

Writing Like You're Running Out of Time: Being a Publishing Advocate

*"Why do you write like you're running out of time?
Write day and night like you're running out of time?"*

– Hamilton, the Musical¹

Sitting down to write my very first introduction to JAACAP Connect as editor, I have to admit it is not a role I would have ever seen myself in. I've always considered myself a clinician and an advocate. Like many of you, I went into child and adolescent psychiatry with an interest to help those most often in need. As a child and adolescent psychiatrist, I viewed my role as not only providing therapy and medication management, but also being an advocate against stigma, increasing access to care, increasing community supports, and challenging those that would restrict care. At the time, doing this work meant talking to policy makers, reviewing health policy, or working in the clinical setting. It didn't seem like using research or scientific writing would be the way for me to accomplish these goals, and it wasn't until my advocacy rotation that a faculty mentor showed me what I was missing. During her career, she had influenced policies that had real impact on adolescents throughout the state and beyond. She made it clear that if she didn't study it and publish it, any advocacy work she did didn't happen. It became clear that scientific study and publishing would be a valuable tool to be a strong advocate.

Like many of you, I have become obsessed with the musical *Hamilton* and was fortunate enough to see it at The Benedum Center in Pittsburgh, PA. The musical and many of its famous lines have been used in conjunction with advocacy. In fact, it has been so popular to talk about *Hamilton* in reference to pediatric advocacy that it has the social media hashtag #Ham4Peds. When I was sitting in the theater listening to lyrics of the song "Non-Stop", the reference that Alexander Hamilton was writing "like he was running out of time" really struck

me. Though Hamilton was a great orator, able to debate and give speeches to prove his point, it was his pen he is most famous for as an advocate. He used the written word to educate and influence political leaders and the voting public. As child and adolescent psychiatry advocates there is something to be learned from this. If we can't share our knowledge and our stories, then we can't shape change to benefit our patients. This issue illustrates how we can use evidence-based writing to better shape ourselves as advocates and make sure we aren't throwing away our shot.

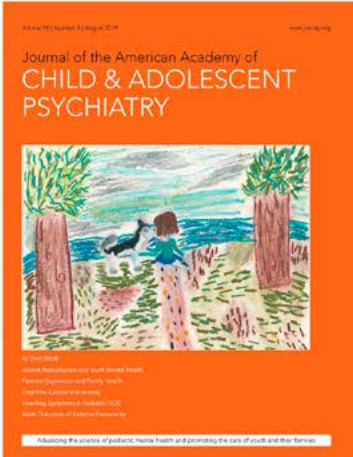
In this issue, Dr. and Representative Bergquist discuss how one can run for office as a child and adolescent psychiatrist or help an ally of one get elected. Having more child and adolescent psychiatrists in office allows for the views and policies essential for the patients we serve to receive a consistent voice. But if you don't have time to run for office, then at the very least, writing an op-ed can make sure politicians and the public can hear the views of a child and adolescent psychiatrist expressed. Drs. Holloway and Copeland walk us through the process shown to be successful when trying to write an op-ed. When doing advocacy work, the national advocacy often gets all the attention, so Drs. Rogers and Fritsch write to reinforce the phrase "all politics is local." Knowing how to navigate one's state and local governments can allow for a greater influence than trying to influence national politics. This is even more true when you can build a coalition of like-minded groups to promote an agenda. Drs. Fritsch and Gerwin use the example of coalition building in Maine to walk us through the process of how to do something similar in our own state. Finally, Drs. Sagot, Willing, and Koss summarize the necessary skills to build and grow future physician advocates in the child and adolescent psychiatry world so that we can expand our voice to influence policy.

Hopefully, reading this issue focused on advocacy will get many of you who might have never considered writing or editing for a journal to do it. You might have something to share that colleagues, families, or the public could benefit from hearing, and if you don't know where to start your journey as a writer, then hopefully *JAACAP Connect* can help you along the way.

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Editor

References

1. Lin-Manuel Miranda. *Hamilton*. [Musical]. New York, NY; 2015.



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