



November 20, 2017

Legislative Activities:

NASW staff continue to work on securing bipartisan champions in the Senate with the goal to have 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 **14 cosponsors**. For more information on the bill please visit our website [here](#).

To continue building bipartisan cosponsors for ***H.R. 1484 the Social Worker Safety Act of 2017***, NASW posted an [action alert](#). NASW needs your continued advocacy to gain more cosponsors to 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 for ***H.R. 1289, Dorothy I. Height and Whitney M. Young, Jr., Social Work Reinvestment Act***, which currently has **19 cosponsors**.

NASW belongs to the Behavioral Health Information Technology (IT) Coalition, which is working to secure passage of the ***Improving Access to Behavioral Health Technology Act*** (H.R. 3331/S. 1732). It currently has **five bipartisan cosponsors** in the House and **three bipartisan cosponsors** in the Senate. The legislation would create a Center for Medicare and Medicaid (CMMI) nationwide demonstration authorizing incentives to psychiatric hospitals, Community Mental Health Centers (CMHCs), social workers, clinical psychologists and outpatient and inpatient addiction providers to obtain health IT.

As a part of the Immigration Task Force's ongoing outreach campaign to Congress get support with expediting the passage of the ***Dream Act*** (H.R. 3440/S.1615), NASW social justice staff arranged and participated in hill visits to members of Congress. NASW led visits with the House Texas delegation including, Reps. Will Hurd (R-TX-23), Pete Sessions (R-TX-32) Louie Gohmert (R-TX-1) and Mac Thornberry (R-TX-13) and attended several meetings with members of Congress arranged by other task

force members. The objective of the outreach effort is to convince Congress to pass the Dream Act before the March 5, 2018 deadline imposed by President Trump. If Congress does not pass Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) related legislation by that date, as many as 800,000 DACA eligible will be subject to deportation.

The Senate Judiciary Committee introduced the *Sentencing Reform and Corrections Act of 2017*. The key sponsors are Committee Chairman Chuck Grassley (R-IA), Senate Democratic Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL) and senators Mike Lee (R-UT), Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI), Lindsey Graham (R-SC), Patrick Leahy (D-VT), Jeff Flake (R-AZ), Cory Booker (D-NJ), Tim Scott (R-SC), Dianne Feinstein (D-CA) and Roy Blunt (R-MO). The stated purpose of the bill is to “recalibrate prison sentences for nonviolent drug offenders, target violent and career criminals and save taxpayer dollars”. The legislation will allow for more discretion from federal judges in sentencing for offenders with minimal criminal histories. The bill will also emphasize reentry programs.

NASW supported H.R. 2681, the Foster EITC (Earned Income Tax Credit) Act, which would lower the age of EITC eligibility to 21 and expand eligibility to age 18 for youth who were in foster care on or after their 14th birthday.

The U.S. House passed their tax plan on Thursday, November 16th by a vote of 227-205. As the Senate Finance Committee considered their tax plan, they made a late night addition of repealing the individual mandate. The individual mandate is a cornerstone of the Affordable Care Act, which requires nearly all Americans to have health insurance with minimal standards or pay a penalty. By eliminating this mandate, the Senate would save have an additional \$338 billion over 10 years at the cost of 13 million becoming uninsured by 2027 and projected premium rates rising by about 10%. NASW continues to monitor the tax plans as they continue through each chamber and as new amendments are added.

Legislation to enhance eldercare workforce capacity introduced: In September, Representatives Janice Schakowsky (D-IL-9), Doris Matsui (D-CA-6), and David B. McKinley (R-WV-1) introduced the [Geriatrics Workforce and Caregiver Enhancement Act \(H.R. 3713\)](#). This legislation reauthorizes the Geriatrics Workforce Enhancement Program (GWEP), a federally funded program administered by the Health Resources and Services Administration. Social workers are among the health practitioners and students eligible for training through GWEP. It also reestablishes the Geriatric Academic Career Awards (GACA) program, which supports the development of academic clinical educators (including clinical social workers) specializing in geriatrics.

