



March 30, 2017

**Legislative Efforts:**

In honor of Social Work Month, March saw the introduction of a number of NASW supported bills in the U.S. House of Representatives and U.S. Senate. On March 1, 2017, Rep. Barbara Lee (D-CA-13) introduced the ***Improving Access to Mental Health Act (H.R. 1290)*** with four original cosponsors. The bill will do three things:

1. Increase the reimbursement rate for clinical social workers (CSWs) who work with Medicare beneficiaries from 75% to 85% of the physician fee schedule,
2. Ensure Skilled Nursing Facility (SNF) residents' access to CSWs by excluding clinical social work services from SNF consolidated billing, and
3. Ensure Medicare beneficiaries' access to Health and Behavior Assessment and Intervention services provided by CSWs.

Also on March 1, 2017, Rep. Barbara Lee (D-CA-13) introduced the ***Social Work Reinvestment Act (H.R. 1289)*** with ten original cosponsors. By addressing the social work profession's workforce challenges, H.R. 1289 creates the foundation to ensure that millions of individuals and families throughout the nation can continue to receive high-quality social work services. A key provision of the legislation establishes a Social Work Reinvestment Commission to provide a comprehensive analysis of issues facing the social work profession.

On March 9, 2017, Reps. Kyrsten Sinema (D-AZ-09) and Elise Stefanik (R-NY-21) introduced the ***bipartisan Social Worker Safety Act of 2017 (H.R. 1484)***. This bill would establish a Social Worker Safety Grant Program within the Department of Health and Human Services to fund State's efforts to improve safety measures for social workers. It would allow these grants to be used to purchase safety equipment, make facility improvements, facilitate safety training programs, provide support services for

social workers who have been victims of violence, or track incident data to mitigate future offenses against social workers. NASW posted an [action alert](#) asking members to contact their Representatives to cosponsor this legislation.

On March 21, 2017, World Social Work Day, Sen. Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) and Rep. Barbara Lee (D-CA-13), with six original cosponsors, introduced ***Social Work Month and World Social Work Day Resolutions (S.Res. 91 and H.Res. 217)*** in the Senate and House. These Resolutions support the goals and ideals of National Professional Social Work Month in March 2017 and World Social Work Day on March 21, 2017.

Throughout March, NASW has been active in **opposing the American Health Care Act**, which would repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act. The Association has signed onto multiple letters of opposition, written a [statement of opposition](#), and sent out [action alerts](#) asking individuals to contact their Representatives. The bill was withdrawn on March 24, 2017, after they did not get enough support to pass the bill in the House of Representatives.

Staff attended **National Coalition on Health Care briefing on Capitol Hill on March 1, 2017**, entitled “Primary Care: It’s Essential Role in a Value-Based Health Care System.” The event offered a review of innovative models of primary care and reimbursement, highlighting interprofessional health care delivery within primary care settings.

About 45 **Social Work Healthcare Education and Leadership Scholars (HEALS) students visited NASW and Capitol Hill for a Student Policy Summit** March 7 and 8, 2017. The day included networking and hearing from social workers in policy organizations and social workers on Capitol Hill. Students spent one day educating Congressional members about social work roles and impact in healthcare.

On March 7, 2017, NASW staff met with social work students from Bryn Mawr College to discuss NASW membership, advocacy, and social justice priorities.

On March 16, 2017, 21 social work students from the University of Southern California visited NASW to learn about our advocacy and political action work. They headed off to meet social worker Rep. Karen Bass (D-CA-37).

On March 22, 2017, social work students from the University of Alabama and The Ohio State University did their inaugural fly-in. They heard from NASW and Polsinelli staff about our association and our legislative priorities. Staff discussed the Improving Access to Mental Health Act (H.R. 1290) and prepared the students to meet with Congressional staff to discuss that bill and two others.

On March 27, 2017, 11 social work students from Southern Adventist University visited NASW and learned about our advocacy, political action, and ethics and professional review departments. They were meeting with Congressional staff later in the week.

**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. You may want to check out the information on the [Indivisible Guide](#). It is a guide created by former Congressional staffers to reveal best practices for making Congress listen.

