail to do so, your policy will lapse and cannot be reinstated.

psychtechs.net

Keep abreast of what's happening! CAPT updates its website frequently, making sure you have current information on state, department, and CAPT news, at your facility and statewide.



California Association
of Psychiatric Technicians



State President's
ANNUAL REPORT

*40th Annual Meeting
September 25-26, 2024*



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Eric Soto, a second-generation Psychiatric Technician and devoted member of CAPT, started his Psych Tech career at Metropolitan State Hospital in 1998 at age nineteen. His passion for workplace justice and early involvement in CAPT's mission swiftly propelled him into leadership roles. By 2005, he was appointed Chief Steward for the CAPT Metro Chapter, followed by his election as Chapter Vice President in 2008. In 2010, Eric became Chapter President, a role he held for four consecutive terms.

Known for his unwavering advocacy, Eric organized multiple picketing campaigns, often collaborating with other bargaining units to strengthen their collective impact. His efforts earned him a reputation for being relentless in his representation of Psych Techs, especially when it came to safeguarding their rights and working conditions.

In 2016, Eric was elected CAPT State President. Over the years, he has played a crucial role in shaping the future of Psychiatric Technicians across the state. A veteran of CAPT's negotiating team, Eric has successfully facilitated four contract negotiations between the State of California and CAPT, advocating for fair and equitable agreements for his fellow members.

Beyond bargaining, Eric has left a lasting mark on CAPT's internal structure. He spearheaded the development of the Grievance Manager software and played a key role in launching the Advanced Steward Training program, enhancing the union's capacity for effective representation.

Eric's commitment to labor advocacy extends to his personal growth. He continually seeks to expand his expertise through ongoing education in labor studies, reflecting his dedication to advancing the interests of his CAPT Brothers and Sisters.

The California Association of Psychiatric Technicians

The professional association for approximately 11,000 state-licensed Psychiatric Technicians who work in California programs serving people with mental illnesses and developmental disabilities.

The elected union representative for Psychiatric Technicians and related professionals working in California state prisons, hospitals, developmental centers and community state staffing homes.

The exclusive representative for approximately 5,500 members who belong to a state employee Bargaining Unit 18.



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Welcome

CAPT Brothers and Sisters, honored guests; I am deeply honored to welcome you to this historic 40th CAPT Annual Meeting. Presiding over this milestone gathering is both a privilege and a responsibility. On behalf of the Northern Corrections, Napa, and Stockton chapters and CAPT Headquarters, I extend my warmest welcome to everyone.

For those who are new to this experience, the Annual Meeting is a platform where delegates from all CAPT chapters across California come together to represent their fellow workers and conduct the essential business of our union. Your role is crucial as you engage in discussions, deliberations, and decision-making, including updating and refining our Constitution and By-laws. In even-numbered years, you may also take part in electing our state officers, shaping the leadership that will guide us forward.

As union members and activists, you will be equipped with invaluable tools for representing our members. You will gain insights into Investigative Interviews and strengthen your ability to stand up for those we serve.

As your State President, I must provide this body with a report on our organization's activities since last year's meeting. Today, I will share the challenges we've faced and the victories we've fought

hard to win, and I will issue a call to action. We must reaffirm our commitment to our sacred duty of protecting our members, enforcing our contract, improving working conditions, and fighting for a better future for all workers.

While we strategize for the battles ahead, reflecting on the path that brought us here is important. We owe much to those who paved the way. Today, we honor those individuals. I'm proud to welcome our esteemed guests—Randy Tyer, Integrated Community Chapter President and Ken Murch, CAPT's former Lobbyist and Chief Negotiator. Lastly, with both pride and a touch of sadness, we will express our deepest gratitude to two of CAPT's pillars as they prepare to embark on their well-deserved retirements.

We are excited to introduce and welcome CAPT's newest employee, Carrie Green. Carrie joined CAPT in July as the new Accounting Consultant. With decades of experience in bookkeeping, payroll processing, financial reporting, and accounts payable and receivable, Carrie brings a wealth of knowledge to her role. Her enthusiasm and energy have already made a positive impact, and we're thrilled to have her on the CAPT team.

Ken Murch (left) standing next to State President Jay Salter during CAPT's ballot countdown to victory (66%) over the Communication Workers of America (31%) at the California Public Employment Relations Board on June 5, 1989.





