



February 28, 2017

**Legislative Efforts:**

The NASW National Office has met with the offices of Sen. Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), Rep. Barbara Lee (D-CA-13) and Rep. Kyrsten Sinema (D-AZ-9) to discuss introduction of several NASW supported bills, e.g., the Improving Access to Mental Health Act, Social Work Reinvestment Act, Social Work Month Resolution and Social Work Safety Act. We will keep you informed once legislation is introduced and will provide details so that you can advocate for additional cosponsors and action.

In addition, NASW sent letters to the key Congressional committees; Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee, Senate Finance Committee, House Ways and Means Committee, House Energy and Commerce Committee and Senate Education and the Workforce Committee. These letters highlighted the role of social workers within our communities, outlined this year's legislative priorities for NASW and our members, and urged support of provisions NASW hopes to retain in any health care reform efforts.

**Social Work Organizations Oppose Repeal of the Affordable Care Act**

NASW and the Society for Social Work Leadership in Health Care (SSWLHC) issued a [joint statement](#) on February 13<sup>th</sup> to oppose efforts to repeal or change key provisions of the Affordable Care Act. Significant gains that have been made in health insurance coverage, health care access and opportunities for health care social workers should not be undone. Post received more than 1,000 likes and 280 shares on Facebook.

NASW posted [action alerts](#) about the Affordable Care Act (ACA) on our web site. To date, 1,991 advocates contacted 6,159 Members of Congress about the ACA in response to our alerts.

**Administrative Efforts:**

## **Nominations**

Despite her eventual confirmation by the Senate, NASW [withheld support](#) for the confirmation of Betsy DeVos to become the U.S. Secretary of Education.

### **Coalition Efforts:**

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

## **Child Welfare**

On February 7<sup>th</sup>, NASW hosted a meeting for National Coalition to End Child Abuse Deaths. Discussion included plans to coordinate Hill visits in March to highlight recommendations from Commission to Eliminate Child Abuse and Neglect Fatalities' report , "Within Our Reach: A National Strategy to Eliminate Child Abuse and Neglect Fatalities."

On February 21<sup>st</sup>, NASW staff, as a member of the National Child Abuse Coalition member, attended a special meeting featuring David Reich of the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities where he discussed recent budget developments in Congress, including the current appropriations and reconciliation processes.

## **Health Care**

Staff attended the National Rural Health Association Policy Institute Forum on February 8<sup>th</sup>, stakeholder meeting funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation about initiatives to advance rural health.

Staff attended the Families USA Health Action Conference on February 17<sup>th</sup>, convening on the topic of preserving health care gains, follow up action to open enrollment and national and state strategies to protect Medicaid.

## **Criminal Justice**

On January 27<sup>th</sup>, staff attended the American Psychological Association-NASW Consensus Working Group on Mental Health in Criminal Justice follow-up meeting. The agenda for this meeting was to address the concerns for potential Affordable Care Act/Medicaid changes articulated by the Congress and Trump Administration. In particular, the group agreed to develop recommendations on the importance of Medicaid expansion to low-income justice involved persons with mental illness. NASW staff is leading these efforts by chairing the Medicaid sub-group that will draft the recommendations.

On January 26<sup>th</sup> NASW staff co-led a Grand Challenges Criminal Justice Practice Working conference call with Professor Melissa Grady of Catholic University. We were joined by 10 working group members representing criminal justice social workers from diverse geographical areas. The call was organized to define roles and the process for developing major social work oriented written documents and webinars about social work practice and policies in criminal justice settings.

### **Civil Rights**

On February 1<sup>st</sup>, NASW social justice staff participated in an emergency field call related to an Executive Order about immigrant access to health care and safety net programs. This call was led by the National Immigration Law Center. Immigration is one of NASW's social justice priorities.

During this time of tremendous challenges and opportunities in the movement, it is crucial that we come together to work towards a common goal that protects the democratic rights of all. There is a movement to curtail access to voting and limit the voices of the most vulnerable.

On February 16<sup>th</sup>, NASW followed-up on an invitation to participate in a strategy session on State Voting Rights. The session was hosted by AFL-CIO and was a working lunch that included strategic partners from a range of organizations including labor unions.

On February 17<sup>th</sup>, NASW social justice staff co-led, with the National Center for Transgender Equality, a Congressional briefing on the topic of access to health care for transgender people. The briefing was held at the HEAL hearing room of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

On February 17<sup>th</sup>, NASW staff participated in an invitation only national conference call and strategy session on forming an immigration coalition dealing strictly with the plight of "Dreamers" and families of the "Dreamers."

### **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 on to letter in support of the Office of National Drug Control Policy \(2/23/17\)](#)
- [NASW signs onto letter to Senators asking to maintain key protections for pre-existing conditions \(02/06/2017\)](#)
- [NASW signs onto letter to Representatives asking to maintain key protections for pre-existing conditions \(02/06/2017\)](#)
- [NASW signs onto letter asking Congress to prioritize the most vulnerable in Medicaid \(1/31/2017\)](#)
- [NASW signs onto letter regarding Medicaid oversight \(1/30/2017\)](#)

- [NASW signs letter opposing confirmation of Betsy DeVos as Secretary of Education \(1/30/2017\)](#)

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