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2022 Psych Congress: Insights from a Steering Committee Member

### Dr. Turck:

Welcome to the *Psych Congress Action Center* on ReachMD. On this episode, we're joined by Dr. Craig Chepke, who's the Medical Director of Excel Psychiatric Associates and a member of the Psych Congress Steering Committee. Dr. Chepke is here to share key highlights from the 2022 Psych Congress. Let's hear from him now.

### Dr. Chepke:

I'm really excited about this year's Psych Congress for a lot of reasons. One, it's a milestone. This is the 35<sup>th</sup> Psych Congress that we've had, and I think we put together the best program that we've had in any of the 35 meetings of this conference. So on the Steering Committee, we wanted to make this special being that it was an anniversary year, and so we created the program to really highlight some of the most important things that are contributing to mental health outcomes, and that's really having an entire treatment team approach, bringing everyone together.

So beyond just bringing together multiple different team members from physicians to nurse practitioners, physician assistants, social workers, and psychotherapists, we're also bringing together other important stakeholders, and by that I mean advocacy organizations, so groups like Mental Health America, the Treatment Advocacy Center, and also leaders from the American Psychiatric Association as well. By bringing everyone together to the same big table, I think we could really come to some better decisions and better outlooks on how we can try to revolutionize the state of mental health care.

This year we've got a lot of really huge updates in the field of psychiatry to be honest. The two most important ones are revolving around schizophrenia. Now the treatment of schizophrenia has in many ways been relatively stagnant over the past 70 years since the discovery of chlorpromazine, which is the first effective antipsychotic, and that's largely because every antipsychotic approved for schizophrenia since chlorpromazine has been based on the concept of direct interaction with the D2 receptor, whether full antagonism or partial agonism of the D2 receptor.

There are two new agents that are in late-stage clinical trials that have absolutely no binding to the D2 receptor. One is called a TAAR1 agonist. That's trace amine-associated receptor type 1 agonist. It also has serotonin 1A partial agonism. The second is a muscarinic agonist. The muscarinic cholinergic receptors we have used in psychiatry to block them for quite some time to treat certain movement disorders, and sometimes we used some of those anticholinergics a little too much. Both of these agents are showing efficacy in positive symptoms but also negative symptoms, which our current armamentarium has not addressed very well. If the further trials for those two medications pan out and the FDA ends up approving them, one or both of them could really revolutionize the way that we treat schizophrenia.

The key takeaways I'd like my colleagues to come away from Psych Congress with is that we can do better. There are so many ways that we are facing adversity in the field of psychiatry. There are too few mental health providers and too many patients for us to handle. We're overworked. We're overburdened. But coming together as a complete team, bringing everyone to the table from every different discipline and working toward that shared common goal of putting the patient at the center of everything and really giving them our all, so really trying to raise the bar and elevate what our expectations are for all of our patients, whatever their struggles are, and doing that in a team-based approach.

**Dr. Turk:**

That was Dr. Craig Chepke sharing insights on the 2022 Psych Congress. To access this and other episodes in our series, visit [ReachMD.com/ PsychCongressActionCenter](https://ReachMD.com/PsychCongressActionCenter), where you can Be Part of the Knowledge. Thanks for listening.