Contract Enforcement and Representation

One of the most fundamental duties of any labor union is contract enforcement. As many of you may have heard me say before, whether at an Annual Meeting or your local chapter, “A contract is just a piece of paper if we aren’t prepared to fight for it.” Our local chapters remain vigilant, holding management accountable when they violate the terms of our contract—whether out of ignorance or malice—because any breach denies our members the hard-earned rights we’ve fought for.

At CAPT, we’ve long embraced a philosophy of approaching discussions with management in good faith. We start every meeting with a smile and a handshake, hoping to resolve issues amicably. Often, this approach works, and we reach common ground. However, we remain unwavering in our preparedness to take stronger action when necessary. Our responsibility as advocates, defenders, and guardians of the contract means we must be ready to use every tool available to uphold the rights of our mem-

bers and the integrity of our profession. Our Headquarters and Chapter representatives rigorously prepare for these encounters, ensuring they are equipped to handle grievances, disputes, and contract violations with the utmost professionalism.

Looking ahead, CAPT has been proactive in preparing for the upcoming retirements of key Headquarters staff. We’ve tapped two highly capable leaders, Kim Souza and Carlos Garcia, both chapter presidents, to train alongside Ann Lyles and me in providing statewide representation. Both Kim and Carlos have excelled in facilitating grievance conferences and meetings and have provided invaluable support to local chapters, offering guidance on a wide range of issues, including strategy, grievances, and representation. They are already working closely with chapters to fine-tune grievances and prepare cases for expedited arbitration, ensuring a smooth transition and continued robust representation for our members.

Training and Development

CAPT has always emphasized readily available and accessible training opportunities for our activists. Membership engagement and activism are one of the cornerstones of a vibrant and active union. CAPT is committed to identifying and inspiring members to become advocates—not just for themselves but for their CAPT Brothers and Sisters. CAPT Consultant Ann Lyles and I continue to lead Basic Job Steward Training, and since last year, we've trained approximately seventeen members statewide, and more are being scheduled.

Basic Job Steward Training is often just the first step in a CAPT activist's journey. For those looking to deepen their understanding of union representation or explore the tactics and strategies employed at the local level, CAPT offers Advanced Steward Training to our more experienced representatives. These experienced representatives play a crucial role in our union's success, and we encourage others to follow their lead. In addition, every two years, following chapter elections, we provide essential Officer Training for newly elected officers, including training for new Chapter Presidents. This training equips officers with the knowledge they need to navigate CAPT policies and carry out their responsibilities as union leaders.

In our ongoing efforts to support other independent, unaffiliated public employee unions, CAPT remains a dedicated member of the Working Assembly of Government Employees (WAGE). CAPT sends a delegation to WAGE conferences twice a year, where union activists network, share their experiences and learn from each other's challenges and victories. CAPT's State Vice President, Paul Hannula, serves on WAGE's Board of Directors. This organization is a valuable resource, helping independent public employee unions remain strong and successful in their advocacy.





NSH Psych Tech Apprentices, June 7, 2023

Apprenticeships and 20/20 Programs

The California Association of Psychiatric Technicians continues collaborating with the Department of State Hospitals (DSH) to bring more Psych Techs into state service. The Joint Apprenticeship Committee (JAC), which includes CAPT, DSH, the Federal Department of Labor, and Napa Valley College, oversees the Psych Tech Apprenticeship via the Fast Track Program. This program allows Psych Tech Apprentices to join DSH as employees, gaining essential on-the-job training while completing their Psych Tech education.

Furthermore, CAPT and DSH play a crucial role in the 20/20 Committee, which is responsible for overseeing and allocating funding for participating facilities. This program, currently implemented at Coalinga, Metropolitan, and Patton State Hospitals, offers full-time state employees the opportunity to attend a Psych Tech program while working 20 hours per week but receiving pay for 40 hours. Despite a decline in enrollment during and immediately after the pandemic, both the Apprenticeship and 20/20 Programs are now experiencing a resurgence in interest.

■ Report Continued, page 16

NSH Psych Tech Apprentices, June 7, 2023





Celebrating 40 years of CAPT

*Advancing Unity and Advocacy
for Psych Techs!*

The California Association of Psychiatric Technicians recently concluded its 40th Annual Meeting, a milestone event in the union's calendar, bringing together members from chapters across California. Held from September 24-26 at the scenic Beach Retreat and Lodge in South Lake Tahoe, this year's meeting, hosted by the Northern Corrections, Napa, and Stockton Chapters, was not only a reflection on CAPT's 40 years of dedication to the Psychiatric Technician profession but also a platform for professional development, union business, and recognition of remarkable member achievements.

