



August 25, 2016

### ***Medicare Reimbursement***

#### **Improving Access to Mental Health Act of 2015 (S.2173/H.R. 3712)**

Since launching our action alert in October, 2015, 1,826 advocates sent 6,073 emails to Congress about the *Improving Access to Mental Health Act (S. 2173/H.R. 3712)*. You can find the alert on our [web site](#). Please consider sending an editable email to your Members of Congress.

NASW members are still working on securing GOP support for the *Improving Access to Mental Health Act of 2015 (S.2173/H.R. 3712)*, which is important to social workers nationwide. Dr. Angelo McClain sent letters to each Chapter Executive Director providing information about the bill and their Congressional delegation and targeted members in that delegation as well as a sample letter to send to their Congressional delegation. August, the Congressional recess, is a perfect time for individuals and groups in the states to reach out to their members of Congress about the legislation. We ask that Chapters reach out to their Congressional delegation by November to secure additional co-sponsors.

On July 25, 2016, nearly 400 NASW members from around the country joined a webinar to discuss strategic next steps for the *Improving Access to Mental Health Act of 2015 (S.2173/H.R. 3712)*.

Co-sponsors of the legislation include: (\*\* indicates original sponsor; \* indicates original cosponsor)

#### ***Senate***

- Sen. Stabenow, Debbie [D-MI]\*\* 10/08/2015
- Sen. Mikulski, Barbara A. [D-MD]\* 10/08/2015
- Sen. Murphy, Christopher S. [D-CT] 02/25/2016
- Sen. Blumenthal, Richard [D-CT] 04/07/2016

### *House of Representatives*

- Rep. Lee, Barbara [D-CA-13]\*\* 10/08/2015
- Rep. Ashford, Brad [D-NE-2] 12/09/2015
- Rep. Bordallo, Madeleine Z. [D-GU-At Large]\* 10/08/2015
- Rep. Brown, Corrine [D-FL-5]\* 10/08/2015
- Rep. Clarke, Yvette D. [D-NY-9]\* 10/08/2015
- Rep. Cohen, Steve [D-TN-9] 10/16/2015
- Rep. DeFazio, Peter A. [D-OR-4] 04/11/2016
- Rep. Grijalva, Raul M. [D-AZ-3]\* 10/08/2015
- Rep. Gutierrez, Luis V. [D-IL-4] 10/16/2015
- Rep. Honda, Michael M. [D-CA-17]\* 10/08/2015
- Rep. McCollum, Betty [D-MN-4] 12/09/2015
- Rep. Moore, Gwen [D-WI-4] 10/16/2015
- Rep. Norton, Eleanor Holmes [D-DC-At Large]\* 10/08/2015
- Rep. Schakowsky, Janice D. [D-IL-9] 10/20/2015
- Rep. Serrano, Jose E. [D-NY-15] 03/14/2016
- Rep. Watson Coleman, Bonnie [D-NJ-12]\* 10/08/2015

NASW has secured supporters of the legislation, listed below:

- American Geriatrics Society
- Association for Ambulatory Behavioral Healthcare
- Clinical Social Work Association
- Council on Social Work Education
- Justice in Aging
- NAADAC, the Association for Addiction Professionals
- National Association of Anorexia Nervosa and Associated Disorders
- National Coalition for Care Coordination (N3C)
- National League for Nursing
- The National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care

### **Administration**

#### ***Aging***

#### **[Leadership transition within the Administration for Community Living \(ACL\) and Administration on Aging](#)**

At the end of July, [Kathy Greenlee](#) stepped down from her roles as ACL Administrator and Assistant Secretary for Aging. [Edwin Walker](#), currently the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Aging, will assume those positions on an acting basis. During her seven years of leadership, Greenlee worked tirelessly to prevent and address elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation, for which she was [recently honored](#) by the Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Center for Elder Abuse Prevention. She was equally dedicated to educating policymakers and stakeholders about the importance of the Older Americans Act (OAA), making the case for [increased OAA appropriations](#) and paving the way for the April 2016 [OAA reauthorization](#). Following the [creation of the ACL](#) in 2012, Greenlee led the agency in bringing together previously separate

services for people of all ages who live with disabilities and for older adults. She also helped the aging and disability network to [integrate with health care providers and to develop sustainable revenue streams](#).

### ***Health Care***

#### **[NASW submits comments to the Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Parity Task Force](#)**

NASW has submitted comments on Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Parity to HHS. The letter highlights the need for health insurance companies to provide greater transparency in how they determine parity and provide access to behavioral health services. It encourages the federal government and state administrations to clearly define mental health parity--instructing if it is based on the comparison of medical/surgical services or costs. It urges the elimination of barriers to evidence-based behavioral health treatment so that routine services can be adopted as a part of holistic health care.

