



April 2019

Legislative

NASW continues to work with our Congressional champions to advance much-needed legislation related to the social work profession, including reimbursement.

Improving Access to Mental Health Act ([S. 782/H.R. 1533](#)): This bill would ensure:

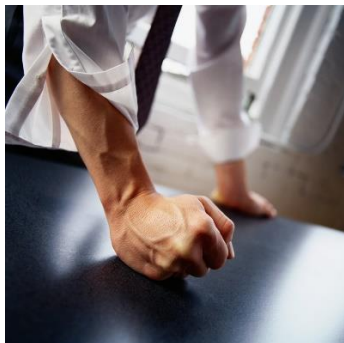
- Medicare beneficiaries' access to clinical social workers by increasing the Medicare reimbursement rate for clinical social workers from 75% to 85% of the physician fee schedule rate



- Skilled Nursing Facility (SNF) residents' access to clinical social workers by excluding clinical social work services from SNF consolidated billing
- Medicare beneficiaries' access to Health and Behavior Assessment and Intervention (HBAI) services provided by clinical social workers.



NASW is working closely with a variety of aging, health care and other groups to advance these bills. If you have not already done so, [email your lawmaker](#) now to urge them to cosponsor this legislation.



Workplace Violence Prevention for Healthcare and Social Service Workers Act (S. 851/H.R. 1309): On March 14, Sen. Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) introduced a companion bill to Rep. Joe Courtney's bill (H.R. 1309) to prevent violence in workplaces employing healthcare and social services workers. Settings include hospitals, psychiatric hospitals, community-based clinics, and others. NASW CEO Dr. Angelo McClain [testified](#) and provided [written remarks](#) in support of H.R. 1309 to the House Education and Labor Workforce Protections Subcommittee on February 27. NASW is working closely with a broad range of health, human services and labor organizations to

move this legislation forward.

NASW is committed to promoting safety in all settings employing social workers, for the benefit of both clients and the professionals who serve them. Stay tuned for an Action Alert to encourage lawmakers to co-sponsor these bills.

Child Welfare Workforce Support Act (S. 1070): This legislation is aimed at ensuring that there is a sufficient number of well-trained and supported child welfare workers. The bill:

- Directs the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to conduct a five-year demonstration program for States, localities, nonprofits, or tribes with a demonstrated high turnover rate of child welfare workers
- Provides funding to implement targeted interventions to recruit, select, and retain child welfare workers
- Focuses on building best practices for reducing barriers to recruitment, development, and retention of child welfare workers

Please encourage your Senators to support this bill.



Geriatrics Workforce Improvement Act (S.299): This legislation is aimed at improving health outcomes for older adults by supporting the Geriatrics Workforce Enhancement Program and the Geriatric Academic Career Awards. Please encourage your Senators to [cosponsor](#) this bill!

The U.S. House of Representatives on April 4 voted to reauthorize the **Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) through H.R. 1585**. NASW is working in coalition with the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, the National Task Force to End Sexual Violence and other allies to advocate for this important legislation.

NASW signed on to [letters](#) with the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids Coalition to the Senate and House Subcommittees to encourage adequate funding in the FY 2020 Appropriations Bills for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Office on Smoking and Health, and the Food and Drug Administration’s tobacco control efforts.



Regulatory



Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP):

NASW submitted [comments](#) in opposition to the United States Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) proposed rule to require all SNAP applicants and current recipients between the ages of 18 and 49 to meet “work requirement” regulations in order to receive SNAP

benefits. This proposed rule is being opposed by many organizations and individuals across the country.

Pain Management: NASW submitted [comments](#) on the Pain Management Best Practice Inter-Agency Task Force Draft Report. The report identified gaps or inconsistencies in pain management care. NASW’s comments highlight the need for access to comprehensive, integrated pain management (CIPM) and the important role that social workers play in the treatment of chronic pain.



Collaboration

On April 3 and 4, NASW joined over 40 national organizations for a two-day convening on **Advancing Our Future: Protecting and Supporting Children in Mixed-Status Immigrant Families**. This gathering was a strategic planning meeting lead by the Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP). NASW will be a member of the founding coalition responding to the impact on children in asylum-seeking and Temporary Protective Status families, as well as DACA status young people and unaccompanied migrant children under the care of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

NASW and the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) staff welcomed 50 **Social Work Health Care Education and Leadership Scholars (HEALS)** to Washington, DC from 10 schools of social work across the country. [BSW and MSW students](#) heard from social work leaders in health policy and visited congressional offices to educate lawmakers about the unique contributions of health care social workers.



Coalition to Preserve Rehabilitation:

The Coalition to Preserve Rehabilitation (CPR) has released its [policy priorities](#) for 2019. These priorities include the following the following themes:

strengthening Medicare postacute care; protecting the integrity of Essential Health Benefits; improving access to

rehabilitation in managed care, including in Medicare Advantage; preserving access to rehabilitation in Medicaid; and promoting rehabilitation and disability research.