Welcome Reception

The Annual Meeting began on Tuesday evening with a warm welcome reception that gathered CAPT state and chapter officers, elected delegates, consultants, and guests. The event fostered an inviting environment where returning participants reconnected with colleagues, and new attendees

were introduced to CAPT's leadership, consultants, and members from across the state. The reception allowed newcomers to ease into the event. For all participants, it provided a space to exchange ideas, share stories, and prepare for the important discussions and activities ahead.

Opening Ceremony and President's Report



The meeting officially commenced on Wednesday, September 25, with the opening ceremony featuring traditional elements such as the invocation, roll call, and recitation of the Psychiatric Technician Pledge. This year, first-time delegate PT Alexandra Pantoja from the Metro Chapter (shown left) was honored to recite the pledge.

Following the ceremony, CAPT State President Eric Soto delivered his Annual Report, a crucial part of the meeting that addressed the union's achievements and challenges over the past year.



President Soto (shown left) outlined significant issues in his report, such as contract enforcement and member representation, highlighting CAPT's successful advocacy in protecting PT rights and benefits. He also discussed ongoing efforts to advance the PT profession, emphasizing

CAPT's commitment to providing training and development opportunities for union activists. Soto also provided critical updates on our departments, warning of the escalating threat posed by contract registries and their potential to undermine the profession by outsourcing positions to non-unionized labor. The full text of President Soto's report is available in this Outreach, beginning on page 7.

Making a Difference Award



A highlight of the Annual Meeting was the presentation of the prestigious Making a Difference Award for Outstanding Professionalism. This award, given to a CAPT member who has demonstrated exceptional bravery and professionalism, was awarded to

Patton Chapter Vice President Gad Panford. Gad was honored for his life-saving actions during the 2023 Annual Meeting, where he responded swiftly and effectively when a guest began choking and lost the ability to breathe. Gad's quick thinking and application of life-saving measures exemplify the vigilance and skill required of a Psychiatric Technician, and his actions serve as an inspiration to all CAPT members.

Special Achievement Awards



Several members were recognized for their exceptional contributions to CAPT's financial management and membership recruitment efforts. Atascadero Chapter Secretary/Treasurer Tessa Hannula (shown left) received the Special Achievement Award for consistent and accurate financial reporting, demonstrating an exemplary commitment to CAPT's financial stewardship.

Membership recruitment awards were also handed out, recognizing chapters with the highest membership rates. Metro Chapter took first place with a remarkable 98.2% membership rate, followed by the Southern Corrections Chapter at 95.3% and the Coalinga Chapter at 93.9%. The Patton Chapter received the award for the greatest improvement in membership with a 0.90% increase, while the Atascadero Chapter improved by 0.50%. As of September 2024, CAPT's statewide membership stood at 90.8%, a testament to the union's ongoing efforts to maintain strong member engagement.



CAPT Founding Consultant Ken Murch

One of the most anticipated moments of the Annual Meeting was the address by CAPT's founding consultant and retired lobbyist, Ken Murch. As a key figure in the formation of CAPT, Ken shared reflections on the union's history, which began in 1985 when he and his partner Dan Western helped five determined Psychiatric Technicians break away from the Communication Workers of America to form an independent union tailored specifically for the PT profession.



CAPT Founding Consultant Ken Murch pictured with Atascadero Chapter Vice President Steve Wright.

Ken's speech was a powerful reminder of CAPT's grassroots origins and the challenges the union overcame to become the exclusive representative for Psychiatric Technicians in 1986. He emphasized the ongoing importance of CAPT's legislative program and the critical role of facility tours in educating lawmakers about the work PTs do. He also strongly warned about the increasing use of contract registries, urging members to continue advo-

cating for the profession and ensuring PT schools remain vibrant. Ken's words left a lasting impact on the attendees, reinforcing the need for continued vigilance and activism to protect the profession's integrity. At the end of the speech, the delegation honored Ken with a standing ovation.