NASW is a longtime advocate for GWEP. The Eldercare Workforce Alliance, of which NASW is a member, worked closely with Rep. Schakowsky’s office on the reauthorization bill and issued a [press release](#) commending the legislation. Stay tuned for an NASW advocacy alert to support the Geriatrics Workforce and Caregiver Enhancement Act.

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 arranged a joint meeting for CSWE & SSWR with the new Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Substance, Dr. Elinore McCance-Katz on November 4th at the Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). The purpose of the meeting was to introduce the three social work organizations to the Assistant Secretary and to identify opportunities to work together. One of the top areas of concern for Dr. McCance-Katz is the current opioid epidemic and public health emergency. In addition, she wants to ensure that social workers and other health professional include addiction and opioid training in educational curriculums.

SAMHSA staff has since followed up and provided information about the State Targeted Response (STR) grants, Addiction Technology Transfer Centers (ATTC), the Provider Clinical Support System (PCSS), and info on SAMHSA's list serve. See links below for more information.

1) State Targeted Response (STR) Grants:

a) General Information about the STR Grants and FY17 FOA - <https://www.samhsa.gov/grants/grant-announcements/ti-17-014>

b) FY 2018 STR TA FOA - <https://www.samhsa.gov/grants/grant-announcements/ti-18-004>

2) Addiction Technology Transfer Centers (ATTC):

a) Information and Resources from the Addiction Technology Transfer Center Network - <http://www.attcnetwork.org/about/about.aspx>

b) Regional Centers - <http://www.attcnetwork.org/regional-centers/search.aspx>

c) FY17 ATTC FOA - <https://www.samhsa.gov/grants/grant-announcements/ti-17-005>

d) FY18 ATTC American Indian and Alaska Native FOA - <https://www.samhsa.gov/grants/grant-announcements/ti-18-001>

3) Provider Clinical Support System (PCSS)

a) PCSS-MAT - <https://pcssmat.org/> (*waiver training courses)

b) PCSS-O - <https://pcss-o.org/>

4) SAMHSA Listserv

a) Sign up for SAMHSA Email Updates - <https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/USSAMHSA/subscriber/new>

Open enrollment period for Medicare beneficiaries ends December 7:

During the [Medicare open enrollment period](#), beneficiaries can use the [Medicare Plan Finder](#) to review their health and prescription drug plans, to compare their current coverage to alternate plans, and to enroll in different plans if they choose. [CMS's open enrollment materials](#) emphasize enrollment in Medicare Advantage (private) plans, with almost no acknowledgment of [original \(traditional, fee-for-service\) Medicare](#) and of [Medicare Supplemental Insurance \(Medigap\) policies](#) as enrollment options.

NASW has long advocated for the integrity of original Medicare. As a member of the Leadership Council of Aging Organizations (LCAO), the association signed on to a [letter](#) urging CMS to correct the imbalance in its communication about Medicare open enrollment. NASW encourages members to use the following resources, created by fellow LCAO member organizations, for a more balanced approach to Medicare open enrollment: [Center for Benefits Access, National Council on Aging](#); [Center for Medicare Advocacy](#); and [Medicare Rights Center](#). Additional assistance with Medicare open enrollment is also available through the federally funded [State Health Insurance Assistance Program \(SHIP\)](#).

New resources about the Jimmo settlement available: In August, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) launched a new [Web page](#) dedicated to the Jimmo settlement. The settlement, approved in 2013, invalidates the false but pervasive perception that Medicare beneficiaries must show improvement (“improvement standard”) in order to obtain occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech–language pathology services, and skilled nursing services in outpatient therapy settings, home health care, and skilled nursing facilities—and, to a lesser extent, in inpatient rehabilitation hospitals.

As noted in a March 2017 [NASW Practice Alert](#), the CMS Web page is part of a Corrective Action Plan ordered by a federal judge in February 2017. The Corrective Action Plan was prompted by a court motion by beneficiary advocates, who alleged that CMS had not complied with its part of the Jimmo settlement agreement. The Center for Medicare Advocacy was one of the public interest firms representing plaintiffs in the 2011 Jimmo case and played a lead role in pursuing additional education from CMS in 2016. The Center convenes the [Jimmo Implementation Council](#), of which NASW is a member. In late September, the Center held a Webinar to educate the public about the CMS Corrective Action Plan and to clarify information regarding the Jimmo settlement. An [archived version of the Webinar](#) and [detailed information regarding Jimmo](#) are available to the public.

