



August 1, 2017

Legislative Activities:

Thank you to all our members who contacted their Representatives and Senators as they debated repealing and/or replacing the Affordable Care Act (ACA). In the early morning of July 28, the Senate voted down a bill that would have severely damaged the ACA. All Democratic and Independent Senators along with Sens. Murkowski (R-AK), Collins (R-ME) and McCain (R-AZ) voted against the measure, ostensibly blocking any chance of repealing and/or replacing the ACA in July. NASW has written multiple [action alerts](#) to mobilize members of the NASW Advocacy Listserv to contact their Senators.

NASW staff continued work on securing bipartisan champions to introduce a Senate companion bill to ***H.R. 1290-Improving Access to Mental Health Act***. Currently, ***H.R.1290, the Improving Access to Mental Health Act*** has 13 cosponsors. A full list of cosponsors can be found [here](#). For more information on ***H.R. 1290, the Improving Access to Mental Health Act*** please visit our website [here](#).

NASW is actively engaged with our Congressional champions to gain support for both ***H.R. 1289, Dorothy I. Height and Whitney M. Young, Jr., Social Work Reinvestment Act*** and ***H.R.1484, Social Worker Safety Act of 2017***. NASW continued to meet with Congressional staff about these bills. As a result of our outreach and grassroots efforts, Rep. Julia Brownley (D-CA-26) signed on as a co-sponsor of H.R. 1289, bringing the cosponsor total to 19, and H.R. 1484, bringing the cosponsor total to four! A full list of cosponsors of H.R. 1289 can be found [here](#). A full list of cosponsors for H.R. 1484 can be found [here](#).

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](#).

In late June, NASW endorsed and attended the bipartisan *Congressional Briefing on the Value of Rehabilitation and Habilitation Services and Devices in America's Healthcare System*, organized by the [Coalition to Preserve Rehabilitation](#) (of which NASW is a member), the [Habilitation Benefits Coalition](#), and the [Independence Through Enhancement of Medicare and Medicaid Coalition](#). Read the [issue brief](#), download the [press release](#), and watch the [video](#).

On June 27, Dr. JaNeen Cross, Social Work HEALS Policy Fellow, organized a Congressional briefing on **Preventing Child Maltreatment of Infants from the Newborn Intensive Care Unit**. This briefing identified strategies to prevent child maltreatment of infants from the NICU. The briefing enhanced awareness about NICU families, identified their unique needs, and reviewed program and policy solutions that promote positive parenting outcomes. Dr. Cross wrote a [Practice Perspective](#) on Perinatal Social Work Practice in Health Care Settings.

Administrative Activities

On July 27, President Trump announced plans to reinstate a policy to ban transgender people from serving in the U.S. military. NASW promptly responded with a statement that the ban is both disrespectful to people who are transgender and a blatant disregard of their honorable service. [Click here](#) to read NASW's statement to President Trump to rescind his ban on transgender people from serving in the military.

[NASW Advocates For Transgender Older Adults In Federal Survey](#): In response to [feedback from NASW](#) and other advocates, the Administration for Community Living [reversed its March 2017 proposal](#) to eliminate data collection on sexual orientation within the 2017 National Survey of Older Americans Act Participants (NSOAAP). However, the [revised survey](#) continues to exclude a question about gender identity. [Read NASW's comments](#) affirming this decision and urging the Office of Management and Budget to reinstate data collection on gender identity within the NSOAAP.

On July 6, NASW submitted [comments](#) to CMS, responding to CMS–9928–NC, “Reducing Regulatory Burdens Imposed by the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act & Improving Healthcare Choices To Empower Patients.” NASW expressed support for the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) and suggested regulatory improvements to enhance coverage and access to health care services.

NASW is preparing comments for the ***Public Stakeholder Listening Session on Strategies for Improving Parity for Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Coverage*** (Document 82 FR 30876) scheduled for July 27 at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. [Written comments](#) are being accepted through August 10.

Judicial Activities:

NASW staff attended a regularly scheduled weekly meeting of the Judicial Nominations Coalition, coordinated through the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights. This coalition is comprised of a diverse group of over 50 organizations. This was a strategy meeting on responding to two pending nominations to the Circuit Court of Appeals, Judge John K. Bush and Judge Damien Schiff, who are of particular concern for the civil and human rights community. NASW submitted a statement opposing the nomination of Judge Schiff.