'Defense during Investigations'

The Annual Meeting also featured an informative professional presentation by Wendy Leonard, the lead labor representative at the Washoe County Employees Association. Wendy's Defense during Investigations session provided attendees with practical, hands-on guidance on representing workers during investigatory interviews. Her presentation covered critical topics such as the rights and responsibilities of both the investigator and the representative, strategies for setting the stage and preparing a defense, and the rules of just cause. She also highlighted common mistakes representatives make during investigations and offered practical tips on avoiding them. Wendy's engaging and insightful presentation gave CAPT members valuable tools to strengthen their representation skills.



Wendy Leonard, the lead labor representative at the Washoe County Employees Association



Consideration of Resolutions



A vital component of the Annual Meeting is considering proposed resolutions that govern CAPT's operations and structure. This year, delegates voted on eleven proposed resolutions to update the CAPT Bylaws and Constitution to reflect current

operational needs and improve efficiency. By adopting these resolutions, the delegation strengthened CAPT's governance framework, ensuring the union is well-positioned to meet future challenges and effectively represent its members.

Conclusion

CAPT's 40th Annual Meeting was a resounding success. It offered a balanced mix of reflection on the union's history, professional development, and strategic planning for the future. The meeting reinforced CAPT's core mission: to promote Psychiatric Technician professionalism, activism, and advocacy. As always, the Annual Meeting serves as an important reminder of the strength of CAPT's community and the power of collective action in improving the lives of its members and safeguarding the PT profession.





CAPT's 40th Annual Delegation



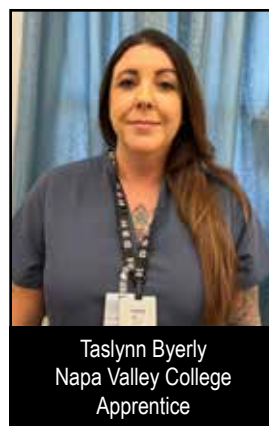
CAPT delegates by chapter pictured alphabetically: Atascadero, Coalinga, Community Facilities, Northern Corrections, Southern Corrections, Integrated Community, Metropolitan, Napa, Patton, Porterville, and Stockton



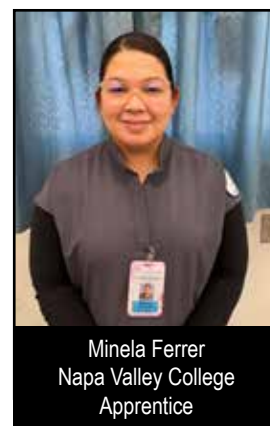
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Taslynn Byerly
Napa Valley College
Apprentice



Minela Ferrer
Napa Valley College
Apprentice



Amina Nakiyaga
Cuesta College



Alonso Rodriguez
San Bernardino Valley
College



Anthony Salinas
Mt. San Antonio College



Christina Salinas
Mt. San Antonio College



Corazon Sheffield
Napa Valley College
Apprentice

Scholarship recipients are pictured alphabetically

CAPT Awards Nine PT Scholarships in 20th Year of Anthony Myers Memorial Program

CAPT proudly awarded \$1,000 scholarships to nine deserving Psychiatric Technician students this year through its highly regarded scholarship program. Now celebrating its 20th year, the program offers financial assistance to students pursuing their Psychiatric Technology education, helping ease the burden of tuition and other expenses. Scholarships are available to CAPT members, their relatives, or individuals residing in a member's home.

In 2014, CAPT's Board of Directors renamed the annual scholarship program the Anthony Myers Memorial Scholarship Program in memory of CAPT's late state president, Tony Myers (pictured top, left), who passed away on January 1, 2014. Tony Myers was elected state president in 2000 and held the office until 2013. Tony was a passionate advocate for the education of Psych Techs and played a crucial role in establishing the scholarship program.

A special thank you to this year's Scholarship Committee members: Eric Soto, CAPT State President; Kim Souza, Northern Corrections Chapter President; Chuck Garcia, Metropolitan Chapter President; Tonja Juneau, Patton Chapter Secretary; and Carol Wiesmann, CAPT Consultant.

The scholarships are funded through the generous support of the [American Association of Psychiatric Technicians](#) (AAPT), which has contributed over \$70,700 to date. AAPT also provides certification services for mental health professionals in the 46 states that do not license Psych Techs. Thanks to AAPT's ongoing contributions, CAPT's scholarship program has awarded more than 222 scholarships.