### **Administrative Efforts:**

#### **Health Care**

**NASW submits comments to Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services regarding the market stabilization proposed rule.** In response to efforts to restrict access to the health insurance marketplace, NASW encouraged the administration to keep open enrollment at three months, reject additional administrative burdens to access Special Enrollment Periods and maximize opportunities that consumers have to connect with health insurance. See comments [here](#).

**NASW submits comments on Prevention of Workplace Violence in Healthcare and Social Assistance.** NASW commented on OSHA's Request for Information and submitted recommendations for workplace policies and practices that respond to any acts of violence by customers/clients/patients and enhance the safety of health care social workers. See comments [here](#).

#### **Criminal Justice**

##### **Addiction Policy Forum – CARA Implementation Conference**

NASW Social Justice Staff was invited to attend a one day training and technical assistance conference that was led by the Department of Justice's Office of Justice Assistance. The conference covered policies related to opioid treatment and prevention, as well as the implementation of the Comprehensive Addictions and Recovery Act (CARA).

### **Judicial Efforts:**

On March 3, 2017, NASW joined 19 health and behavioral health professional associations in a [friend-of-the-court brief](#) to the United States Supreme Court supporting Gavin Grimm and his efforts to be treated equally and fairly while he pursues his high school education. Three days later, the US Supreme Court remanded the case back to the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals to reconsider the case due to the Trump Administration's decision to rescind Obama Administration guidance that Title IX requires schools to allow transgender students use of restrooms corresponding with an individual's gender identity.

### **Coalition Efforts:**

**NASW joins the newly created [Medical Society Consortium on Climate and Health](#) as an affiliate.** Physicians, social workers and providers are working together to inform the public and policymakers about the harmful effect of climate change on Americans and the health benefits of reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The group's new report, *Medical Alert! Climate Change is Harming Our Health* is available [online](#).

**NASW participated in Provider ACA Roundtable meeting on March 3, 2017 with Doctors for America** and other provider organizations to discuss ACA mobilization efforts. There is interest in establishing interprofessional groups (including physicians, nurses, social workers, etc.) to visit local representatives and they may be reaching out to NASW chapter offices. Please let Carrie or Mel know if there is someone in your community who would like to take the lead on organizing local activities.

The *Jimmo v. Sebelius* settlement, approved in 2013, enhanced Medicare beneficiaries' access to occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech–language pathology, and skilled nursing services. **NASW participates in the Jimmo Implementation Council**, which educates stakeholders about *Jimmo*. In early

February, a federal judge issued a ruling that will result in additional education regarding the settlement. Read this [NASW Practice Alert](#) for additional information.

As a member of the Leadership Council of Aging Organizations (LCAO), **NASW contributed to an LCAO issue brief** detailing ways in which the ACA improves the health and well-being of older adults. NASW also contributed to the coalition's [recommendations to the new administration](#) regarding various federal policies and programs that improve older adults' health, economic security, and access to community resources.

**NASW signed on to First Focus Letter on Urging Medicaid to 26 for Young People Formerly in Foster Care.** First Focus circulated a sign on-letter asking Congress not to take Medicaid coverage away from former foster youth. The Medicaid coverage to 26 for former foster youth provision in the Affordable Care Act parallels the provision allowing all young people to stay on their parents' health insurance until age 26. The letter was sent to the Senate Finance Committee and House Energy and Commerce Committee.

NASW Social Justice staff participated in an **informational briefing on key criminal justice grant programs**. The session provided participants with details on how the states are utilizing the following federal grants: Byrne---Justice Assistance Grant (Byrne---JAG) Program: National Criminal History Improvement Program (NCHIP) & National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) Act Record Improvement Program (NARIP).

Staff was invited to and was a participant in an **interactive briefing on *Reducing Crime and Prison Spending: Justice Reinvestment*** held at the Dirksen Senate Office Building. The discussion focused on alternatives to incarceration for justice involved persons with mental illness. The funds saved by reducing prison and jail population are used to cover the costs treatment programs.

#### ***Policing in a New Era***

As a member of the Law Enforcement Working Group staff participated in an informational and planning discussion dealing with the strained relationship between police and communities of color. The discussion centered on what will the new administration's approach to federal involvement mean for efforts to implement these solutions at the national and local level?