Coalition Activities:

In June, NASW staff attended a briefing convened by the Urban Institute to discuss research findings of the first multisite, in-person, paired testing study on rental housing discrimination against lesbians, gay men, and transgender people. The report [Housing Challenges Facing LGBTQ Communities](#) highlights housing discrimination and other challenges LGBTQ communities face and suggested next steps in policy, research, and advocacy.

NASW staff continues to participate in the **Families USA Protect Our Care Coalition** (weekly calls) and **Medicaid Coalition** (monthly meetings) to coordinate advocacy efforts to preserve the ACA and Medicaid.

Staff participated in the **Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids Coalition** meeting on July 10. FY18 appropriations issues and funding for tobacco control efforts were discussed.

NASW staff attended the **National Criminal Justice Association Meeting** on July 10 with experts on the issue of opioid treatment and intervention related to justice involved individuals. NASW is a lead organization on developing strategies, policies, and diversion programs that approach opioid addiction as a public health-not criminal justice- concern. The meeting was for planning and follow-up purposes.

On July 14, NASW staff attended the **Reentry Working Group**. The key issue for NASW was the review and editing to a critical position paper on collateral consequences impacting justice involved men, women, and youth. Collateral consequences are policy issues about which criminal and juvenile justice advocates are concerned. The report from the Reentry Working Group was submitted – with recommendations- to the Department of Justice.

NASW social justice staff is a member of the Vera Institute of Justice **Safe Alternatives to Segregated Housing Project's Advisory Committee**. The project is funded by the Department of Justice and works with eight state departments of corrections on reforming the use of solitary confinement. The meeting was a two-day planning, evaluation, problem solving, and recommendation gathering session. NASW staff was asked to speak to the group about the mental health impact of solitary confinement, and the role of the provider community of reforming the use of solitary confinement.

The **National Sheriff's Association** invited NASW to participate in a **Criminal Justice Reform Roundtable**. This was an all-day meeting that included major law-enforcement, federal government, community-based organizations, and national provider organizations (such as NASW). The focus of the meeting was to discuss and come up with recommendations on reducing the number of seriously mentally ill individuals winding up in the nation's jails. This meeting was a part of a series of stakeholder meeting on treating and diverting people with mental health problems from jails.

On July 17, NASW social justice staff attended a briefing by Rep. Frank Pallone (D-NJ) at the Center for American Progress. This briefing discussed cost and access of prescription medications as an endangered essential benefit in the current effort to repeal the Affordable Care Act (ACA). The concern was that by reducing Medicaid funding in ACA, vulnerable populations would lose access to very expensive prescription medication.

NASW Social Justice Staff attended a monthly meeting of the Voting Rights Taskforce. The coalition aims to develop strategies and actions to mitigate against the potential harm that the Pence-Kobach Voting Fraud Commission can have on voter suppression.

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
- Medicaid Coalition
- Federal AIDS Policy Partnership

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 letter urging House appropriators to preserve funding for the State Health Insurance Assistance Programs \(SHIP\) in fiscal year 2018 \(7/18/2017\)](#)
- [NASW signs on to Leadership Council of Aging Organizations letter expressing opposition to the Better Care Reconciliation Act in the Senate \(7/11/2017\)](#)
- [NASW joins over 1500 organizations in signing onto letter opposing the FY 2018 Budget \(7/11/17\)](#)
- [NASW signs on to letter seeking cosponsors for the Do No Harm Act \(06/28/2017\)](#)
- [NASW signs onto letter to Congressional leadership expressing concerns about the Better Care Reconciliation Act's impact on the nation's most vulnerable children \(06/27/2017\)](#)
- [NASW signs on to open letter opposing repeal of the Prevention and Public Health Fund within the Better Care Reconciliation Act \(06/26/2017\)](#)
- [NASW signs on to Coalition to Preserve Rehabilitation comments to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services regarding proposed rule addressing Inpatient Rehabilitation Facility Prospective Payment System for fiscal year 2018 \(06/26/2017\)](#)
- [NASW signs on to open letter describing the harmful impact Medicaid per-capita caps would have on people living with or affected by Alzheimer's disease and related dementias \(6/22/2017\)](#)
- [NASW signs on to *Politico* ad urging Congress not to cut or cap federal funding for Medicaid \(06/22/2017\)](#)

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

- [NASW advocates for retention of data collection on gender identity within the National Survey of Older Americans Act Participants \(07/20/2017\)](#)
- [NASW responds to CMS Request for Information, CMS–9928–NC, Reducing Regulatory Burdens Imposed by the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act & Improving Healthcare Choices To Empower Patients \(07/06/2017\)](#)