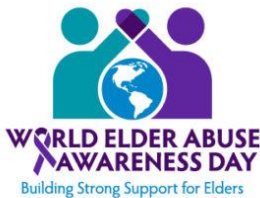
Eldercare Workforce Alliance:

The Eldercare Workforce Alliance (EWA) has released its [policy priorities](#) for 2019. These priorities address topics related to strengthening the health care workforce, supporting older adults and family caregivers, enhancing health care access, and promoting health care innovation.



World Elder Abuse Awareness Day 2019:

NASW observes World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD) on June 15 each year. [Material for the observance](#) are now available from the National Center on Elder Abuse, to which NASW serves as an advisory board member. This year's theme, *Lifting Up Voices*, unifies elder justice and the movement to end violence against women by conveying the lived experiences of older adults. Use these materials in your policy advocacy as WEAAD approaches.



As a member of the **Voting Rights Task Force**, NASW is developing plans for interdisciplinary collaboration activities with the Task Force leadership at the Leadership Conference for Civil

and Human Rights during the lead-up to the 2020 elections. The initial plans include joint get out the vote efforts, sharing of voting tool kits, webinars and related voting engagement activities.



NASW has taken the lead with the national **Criminal Justice Reform Task Force** on pushing for more policy and practice discussions on the need for a more robust strategic approach to the impact of behavioral health on criminal justice reform. NASW is working collaboratively with the American Psychological Association, American Psychiatric Association and over 15 behavioral health and related organizations to revise its consensus recommendations on behavioral health in jails and prisons. [The Consensus Workgroup Policy Recommendations](#) to the 115th Congress and (the then) incoming Trump Administration are available online. Recommendations for the 116th Congress are currently in development and will be issued in the coming months.

Together with **Brady** (formerly the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence), NASW hosted a joint [webinar](#) on March 21 on the role of social workers in gun violence prevention and gun safety promotion. Presenters included Rebecca Gonzales, Director of Government Relations for NASW, California Chapter and Bettina Lanyi, the Director, National Partnerships for Brady.



The NASW Social Justice Brief, [Tools for Social Workers to Prevent Gun Violence: Safe Storage of Guns in the Home, Extreme Risk Protection Orders, and Other Methods of Gun Violence Prevention](#), is available at our website.

NASW and its partners in the **Opportunity Starts at Home initiative** on March 28 released the [results](#) of a national survey about American’s opinions on the need for affordable housing. The poll showed:

- 85% agree that ensuring that everyone has a safe, decent, affordable place to live should be a “top national priority.” 78% believe government has an important role to play in making sure there are enough affordable places for people to live.
- 78% agree that the president should “take major action” to make housing more affordable for low-income families. 80% agree that Congress should “take major action” to make housing more affordable for low-income people.



- 61% report that they have had to make at least one sacrifice in the past three years because they were struggling to pay for housing. People under age 50 (74%), African Americans (69%), Hispanics (79%), and renters (79%) are among those most likely to have had to make sacrifices in the past three years to afford their housing.
- 83% agree that elected officials are not paying enough attention to the cost of housing and the need for more affordable housing.

- 76% are more likely to vote for a candidate running for office in their state with a detailed plan on making housing more affordable.

NASW has joined a multi-year national campaign, **Project THRIVE**, to create more equitable, inclusive supports, systems, and communities for LGBTQ youth. Project THRIVE will build the skills and capacities of all youth-serving professionals to better meet the needs of LGBTQ young people. Project THRIVE is a collaborative effort of more than 20 national organizations. The goals of the Project THRIVE include:

- Actively promoting well-being for LGBTQ youth within all youth-serving professions (e.g. education, child welfare, juvenile justice, homelessness).
- Providing all youth-serving professionals with the tools, resources, and training they need to support and affirm LGBTQ youth, in particular LGBTQ youth of color and who have a history of system involvement.
- Increasing the proportion of LGBTQ young people experiencing permanent, supportive connections with caring adults and family networks.
- Reducing the significant disparities in mental and physical health outcomes among LGBTQ youth Improve school safety and inclusion so that LGBTQ students can succeed and thrive academically and socially.

Get Involved! We encourage you to join [NASW's Advocacy Listserv](#) to stay up-to-date on Congressional activity. We also have a variety of valuable [resources](#) on our web page to guide members in connecting with their lawmakers.

For questions about the Washington Update or to suggest content that you would like us to consider for inclusion in a future mailing, please contact Dina Kastner, Senior Field Organizer, at dkastner.nasw@socialworkers.org.

The National Association of Social Workers (NASW), in Washington, D.C., is the largest membership organization of professional social workers. We promote, develop and protect the practice of social work and social workers and enhance the well-being of individuals, families, and communities through advocacy. [Become a member of NASW.](#)



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