Elder justice resources available through the National Center on Elder Abuse: NASW has been working closely with the [National Center on Elder Abuse](#) (NCEA) for the past year and encourages members to use NCEA resources to inform their advocacy efforts. The mission of NCEA is to provide the latest information regarding research, training, best practices, news, and resources on elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation to professionals and the public. NCEA is a national resource center funded under Title II of the Older Americans Act (OAA). The [Administration for Community Living](#) awards OAA funds for NCEA on three-year grant cycles. The [Keck School of Medicine at the University of Southern California](#) (USC) has housed NCEA since October 2014 and was recently awarded a second grant to house NCEA through September 2020.

Administration for Community Living releases principles for serious illness, informed by NASW: The Administration for Community Living (ACL) has published the final version of its [Principles for Person-directed Services and Supports during Serious Illness](#). This document was informed by [feedback from NASW](#) and other stakeholders on a draft version in May. Social workers can use these principles to promote the right and ability of people with serious illness to direct their care and services. The principles will also inform policy discussions and enhance existing programs and services within ACL related to serious illness among older adults and individuals with disabilities.

Materials available from federally funded research summit on dementia care: In mid-October, NASW participated in the [National Research Summit on Care, Services and Supports for Persons with Dementia and Their Caregivers](#), sponsored in part by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Several

NASW members presented at the summit. The [videocast archive](#) and [presentation slides](#) are available to the public and can be used to inform social workers' advocacy efforts.

Collaborative Activities

The NASW social justice staff and advocacy staff were invited to join the NASW Michigan Chapter's Legislative Social Policy (LSP) Committee in an in-depth discussion on how NASW national and individual chapters can collaborate on major policies and legislation that have both national and state specific implications. The combined discussion led to a mutual agreement (between the Michigan LSP Committee and national staff) that there were numerous critical issues that intersect along state and national lines. There was a consensus to hold regular conference calls and collaborative Government Relations planning between the Michigan Chapter and the national office.

Criminal Justice

Social Justice Staff met with Jeree Thomas- Policy Director for the Center for Youth Justice (CFYJ) to discuss the finalization of a collaborative social justice brief dealing with juvenile transfers to adult prisons-with a focus on racial disparities in such transfer. The brief will be completed and widely disseminated soon.

Domestic Violence/Violence Against Women

NASW Social Justice staff met with Rachel Graber, the Public Policy Manager **National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCADV)**. Ms. Graber is also a social worker. The meeting was to discuss collaboration between NASW and NCADV to combine advocacy and informational resources to help ensure the reauthorization of the Violence against Women (VAWA) Act. VAWA is expected to be on the Congressional agenda for reauthorization in early 2018. The significant request from Ms. Graber was that NASW staff set-up a briefing with the key staff from the Chairs of the Senate Judiciary Committee and House Judiciary committee - through which VAWA will be debated. NASW will work with NCADV to facilitate setting up such a briefing in the near future.

Children's Issues

Members of the U.S. Department of State International Visitor Leadership Program participated in a meeting in NASW national office on November 2nd to discuss how the U.S. addresses children's issues. The International Visitor Leadership Program is the U.S. Department of State's premier professional exchange program. Through short-term visits to the U.S., current and emerging foreign leaders in a variety of fields experience the U.S. firsthand and cultivate lasting relationships with their American counterparts.

NASW Documents

Drug Policy

NASW issued a statement in [in support of](#) using a public health approach to stemming the opioid epidemic. The statement also recommends that the White House add more treatment and prevention funds to achieve the goal of ending the opioid crisis.

Coalition Activities:

Health Care

Affordable Care Act Open Enrollment

NASW has disseminated [important ACA Open Enrollment information](#) and resources through all channels and continues to work in the Families USA Protect Our Care Coalition to advance access to health care.