#### **[NASW Social Work Practice in Health Care Settings Standards Released](#)**

An updated version of the NASW Standards for Social Work Practice in Health Care Settings has just been released and is available online or for purchase through the NASW Press. It is a resource based on the consensus of expert health care social workers and is designed to enhance social workers' knowledge to work effectively in health care settings in the Affordable Care Act era. These updated standards highlight social work responsibilities in the context of new health care delivery models as well as the importance of social work in addressing the social determinants of health, and reducing health disparities.

### ***Criminal Justice/Gun Violence***

#### **White House Office of Public of Public Engagement – Big Table Meeting**

NASW participated in a conversation focused on the communities' healing from tragedies in Baton Rouge, Louisiana; Falcon Heights, Minnesota; and Dallas, Texas. This conversation took place at the weekly Big Table Meeting, where members of the White House Offices of Public Engagement and Intergovernmental Affairs briefed on the government's outreach to those communities and the important work ahead for all of us to heal, build bridges, and prevent future similar gun violence and policing incidents.

### ***Criminal Justice/Health Equity***

#### **White House Forum on Criminal Justice Reform and People with Disabilities**

NASW was invited to the White House to participate in a forum on criminal justice reform and people with disabilities, including the release of an exciting new resource. This conversation included experts in criminal justice reform, disability rights advocates, policymakers, and individuals directly impacted by the system.

### ***Voter Rights***

#### **Election Monitors Call**

NASW participated in call with the Department of Justice to discuss their plan not to assign monitors at election sites that had past history of voter suppression and intimidation based on race.

## **Social Justice Priority Areas**

### ***Criminal Justice***

Meeting was held to discuss and make assignments for the Justice Roundtable's Reentry Working Group's Transition Plan for the next White House Administration. NASW staff have the lead on the mental health/disability part of the plan.

#### ***Federal Reentry Working Group-- Site Visit to the Bureau of Prison's Allenwood, PA Maximum Security Prison***

NASW staff participated in a pre-arranged site-visit as a follow-up to a meeting with the Bureau of Prison (BOP) hierarchy in late June, 2016 on the issue of mental health treatment and intervention in federal prisons. Allenwood is considered to have a model and replicable mental program for prison populations. Our group received a full-tour and presentation from the Warden and his staff. NASW staff were able to talk to the one social worker assigned to over 800 men. The key issue for this program is in its staffing pattern which is psychologist intensive. NASW will be advocating for the hiring of clinical social workers.

#### ***Grand Challenges Working Group- Micro-Level Criminal Justice Policy and Practice***

NASW participated in a planning call with the co-chair of the Practice Working Group for the Decarceration Section of the Grand Challenges. The co-chair is Dr. Melissa Grady of Catholic University. The practice working group is currently recruiting social work criminal justice experts to join.

#### ***Planning Meeting for National Mental Health Policy and Practice Meeting***

NASW participated in a preliminary planning meeting with the American Psychological Association on a jointly organized national criminal justice mental health stakeholders meeting.

### ***Voters Rights***

On August 11, 2016 NASW leaders at the Association Leadership Meeting received the inside outlook of 2016 elections and how to effectively mobilize members to register and vote. In addition, NASW members were able to participate in breakout session ranging from elections and advocacy to regulatory and law enforcement issues.

### ***Voters Rights/Criminal Justice/Economic Justice***

Democratic National Conference

This was a three day networking, planning, and policy series of meetings associated with the Democratic National Convention in Philadelphia. The events and activities included:

- National Urban League social justice luncheon
- **The People for the American Way's** The Supreme Court: A Winning Issue For Progressives in 2016 - How Running Against a Trump Supreme Court Can Help Democrats Take Back the Senate and Win the White House
- **The Raben Group's:**
  - Women and Girls
  - Mass Incarceration
  - Voter Suppression

- **The Lawyers Committee for Justice Under the Law's- *The Future of Voting Rights in America***
- **National Action Network** – Human Rights Luncheon
- Network Reception with political and social justice leaders.

### ***Health Disparities***

#### Health Equity Symposium

NASW social justice and health staff attended a two-day national seminar and interactive discussion on health disparities and inequalities throughout the United States. The purpose of the meeting was to inform and share about a range of health inequities and to recommend solutions and resources. The organizers seek get organizations such as NASW to join an ongoing coalition on health equity and view health disparities as a social justice issue.

### **Coalition Work**

NASW participated in coalition work with:

- Eldercare Workforce Alliance
- National Coalition on Mental Health and Aging
- Social Work and Health Care Work Group
- Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights
- Coalition on Human Needs
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Gun Research Coalition
- The Office of National Drug Policy Stakeholders
- Justice Roundtable
- Federal Policing Coalition
- Transportation Equity Caucus
- Law Enforcement Equipment Stakeholders
- Criminal Justice Social Work Grand Challenge Coalition

### **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 letters from July is below.

- [NASW signs on to support S. 2680, the Mental Health Reform Act of 2016 \(7/13/16\)](#)

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

- [NASW submits comments to the Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Parity Task Force \(8/16/2016\)](#)