



**Schizophrenia  
& Psychosis**  
Action Alliance

## **Schizophrenia and Related Disorders Alliance of America (SARDAA) Becomes Schizophrenia & Psychosis Action Alliance**

### ***Global Impact Organization Moving Individuals, Families and Policies Forward to Improve and Save Lives***

ALEXANDRIA, VA, April 5, 2021 -- For people living with schizophrenia and psychosis, every day without treatment can mean the difference between life and death. Our new brand showcases our organization's efforts to accelerate and transform the treatment paradigm for all persons living with schizophrenia-related brain diseases which involve psychosis.

Today's announcement comes as we've witnessed the devastating impact of COVID-19 over the last year on people with schizophrenia who have an increased risk factor of death from the virus second only to age [JAMA Psychiatry](#).

2020 had unimaginable negative consequences for people living with schizophrenia and psychosis. This provided an urgent inflection point for our organization and brought several strategic changes in our brand, leadership, mission clarity, program delivery, staff and board composition, and our strategic vision for the future.

“We are acting boldly to promote changes in treatment, healthcare and public policy so every person living with a schizophrenia related brain disease receives respect, appropriate medical treatment, and an opportunity to live a meaningful and satisfying life in a compassionate community free of discrimination. Our goal is nothing short of the reclassification of schizophrenia as a neurological designation,” said Mary Palafox, RN, Board Chair, Schizophrenia & Psychosis Action Alliance.

To accomplish these goals, we are announcing several organization updates, including:

We stand on the shoulders of our founder Linda Stalters, MSN, APRN (Ret.) who served as CEO for 12 years and retired at the end of 2020. “There is not a more passionate and committed champion in support of people living with schizophrenia than Linda and we are moving forward with the vision she planted to transform the treatment paradigm in order to save lives,” said Gordon Lavigne who is now CEO and previously worked with Linda for two years.

We have enthusiastically joined the Steering Committee for the [Accelerating Medicines Partnership \(AMP\)](#), a unique public-private partnership launched by the National Institute of Health (NIH) aimed at meeting the urgent need for identifying new, effective therapeutic interventions for people at risk of developing, or those living with, schizophrenia.

We have appointed Eva Velthorst, Ph.D. as Science Advisor to help accelerate our scientific agenda by managing research initiatives related to biomarker testing, potential new investigational treatments, and the use of innovative approaches for studying schizophrenia and psychosis. She is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychiatry and Training Faculty of the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences of the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai (ISMMS). She received her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from the University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands, in 2011. In 2019, she became an Associate Member of the American College of Neuropsychopharmacology.

We have appointed to serve on our Board of Directors three accomplished leaders connecting digital health, health economics and advocacy to advance our mission.

**Lara Gregorio**

Lara has more than 20 years of leadership experience in the behavioral and tele-health industry with extensive frontline clinical experience. She is the Co-Founder and CEO of Humanest Care, a solutions-focused therapy platform. Previously, she served as the head of health systems at 7 Cups. Lara received her B.A. in Sociology/Social Psychology from Emory University and her M.A. M.S.W. from Smith College.

**Holly Krasa**

Holly is the Managing Director and Principal of Blue Persimmon Group with over 25 years of experience conducting and leading medical and health system research. She has worked across industries leading groups responsible for disease area and product-specific evidence development to support regulatory filings, public policy, and product reimbursement. She previously served as the Head of the Health Outcomes department at Otsuka leading a team of researchers across therapeutic and product categories, including products for serious mental illness such as Abilify, Abilify Maintena, Rexulti, and Abilify MyCite. She was a scientific advisor to multiple non-profit advocacy organizations, most recently including UsAgainstAlzheimer's and the Healthy Brains Global Initiative. She received her B.S. in Biology from the University of Michigan and her M.S. in Neurobiology and Physiology from Northwestern University.

**Linda Mimms**

For more than ten years, Linda has served as an advocate for reform in public policy, law, insurance, and treatment protocols for serious neurodevelopmental brain disorders. She began her career working for the U.S. State Department and the U.S. Senate. She currently serves on Lawrence University's President's Advisory Council, and in 2020 established the Fund for Serious Mental Illness Advocacy Internships to give students the opportunity to learn about serious brain diseases, their criminalization, and how to build solutions for better access to medical treatment. She is a member of the California Advocates for Treatment, the Hope Street Coalition, the National Shattering Silence Coalition, and the

National Alliance on Mental Illness. She earned an M.A. in Public Policy from Duke University and a B.A. in Anthropology from Lawrence University.

We are proudly joining the Mental Health Coalition to help destigmatize Mental Health Conditions. Bringing together an axis of organizations, brands, and individuals we look forward to ensuring the voice of those living with schizophrenia and psychosis is represented in this important conversation [thementalhealthcoalition.org](http://thementalhealthcoalition.org).

We will provide updates on our progress and continue being a beacon of hope for patients, caregivers and all those concerned about improving and saving lives.

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To learn more information, please visit [www.sczaction.org](http://www.sczaction.org)

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