Society for Social Work Leadership in Health Care (SSWLHC) Conference in Baltimore, MD

On October 12th NASW staff participated in a presentation entitled, *Social Work Healthcare Education and Leadership Scholars (HEALS) Initiative: Lessons from the University of Maryland*. The session highlighted implementation of the HEALS scholarship program at the school and included Mel Bellin and Carolyn Tice, faculty from the University of Maryland School of Social Work, HEALS field instructor Jennifer Broaddus, and two HEALS alumni Terra Hill and Beth Kalb.

Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids Coalition meeting

NASW staff participated in a quarterly meeting with the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids Coalition to discuss FDA's delay in implementing for tobacco and nicotine regulation, FY18 Appropriation issues for FDA & CDC tobacco control efforts and other proposed legislation regarding tobacco.

National Navigation Roundtable- American Cancer Society

NASW staff participated in a newly formed roundtable of the American Cancer Society, the National Navigation Roundtable (NNRT). The NNRT is a collaboration of organizations and individuals dedicated to achieving health equity and access to quality care across the cancer continuum through effective patient navigation. The Roundtable aims to advance navigation efforts that eliminate barriers to quality cancer care, reduce disparities in health outcomes, and foster ongoing health equity. The work of the NNRT will focus on navigation through the cancer lens and across the cancer continuum, with a focus on evidenced-based promising practices, training & certification and policy.

NASW advocates for integrative pain care: Seventy leaders from more than [50 organizations](#) gathered in San Diego for the first-ever [Integrative Pain Care Policy Congress](#) on October 21-22 during the 28th Annual Meeting of the Academy of Integrative Pain Management (AIPM). Representing the full scope of licensed and certified health care providers, public and private payers, policy advocates, and research organizations, the group's initial goal was to agree upon a definition of "comprehensive integrative pain management". A universal definition of comprehensive integrative pain management, among organizations that have never come together around this issue, is an integral step towards implementing key solutions for the opioid overdose epidemic.

As a member of [Partners for Understanding Pain](#), NASW promoted Pain Awareness Month in September. The NASW blog for the observance includes numerous resources to inform social workers' advocacy efforts, including a link to NASW's statement for the Integrative Pain Care Policy Congress.

Immigration

NASW staff attended the weekly meeting of the Immigration Task Force. The meeting is focused on discussing and reporting out on the feedback received from outreach visits to Congressional offices. The feedback suggests that there is bipartisan support for passing legislation that will protect DACA eligible. The legislation will be either the Dream Act or the Recognizing America's Children (RAC) Act introduced

by Rep. Carlos Curbelo (R-FL-26). The RAC Act is a more conservative version of the Dream Act- but would be an acceptable alternative for some Immigration Task Force members, if passed.

Economic Justice

NASW social justice staff participated in an economic justice Congressional Briefing organized by the Non-Defense Discretionary Budget (NDD United) coalition. The briefing was facilitated by Rep. John Yarmuth (D-KY-3) and included a panel of several other Democratic House members. Rep. Yarmuth is the Ranking Member of the House Committee on the Budget. The purpose of the briefing was to explain the impact-of the budget passed by the House on safety net programs. Rep. Yarmuth organized the briefing to seek advocacy support from the NDD United Coalition to protect safety-net programs from budget cuts.

Criminal Justice

NASW social justice staff participated in an invitation-only two-day *Smart on Crime Innovative Conference* held at John Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York City. The conference was designed to bring together criminal justice thought leaders to discuss the state of criminal justice reform during the Trump era. Key speakers included former Attorney General – Eric Holder and former head of the Department of Justice Civil Rights Division – Vanita Gupta. Conference included breakout and network sessions dealing with opioid impact and collateral consequences.

NASW social justice staff chaired the initial conference call for the Social Work Grand Challenges' *Smart Decarceration Policy Working Group*. The working group includes social workers from across the country. The purpose of the working group is to identify several priority criminal justice policy issues. The group will develop tangible deliverables to include webinars, reports and briefs. The target audience is social workers and other criminal justice professionals.