Be on the lookout for details about the 2025 application process, which will begin next spring.

Important Notice on DSH Facility Expansion for Coleman Patients



August 15, 2024

CAPT wants to inform you of a significant development that will impact our facilities at DSH-Atascadero, DSH-Coalinga, and DSH-Patton. Beginning September 16, 2024, the Department of State Hospitals will expand its eligibility criteria to admit a new category of Coleman patients.

Eligibility Criteria

DSH may now admit Coleman patients from the California Department of Corrections (CDCR) who fall into the following categories:

- Life Without Parole (LWOP) Inmates who are over 62 years old
- Close Custody Inmates with specific security needs
- Single Cell Suffix Inmates with mental health or victimization concerns

This expansion will help ensure that these patients receive the specialized treatment that DSH offers when clinically indicated. Each referral will undergo a stringent screening and referral process before admission.



California Association of Psychiatric Technicians

Patients accepted under these new criteria will first be admitted to the Admissions Unit for a comprehensive assessment period lasting up to 60 days. During this time, an interdisciplinary team (IDT) will review their medication and treatment program. If a patient's mental status or behavior prevents them from being moved to a living unit or dorm within 60 days, they will be returned to CDCR.

Facility Bed Availability

As part of the requirements under *Coleman v. Newsom*, DSH must make 336 intermediate care beds available to treat CDCR inmates. These beds are distributed across our facilities as follows:

- DSH-Atascadero: 256 beds available, presently housing 103 Coleman patients
- DSH-Coalinga: 50 beds available, presently housing 37 Coleman patients
- DSH-Patton: 30 beds available, presently housing 6 Coleman patients

CAPT has been assured that this expansion will not result in or worsen existing staffing shortages. Patients will be admitted to Intermediate Care Facility (ICF) units operating under the standard staffing ratios of 1/8, 1/8, and 1/16.

The primary goal of this expansion is to improve mental health outcomes for a broader range of Coleman patients. By admitting these patients when clinically indicated, we can provide the specialized care that might be lacking in other settings.

If you have any questions or concerns about this expansion, please do not hesitate to contact your local chapter representative.

DSH to implement new security protocols for ASSIST



California Association of Psychiatric Technicians

September 13, 2024

On September 12, 2024, CAPT representatives from our DSH chapters met with the Department of State Hospitals to discuss concerns about the upcoming security changes to ASSIST. Beginning **December 17, 2024**, DSH will implement Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) for employees accessing ASSIST externally on personal devices. MFA adds an extra layer of security by requiring you to provide two verification forms to log into ASSIST on non-DSH devices. This change will affect how all staff log into the system when using non-DSH devices.

CAPT raised concerns about protecting our members' personal devices and maintaining privacy. DSH assured CAPT that MFA is simply an additional security layer and that no personal information will be accessed from your devices. We also asked how MFA will impact members' ability to utilize contractual items when accessing ASSIST outside the facility. DSH said there would be no impact until December 17, 2024—access to ASSIST will remain unchanged until then.

Security Changes

MFA will require users to verify their identity through two methods when accessing ASSIST from non-DSH devices. You will log in using your work email address, but your password remains unchanged. These changes apply only to external access from personal devices.

Anyone using ASSIST on a personal device will need to enroll in MFA. You must enroll in person at your facility's Technology Services Help Desk as soon as possible. Users who do not enroll by the **December 17** deadline will not be able to access ASSIST from their personal devices.

Users can choose one of several verification methods, including authenticator apps (Microsoft) and SMS text messaging, which require registering their cell phone numbers.

DSH will provide comprehensive training materials and support through the Help Desk support team to ensure a smooth transition.

Please get in touch with your local chapter president if you have any questions or would like more information.

DSH-Napa Implements Rotating Schedule

CAPT Secures Fair Post & Bid and Preserves No Mandate Before Pivot Day



California Association of Psychiatric Technicians

October 29, 2024

In late August, the Department of State Hospitals (DSH) notified CAPT about Napa's proposal to implement a rotating Daphne schedule. CAPT met with Department and facility representatives in early October to address our concerns and ensure that the needs of our BU 18 members were heard. Management stated that the schedule change's goals were to provide more employees with weekends off, reduce unscheduled absences, and attract new hires.

