



# The Daily BULLETIN

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## District Branch Success

*Ontario District Branch receives recognition for education program.*

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## Innovative program offers CME credit

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– Frank Sommers, M.D

THE ONTARIO DISTRICT BRANCH of the APA recently received the APA Assembly's Best Practice Award, which recognizes the efforts and innovative programs of a district branch each year.

The Ontario District Branch was honoured for its Psychiatric Salon Program, which offers members an opportunity to earn CME credit while networking with colleagues.

The Psychiatric Salon, initiated by membership co-chair Frank Sommers, M.D., came about following a comprehensive survey of members' needs, which indentified a strong interest in CME and networking events.

"This outreach exercise revealed a high priority among members for increased and enhanced collegial interaction along with opportunities for additional CME in the context of our national Royal College Maintenance of Competence program," Dr. Sommers said.

The program, which operates on a minimal, revenue-neutral budget, includes four or five meetings each year. Each event includes a dinner and a speaker. Attendees pay for their own meal and speakers do not accept honorariums, which keeps costs low.

"An innovative aspect of this program is that our speakers are drawn from our own membership," Dr. Sommers said. "We rely on the expertise and experience of our members. We dip into the rich pool of knowledge available in our branch."

The topics covered have included deep brain stimulation for depression, business management, and

treating soldiers in a war zone. Each program provides two hours of CME credit.

"These are the kind of subjects that don't always get covered in other CME events," Dr. Sommers said. "People look forward to these events, and the subjects are not ones we usually would encounter, so this is refreshing for many of us. We don't shy away from any topic."

The branch also maintains a DVD archive of Psychiatric Salon events. Members can check out DVDs free of charge to review presentations they've missed or would like to see again.

The program, now in its third year, has served as a recruitment and retention tool for the branch as well.

"We see new faces as well as repeat attendees at the programs," Dr. Sommers said. "We also see established members as well as potential members. We really use these events as a tool to attract members-in-training. The Psychiatric Salon gives younger members an opportunity to meet with senior colleagues, and it offers added benefits to existing members as well."

Plans are in progress to expand the Psychiatric Salon concept to centers in districts beyond Toronto, such as Ottawa, London, Kingston, and to use the program's potential to attract and retain members.