Advancing Justice 2017 – NASW social justice staff participated in an invitation-only all day symposium on criminal justice reforms. The gathering included politically bipartisan thought leaders and legislators. There were keynote speeches by Sen. Charles Grassley (R-IA), Chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, and Senator Mike Lee (R-UT). Much of the content dealt with the need for reforms related to the ongoing opioid epidemic; questions around violent crime, and continued police militarization.

The conference was organized by the Charles Koch Institute. The stated purpose of the meeting was to; identify *the next set of criminal justice reform priorities, and support a broad coalition of policy makers, academics, think tanks, and community activists*. All of whom should be committed to supporting the best ideas and lending our voice to the national conversation for an advancement in human dignity and greater public safety.

Child Welfare

NASW hosted a National Child Abuse Coalition meeting on November 14th. Commissioner Jerry Milner, Associate Commissioner at the Children's Bureau and the Acting Commissioner for the Administration on Children, Youth and Families, was a featured speaker on the agenda who spoke about the importance of prevention services to ensure child and family well-being. Other items discussed included unconditional child transfer issue; S. 705, Child Protection Improvements Act of 2017 (Hatch);

S. 534, Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse Act of 2017 (Feinstein); and S. 1964, Child Welfare Oversight and Accountability Act of 2017 (Hatch/Wyden).

Aging

November is National Family Caregivers Month: NASW and numerous coalition partners celebrate National Family Caregivers Month in November. The observance provides an excellent opportunity to advocate for and recognize family caregivers in your community and on a macro level. Resources to inform your advocacy include materials related to this year's theme, [Caregiving Around the Clock](#); a blog from the [Administration for Community Living](#) describing various federal programs to support family caregivers; and recent letters, signed by NASW, to promoting the RAISE Family Caregivers Act in the [Senate](#) and the [House](#).

Summit highlights eldercare workforce: In mid-November NASW participated in the Alliance for Health Policy's summit *Care Delivery in the Future: The Role of the Health Care Workforce*. The event was sponsored by the Eldercare Workforce Alliance, of which NASW is a member, and included one panel addressing aging and another addressing the behavioral health workforce. [Summit materials](#), including transcript, video archive, and slides, are available to the public.

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
- Eldercare Workforce Alliance
- Gerontological Society of America
- Leadership Council of Aging Organizations
- National Center on Elder Abuse
- Center for Excellence in Assisted Living
- Center for Medicare Advocacy
- Alliance for Health Policy
- Center for Advancing Holocaust Survivor Care (Jewish Federations of North America)
- National Coalition on Mental Health and Aging

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 onto MHLG letter thanking legislators for introducing the Excellence in Mental Health and Addiction Treatment Expansion Act \(11/14/2017\)](#)
- [NASW signs onto letter to Congress urging them to preserve the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program \(11/13/2017\)](#)
- [NASW signs on to Leadership Council of Aging Organizations letter urging the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services to correct misleading public outreach and education about the Medicare open enrollment period \(11/09/2017\)](#)
- [NASW signs onto MHLG letter supporting the Bipartisan Health Care Stabilization Act \(10/27/2017\)](#)
- [NASW signs onto letter supporting the CHIP Mental Health Parity Act \(H.R. 3192\) \(10/24/2017\)](#)
- [NASW signs onto letter in support of the CONNECT for Health Act \(S. 1016\) \(10/17/2017\)](#)
- [NASW signs on to Leadership Council of Aging Organizations letter urging the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to proceed with full implementation of ACA Section 1557, which includes critical antidiscrimination protections \(10/13/2017\)](#)
- [VETS Act Sign On \(9/26/2017\)](#)
- [NASW signs on to open letters supporting the Recognize, Assist, Include, Support, and Engage \(RAISE\) Family Caregivers Act \(09/20/2017\)](#)
 - [House](#)
 - [Senate](#)
- [NASW signs on to open letter supporting reintroduction of the Beneficiary Enrollment Notification and Eligibility Simplification \(BENES\) Act \(H.R. 2575\) \(6/29/2017\)](#)

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

- [NASW Responds to CMS-1676-P: Revisions to Payment Policies Under the Physician Fee Schedule and Other Revisions to Part B for CY 2018 \(Sept. 8, 2017\)](#)