CAPT surveyed Napa members to gather feedback and held meetings to understand their thoughts on the proposal. While many showed interest, some voiced concerns about the "pivot day" and the upcoming vacation bid. Napa administration has since agreed to continue the practice of not mandating BU 18 employees the day before their pivot day.

Due to the extensive nature of this schedule change, the entire Post and Bid will have to be redone. During our discussions, CAPT identified and resolved discrepancies, including several missing Post-and-Bid positions and an equitable distribution of AM and SPT positions.

All eligible BU 18 employees (excluding those on probation) will receive an appointment date and time based on seniority. Employees in management positions, including off-unit staff, may choose not to keep their appointments. Any BU 18 employee on long-term leave (IDL/EIDL, NDI, etc.) will also be given appointments. However, they must be able to report to their awarded position by January 1, 2025.

Post & Bid Dates: Nov. 4 – Nov. 12

Appointment Scheduling: Employees will be scheduled in 10-minute intervals. In-person attendance is encouraged, though call-in and proxy options are available. CAPT observers will be present to ensure fairness and accuracy and to assist with any questions. After the hospital-wide Post and Bid is completed, vacation bidding will be scheduled.

CAPT continues to advocate for this scheduling change's fair and successful roll-out. We're here to support your questions and concerns every step of the way.

If you have any questions or need assistance, please contact Napa Chapter VP Samona Booker at (707) 373-8152 or delgado@psychtechs.net



Exercise Your Right to Vote This Election Day

California Association of Psychiatric Technicians

November 5, 2024!

October 30, 2024

Under California state law ([Elections Code 14000](#)), all employees are guaranteed Time off to vote in statewide elections if their schedule doesn't provide adequate Time to vote outside working hours. This right is essential for BU 18 Psych Techs working in 24/7 facilities, where shifts and unexpected mandatory overtime can limit access to voting.

Know Your Voting Rights

Paid Time Off for Voting: If your regular schedule doesn't allow sufficient Time to vote, you are entitled to take up to two hours of paid Time off at the beginning or end of your shift.

Advance Notice Requirement: To secure this Time off, notify your employer by Sunday, November 3, 2025 (two days before Election Day) if you anticipate needing Time off to vote.

What if Your Shift Changes?: If, on Election Day, you find yourself unexpectedly mandated for an additional shift that interferes with your ability to vote, immediately inform your supervisor. Under the law, this situation entitles you to request the necessary Time off to vote without pay loss, even if prior notice wasn't given.

Your participation in the democratic process matters, so take the time to cast your vote this Election Day. If you encounter issues securing time off to vote, contact your local chapter for support.

■ *Report Continued, from page 11*

BVNPT and the Psych Tech Profession

CAPT has long been the voice for all Psychiatric Technicians in California. As the professional organization advocating for the Psychiatric Technician profession, CAPT remains deeply involved with the Board of Vocational Nurses and Psychiatric Technicians (BVNPT). CAPT staff and representatives regularly liaise with the licensing board on matters of policy, enforcement, and discipline, ensuring that the interests of our profession are represented. CAPT frequently recommends current and former members for appointment to the BVNPT by the Governor, helping to maintain strong professional oversight.

Since the COVID pandemic, we've witnessed a noticeable decline in enrollment across many health-care programs, and the Psychiatric Technician programs have been no exception. CAPT continues

to engage with community colleges and Regional Occupational Programs (ROP) to educate students about the Psychiatric Technician profession. We are also exploring ways to connect with local high schools, particularly through career days, to introduce students to our field and encourage them to consider it a career path.

Additionally, the American Association of Psychiatric Technicians (AAPT), an independent entity affiliated with CAPT, continues to support the certification of Psych Techs and their equivalents in other states. Over the past year, AAPT provided seed funding to help establish a new Psychiatric Technician program in Louisiana, furthering the reach and impact of our profession nationwide.





Department of Developmental Services

The Stabilization Training Assistance Reintegration (STAR) Homes

The STAR homes play a unique and crucial role in the state's commitment to providing specialized support for individuals with developmental disabilities. These homes, which are part of three regional programs—Northern, Central Valley, and Southern—offer time-limited, highly personalized crisis stabilization services to transition individuals to community living. STAR's mission is clear: to provide adolescents and adults receiving regional center services with up to 13 months of tailored support during critical periods of instability.

