



March 28, 2018

Breaking News:

On Thursday, March 22, Senators Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) and John Barrasso (R-WY) introduced **bi-partisan legislation S.2613 – Improving Access to Mental Health Act**. S.2613 is the Senate companion bill to the House version – H.R. 1290- introduced by Congresswoman Barbara Lee (D-CA-13) last year. This is truly a momentous occasion and a shining example on how NASW and social work issues transcend across party lines. As we celebrate this legislative introduction, we encourage NASW members to continue to advocate for **S.2613/H.R. 1290- Improving Access to Mental Health Act** by [asking your Senators and Representative to cosponsor today!](#)

For more information on **S. 2613/H.R. 1290-Improving Access to Mental Health Act**, please visit our website [here](#).

Legislative Activities:

In advance of the March 23 deadline, Congress passed, and President Trump signed into law the Fiscal Year 2018 (FY18) omnibus funding package, entitled: The Consolidated Appropriation Act, 2018. This omnibus funds the federal government through the end of the fiscal year, September 30, 2018. There are several provisions of particular interest to social workers, including:

- **Behavioral Health Workforce Education and Training program**, the omnibus provides an increase of \$25,000,000 to expand the mental health and substance abuse workforce, including master's level social workers.
- **Mental and Behavioral Health Education Training**, the omnibus provides an increase of \$27,000,000 to recruit and train professionals and faculty in the fields of social work,

psychology, psychiatry, marriage and family therapy, substance abuse prevention and treatment, and other areas of mental and behavioral health.

- The omnibus provides an increase of \$105,000,000 to expand and improve access to quality opioid and substance use disorder treatment in rural and underserved areas nationwide. The agreement expands eligibility for loan repayment awards through the **National Health Service Corps**.
- The omnibus clarifies the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has the authority to conduct research on the causes of gun violence.
- The omnibus also includes nearly \$4 billion in funding to combat the opioid epidemic.

Key NASW Legislation:

NASW celebrates the Senate's bipartisan introduction of [S.2613/H.R. 1290- Improving Access to Mental Health Act](#). While we continue to build support in the Senate, a full list of cosponsors in the House can be found [here](#). NASW created an [action alert](#) that you can use to urge your Senators and Representatives to co-sponsor the bills.

The NASW [action alert](#) for [H.R. 1484 the Social Worker Safety Act of 2017](#) is still active. Thank you for your advocacy efforts and we look forward to continued outreach to gain additional cosponsors for this vital piece of legislation. A full list of current cosponsors for H.R. 1484 can be found [here](#).

NASW continues to push for support of [H.R. 1289, Dorothy I. Height and Whitney M. Young, Jr., Social Work Reinvestment Act](#), which currently has [19 cosponsors](#).

On March 5 and 6, forty-seven scholarship students from around the country visited Washington, DC for a **Social Work Healthcare Education and Leadership Scholars (HEALS) Policy Summit**. During the summit, social work students were able to hear from leadership at the NASW National Office and outside speakers on education and healthcare issues. Students then traveled to Capitol Hill to meet with their members of Congress on key social work issues. HEALS is a joint initiative of NASW and the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) designed to prepare the next generation of social work leaders in healthcare.

On March 8 and 9, Senator Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) and Congresswoman Barbara Lee (D-CA-13) introduced bicameral congressional resolutions – S.Res. 427 and H.Res.770 – that mark March 20, 2018 as World Social Work Day and celebrates March as Social Work Month. Congressman Beto O'Rourke (D-TX-16) also signed on as a cosponsor to H.Res. 770.

Get involved! You can join [NASW's Advocacy Listserv](#) to stay up-to-date on Congressional activity. We also have [resources](#) on our web page to help in setting up visits with your members of Congress. For best practices on Congressional outreach, check out the [Indivisible Guide](#).

Administrative Activities:

NASW joined a [sign on letter](#) opposing the proposed rule on Association Health Plans.

Opportunity to [comment](#) on Short-Term Health Plans is available until April 23rd. A [summary of the proposed rule and topic](#) is available from State Health and Value Strategies.

Coalition and Collaborative Activities:

[NASW Contributes to Issue Brief on End-of-Life Care for Older Adults](#) As a member of the Eldercare Workforce Alliance (EWA), NASW played a central role in developing EWA's issue brief, *End-of-Life Care: Preparing the Eldercare Workforce*, published in March. Download the issue brief to learn about the role of the health care workforce serving older adults in end-of-life care.

NASW participates in the Families USA [Protect Our Care Coalition](#) weekly calls and activities.

On March 8, NASW staff participated in a call with other social work and health care associations, convened by the **Society for Social Work Leadership in Health Care**. The group discussed upcoming events, conferences, advocacy activities and collaboration opportunities.

NASW staff participated in a call advancing the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine consensus study, *Integrating Social Needs Care into the Delivery of Health Care to Improve the Nation's Health*.

NASW staff is participating in the **National Navigation Roundtable Training & Certification Task Force** with the American Cancer Society to advance competencies for Patient Navigation.