#### ***National Criminal Justice Association "Brown Bag" Meeting***

Staff participated in a coalition meeting that meets monthly. This month featured an interactive discussion on budget issues related to criminal justice. The speakers were Jeff Ashford and Colin Samples with the House Commerce, Justice Science and Related Agencies Subcommittee.

#### ***ACA Repeal Coalition – Emergency Conference Call on the fate of Medicaid***

Staff participated in a national emergency call led by the Center for Policy and Budget Priorities to mobilize national organizations to respond to the looming threat to end Medicaid in the American Health Care Act which was the House was expected to vote on March 23, 2017.

### ***Judicial Nominations Coalition- Opposition to the Nomination of Judge Gorsuch to SCOTUS***

Staff attended this coalition that meets weekly to discuss and mobilize around federal judiciary issues.

There is a special ongoing campaign concerning the nomination of Judge Gorsuch to the Supreme Court.

NASW participated in coalition work with:

- 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
- Eldercare Workforce Alliance
- Gerontological Society of America
- National Coalition on Mental Health and Aging

### **Internal Efforts:**

Social Justice staff facilitated a conference call with NASW chapters from the Mexico border states of Arizona, California, New Mexico and Texas, as well as NASW Executive office and Advocacy staff. The call was to discuss the **formation of an ad hoc committee** that will work together to respond to and to inform membership about the many immigration-related issues that are expected to emerge from the Trump Administration. The objective of the committee is to establish a collaborative approach between chapters and the national office on major national issues such as immigration.

### **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 from the last month is listed below.

- [NASW signs onto letter asking Congress to “do no harm” to children as they consider changes to the health care system \(3/22/2017\)](#)
- [NASW signs onto letter to save Medicaid in schools \(3/22/2017\)](#)
- [NASW joins immigration advocates and other national civil rights organizations on a letter to the Secretary of Homeland Security and the Attorney General to voice our opposition to an “open-ended” data collection requirement in President Trump’s executive order on immigration. Our concern is that the executive order does not provide sufficient privacy protections \(3/17/2017\)](#)
- [NASW signs on to National Alliance of Specialized Instructional Support Personnel letter regarding concerns with the American Health Care Act \(3/17/2017\)](#)
- [NASW joins over 150 national organizations in opposing the American Health Care Act \(AHCA\) which has been proposed to replace the Affordable Care Act \(ACA\). NASW, along with other signers of the letter to the leadership of the House of Representatives, is particularly opposed to](#)

AHCA's provision to phase out Medicaid expansion at the end of 2019. This action would mean that as many as 24 million people will be uninsured by 2026 (3/21/2017)

- NASW signs onto Mental Health Liaison Group letter expressing concern about the American Health Care Act (3/17/2017)
- NASW joins over 200 organizations in opposing the ADA Education and Reform Act of 2017. The Act, in order to ease ADA regulations for businesses, would place an undue burden on people with disabilities in accessing public accommodations (3/13/2017)
- NASW joins sign on letter asking Congress to protect Medicaid in Schools (3/7/2017)
- NASW has joined with the Women's Health Defense Table and over 100 organizations in signing an Affordable Care Act (ACA) letter on how repeal would impact women's health. See the attached sign on letter: (3/6/2017)
- NASW signs on to open letter to Congress, describing how Medicaid block grants or per-capita caps would jeopardize people with disabilities and older adults (3/3/2017)
- NASW signs on to open letter urging the president to retain the Prevention and Public Health Fund, authorized under the Affordable Care Act (3/3/2017)
- NASW signs on to MHLG Letter Asking Congress to Protect Medicaid (3/2/2017)
- NASW joins over 128 national organizations urging Attorney General Sessions to fill key leadership positions and fully support the historic mission of the Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division
- NASW signs on to NDD United Letter asking Congress to protect Non-Defense Discretionary Programs (03/01/15)
- NASW signs letter to thank Rep. Murphy and Rep. Kilmer for introducing the Mental Health and Substance Abuse Treatment Accessibility Act of 2017 (02/28/17)

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

- NASW submits comments on Prevention of Workplace Violence in Healthcare and Social Assistance, OSHA Docket no. 2016-0014, RIN 1218-AD 08 (03/13/2017)
- NASW submits letter regarding Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act Market Stabilization, CMS-9929-P (03/03/2017)