In Northern California, the North STAR program operates three homes in Vacaville, each catering to specific age groups—adults 18 years and older, youth 12-17, and children 7-12. Central Valley STAR, located in Springville and Porterville, serves individuals aged 12-17 and adults 18 and older. Southern California STAR homes offer similar support for the same age brackets, ensuring a continuum of care across the state.

At Porterville Developmental Center (PDC), our dedicated Psychiatric Technicians continue to demonstrate exceptional resilience in the face of overwhelming challenges. As of July 1, 2024, the PDC vacancy rate for all classifications within BU 18 stands at a staggering 46.3%. Specifically, Psych Techs are facing a crisis: out of 476 budgeted positions, 271 remain unfilled, resulting in a 56% vacancy rate. This workforce shortage is exacerbated by lengthy investigations that remove members from direct patient care, further straining resources.

These chronic staffing vacancies, particularly at PDC, have been an enduring issue. The pandemic only deepened the crisis, increasing the Department's reliance on costly and unsustainable outside registries. CAPT has raised these concerns in repeated meetings with the Department. While they've acknowledged the issue, they have yet to be willing to implement meaningful recruitment and retention (R&R) solutions due to the state's ongoing financial constraints. The urgency to resolve these staffing problems cannot be overstated—our members and the individuals they serve deserve better.



Department of State Hospitals

The Department of State Hospitals remains the largest employer of Psychiatric Technicians across all state agencies. Psych Techs within DSH are indispensable in nearly every facet of patient care, providing essential support to a patient population with complex and acute needs. DSH currently has approximately 4,156 Bargaining Unit 18 positions, of which only around 3,156 are filled. This translates to a staggering 24% vacancy rate, with 1,000 positions remaining vacant statewide—a critical gap that places immense pressure on existing staff and impacts patient care.

Further compounding the state's recruitment challenges, DSH continues to rely heavily on external staffing registries. This practice fills immediate staffing voids and draws potential long-term employees away from permanent positions within the Department, as registry work often offers more flexible schedules and competitive compensation. As CAPT

has long warned, this over-reliance on registries undermines the Department's ability to attract and retain qualified Psych Techs.

In response to persistent staffing shortages, CAPT successfully negotiated Recruitment and Retention (R&R) pay for four of the five state hospitals, largely based on high vacancy rates. However, as CAPT anticipated, the current R&R amounts have proven insufficient to reverse the trend. Despite recognizing the severity of the issue, the Department, citing the state's financial difficulties, has been unwilling to commit to increasing R&R incentives during recent meetings with CAPT. The ongoing staffing crisis requires immediate and more substantial action if DSH is to stabilize its workforce and meet the needs of both patients and employees.

Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation/California Correctional Healthcare Services

Our Corrections chapters stretch across the entire state, from Pelican Bay in the north to the Mexican border in the south. Despite the geographic span, one constant remains: our CAPT representatives are unwavering in their fight to protect the rights of our members. At every level, our activists face an entrenched, heavy-handed management style that often conflicts with our contract rights. Nowhere is this more apparent than at Richard J. Donovan Correctional Facility (RJD) and California State Prison – Sacramento (CSP-Sac), both of which remain under CAPT's Red Tag designation. This status, authorized by our Board of Directors, is a stark warning to our members and prospective employees that these facilities are flagrantly disregarding contract rights and engaging in unfair labor practices. CAPT is fully committed to holding these institutions accountable and will continue to intensify our efforts to defend our members' rights.

Like other departments, staffing shortages plague several corrections institutions, with many struggling to fill vacant Psychiatric Technician positions. Chronic under-staffing, a systemic issue within CDCR/CCHCS, has increased reliance on outside contract registries, further straining resources and morale. CAPT has consistently proposed Recruitment and Retention (R&R) initiatives at multiple locations to attract and retain PTs, but the Department has rejected these proposals. Despite acknowledging the severity of the staffing crisis, CDCR/CCHCS, citing the state's ongoing budget constraints, has been unwilling to implement R&R solutions during recent discussions with CAPT.

The battle for adequate staffing and fair labor practices is ongoing, but CAPT remains resolute in its mission to fight for meaningful changes. These changes benefit not only our members but also the individuals they serve.