NASW will be commenting on the [US Preventive Services Task Force Recommendations for Obesity Care for adults](#).

NASW is an affiliate member of The Medical Society Consortium on Climate and Health. NASW is co-sponsoring its annual meeting, Climate Health Solutions, that will take place on April 9-10, 2018 in Arlington, Virginia. The meeting will include briefings on the health effects of climate change and presentations on a range of solutions, including carbon pricing, accelerating the transition to clean energy, and greening the health sector. [Registration](#) for the annual meeting is free but is required.

NASW participated in meetings of the following coalitions or other external initiatives:

- National Center on Elder Abuse Advisory Board
- Eldercare Workforce Alliance
- Leadership Council of Aging Organizations
- Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights
- Coalition on Human Needs
- Mental Health Liaison Group
- National Coalition to End Child Abuse Deaths
- National Child Abuse Coalition
- Protect Our Care Coalition
- Medicaid Coalition

NASW Resources

There is a new [Practice Alert](#) available about National Healthcare Decisions Day. **National Healthcare Decisions Day** is on Monday, April 16th and begins a week of engagement to consider the importance of advance care planning for yourself, family members and clients. additional training material is available from the [Conversation Project](#).

NASW issued two statements following the February 14 mass shooting in Parkland, Florida. [NASW grieves for families of Florida school shooting, urges President Trump and Congress to declare gun violence public health crisis](#) and [NASW supports young people who are advocating and protesting for laws to curtail nation's gun death epidemic](#). NASW staff and members participated in the March for Our Lives in Washington, DC and across the country.

Items of Note

Get Ready for Older Americans Month. NASW celebrates Older Americans Month (OAM) every May. The Administration for Community Living has announced the theme for this year's observance: [Engage at Every Age](#). Begin preparing now for OAM 2018 and learn how NASW [advocates](#) to enhance the well-being of older adults.

The **National Health Service Corps (NHSC) Loan Repayment Program (LRP)** is open to Licensed Clinical Social Workers. The program is for clinicians who are fully trained and licensed to provide culturally competent, interdisciplinary primary health care services to underserved populations located in selected Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs) identified by the Secretary of HHS. HPSAs can be found in rural and urban communities across the nation. In return, the NHSC LRP assists clinicians in their repayment of outstanding qualifying educational loans. The application deadline is **April 23, 7:30 p.m. ET**. Eligibility information and the application can be found at this [site](#).

Support Letters

NASW has signed onto a number of letters of support. You can find a list of letters of support on our [web page](#). A sample of recent letters is listed below.

- [NASW signs on to LEAD Coalition letter supporting Building Our Largest Dementia \(BOLD\) Infrastructure for Alzheimer's Act \(S. 2076/H.R.4256\) \(3/6/2018\)](#)
- [NASW signs on to letter raising objections to the Association Health Plans proposed rule \(3/6/2018\)](#)
- [NASW signs on to open letters urging Congressional leaders to pass legislation extending the Money Follows the Person \(MFP\) program \(3/5/2018\)](#)
 - [House letter](#)
 - [Senate letter](#)
- [NASW signs on to Representative Debbie Wasserman Schultz's "Dear Colleague" letter urging colleagues to sponsor the Nursing Home Comfortable Air Ready for Emergencies \(CARE\) Act \(H.R. 4704\) \(2/28/2018\)](#)

- NASW signs on to MHLG letters to Federal Departments Requesting Information on How they will Implement ISMICC Recommendations (2/23/2018):
 - [Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services](#)
 - [Department of Defense](#)
 - [Department of Education](#)
 - [Department of Health and Human Services](#)
 - [Department of Housing and Urban Development](#)
 - [Department of Justice](#)
 - [Department of Labor](#)
 - [Department of Veterans Affairs](#)
 - [Social Security Administration](#)
- [NASW signs on to letter to U.S. Senate urging them to find a bipartisan path forward for comprehensive legislative solutions to firearm-related injuries and fatalities \(2/22/2018\)](#)
- [NASW signs on to letter to U.S. House urging them to find a bipartisan path forward for comprehensive legislative solutions to firearm-related injuries and fatalities \(2/22/2018\)](#)
- [NASW signs on to letter to HHS Secretary expressing concern about the lack of focus on LGBTQ individuals in the HHS Draft Strategic Plan \(2/20/2018\)](#)
- [NASW signs onto MHLG Letter Urging Passage of H.R. 2345, The National Suicide Hotline Improvement Act of 2017 \(2/16/2018\)](#)

NASW has also submitted its own comments to the Administration and Congress. You can find this list on our [web page](#) as well.

- [NASW sends letter to CMS requesting a review of the 2018 Physician's Quality Reporting System \(PQRS\) negative payment penalties for the reporting year 2016 \(Mar. 6, 2018\)](#)
- [NASW sends comments to CMS regarding clinical social workers participation in MIPS reports beginning in 2019 \(Feb. 28, 2018\)](#)