Confronting the Growing Threat of Contract Registries

The state's ongoing reliance on contract registries to fill its staffing vacancies across all three departments in which we work presents a persistent threat to the stability of civil service employment. These registries offer substantial sums of money to private staffing agencies, which, in turn, compensate their employees at rates equal to or often higher than what our Psychiatric Technicians earn. CAPT repeatedly highlighted this contradiction to the state, only to be dismissed: "We don't have any say in how these agencies pay their staff." This feigned ignorance cannot be allowed to continue unchecked.

CAPT has launched a multi-pronged strategy to combat this issue and expose the financial waste tied to this contradictory approach. First, in collaboration with other public employee unions, CAPT successfully persuaded the Joint Legislative Audit Committee to authorize a California State Auditor investigation into three facilities: DSH – Atascadero, Salinas Valley State Prison, and Porterville Developmental Center. By drawing attention to these specific locations, CAPT aims to expose the inefficiencies of contracting out essential services to external registries—an approach that continues to undermine recruitment efforts within the state system.

Secondly, a significant legal ruling has strengthened CAPT's position. On June 25, Chief U.S. District Judge Kimberly Mueller found California prison officials in contempt for failing to hire enough mental health professionals to provide adequate care for incarcerated individuals with serious mental disorders. The state was ordered to pay \$112 million in fines, with ongoing monthly penalties until vacancy rates for required mental health positions fall below 10%. This ruling highlights the severity of the

staffing crisis and underscores the financial consequences of inaction. CAPT will leverage this ruling to pressure the state to address chronic Bargaining Unit 18 staffing shortages, particularly within corrections. By pointing to the \$112 million in fines and the ongoing legal risks, CAPT can make a compelling case for immediate Recruitment and Retention (R&R) initiatives, framing them as essential for compliance with federal mandates and fiscal responsibility.

In addition to these efforts, CAPT is challenging the legal justification for contract registries at the State Personnel Board. As the state prepares for bargaining, it must provide detailed and specific justifications for the continued use of these contracts in light of the ongoing challenges in recruiting nursing staff. CAPT plans to use this information at the bargaining table to push for proposals to attract more nursing professionals into civil service, offering competitive and sustainable solutions to the staffing crisis.

By bringing these issues into the open through both the state audit and the State Personnel Board, CAPT is setting the stage for making staffing reform a central issue at the bargaining table. Our multi-faceted approach aims to expose the waste, confront the state's reliance on registry staff, and ultimately strengthen our civil service workforce.

Tilting at Windmills for 40 Years!

The labor movement, and CAPT in particular, can be likened to the timeless tale of Don Quixote de La Mancha. In Miguel de Cervantes' novel, the knight errant embarks on a quest to uphold noble ideals, fighting against seemingly impossible odds. Much like Don Quixote, workers striving for fair wages, better working conditions, and basic human dignity find themselves in constant struggle against powerful employers, vindictive managers, restrictive government regulations, and deeply entrenched systems resistant to change. Just as Don Quixote tilts at windmills—believing them to be giants—workers have historically confronted what appear to be insurmountable obstacles in their quest for workplace justice. CAPT's journey is a pursuit of fairness in a world that often places profits above people, treating workers as mere cogs in a vast machine.

Don Quixote's journey is punctuated by moments of perceived futility as he battles imaginary foes while the world around him dismisses his idealism as foolish. CAPT representatives understand this sentiment all too well. We often experience setbacks that make victories seem fleeting and the struggle never-ending. Yet, like Don Quixote,

many of us are driven not only by tangible gains but by something far deeper. We are fighting for the right to shape our destinies and to have a voice in our workplaces. But above all, CAPT's struggle embodies the relentless pursuit of dignity and respect, no matter the obstacles. This fight is fueled by our enduring belief in a better world for our workers and our brothers and sisters.

CAPT's very history is a testament to this unwavering commitment. Disillusioned with their top-heavy union, Psych Techs, and union activists from across the state sought change from within. When their noble efforts were blocked, they took aim at a daunting windmill by forming CAPT. This history, told and retold at every steward training, serves a vital purpose: to remind those who wish to become CAPT representatives that the road will be difficult, that victories will be hard-won, and that the same battles will be fought time and again. Yet through it all—thanks to the founders of CAPT, Tony Myers, who led as CAPT State President for 13 years, and Ann Lyles and Carol Weismann, who dedicated decades of service—we have never wavered from our higher purpose.

Here's to 40 years of CAPT tilting at windmills, unwavering in our pursuit of a more just and dignified future for all workers!





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