



July 5, 2018

**Legislative Activities:**

In recent months, NASW has worked to support efforts in Congress to advance the **Improving Access to Behavioral Health Information Technology Act (S. 1732/H.R. 3331)**, which would authorize the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to incentivize behavioral health providers to adopt electronic health records.

NASW is pleased to report that both the House and Senate passed versions of the bill, on June 12 (H.R. 3331) and May 7 (S. 1732) respectively.

The legislation enjoys strong bipartisan, bicameral support, including champions: Sens. Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI) and Rob Portman (R-OH) and Reps. Lynn Jenkins (R-KS-02) and Doris Matsui (D-CA-06).

NASW is part of the Behavioral Health Information Technology (BHIT) Coalition, which is advocating for passage of this legislation.

**Key NASW Legislation:**

Please advocate for **S. 2613/H.R. 1290- Improving Access to Mental Health Act** by [asking your Senators and Representative to cosponsor today!](#) NASW continues to advocate for the **bipartisan legislation S. 2613 – Improving Access to Mental Health Act** introduced by Sen. Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) and Sen. John Barrasso (R-WY). S. 2613 is the Senate companion bill to the House version – H.R. 1290 – introduced by Congresswoman Barbara Lee (D-CA-13) last year. A full list of cosponsors in the House can be found [here](#).

Don't forget to also weigh in on [H.R. 1484 the Social Worker Safety Act of 2017](#). This bipartisan legislation was introduced by Rep. Kyrsten Sinema (D-AZ-09) with original cosponsor, Rep. Elise Stefanik (R-NY-21). With the help of your advocacy efforts, we are now up to [5 bipartisan cosponsors](#) for H.R. 1484. We look forward to continuing the momentum for this vital piece of legislation by continuing to add cosponsors.

NASW continues to push for support of [H.R. 1289, Dorothy I. Height and Whitney M. Young, Jr., Social Work Reinvestment Act](#), which currently has [19 cosponsors](#).

**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](#).

### **NASW Activities:**

Senator Cory Booker (D-NJ) addressed attendees at the NASW National Conference in Washington, DC in June.

NASW CEO, Dr. Angelo McClain, was invited to provide remarks at a Congressional press conference highlighting the problems with the Trump Administration's "Zero-Tolerance" Immigration policy that has separated families at the border. NASW has issued [statements](#) about the policy and provided [information](#) to social workers about what they can do in response to the crisis at the border. NASW is also joined with the [Families Belong Together Coalition](#) to [recruit](#) social workers to attend rallies on June 30.

In conjunction with the 2018 NASW National Conference, NASW hosted a **Voter Engagement Teach-In** on Capitol Hill on June 20. Over 150 social workers registered for the event. They dialogued with experts in voter engagement including Tanya Rhodes Smith, MSW, Director of the Nancy A. Humphrey's Institute for Political Social Work; Cheryl Aguilar, LICSW, Founder and Lead Therapist for The Hope Center for Wellness and Shaneice Simmons, Associate Director of Civic Engagement at Rock the Vote. The teach-in was moderated by Michael Reisch, PhD, Daniel Thursz Distinguished Professor of Social Justice at the University of Maryland School of Social Work.

Participants heard about efforts to mobilize social workers to assist their clients in registering and getting out to vote. This non-partisan work is critical and legal to do. They also learned about the ways that Rock the Vote mobilizes young people in civic engagement through easy voter registration and education.

On June 6, NASW hosted a Congressional briefing titled "**Opioid Crisis Response: Social Work Workforce Readiness.**" The event was recorded and can be viewed on [YouTube](#).

### Coalition and Collaborative Activities:

NASW staff attended the **Judiciary Committee** hearing on *TVPRA and Exploited Loopholes Affecting Unaccompanied Alien Children*". This was a hearing that included testimony from key senators on the issue of border security and tying the need for "Zero Tolerance" based on so-called threats from MS-13 gangs. NASW attended the hearing as a part of the Immigration Taskforce's efforts to protest the policy and its possible impact on children and families. The hearings included a planned protest by immigration reform advocates who walked out of the hearing to make the point about child-welfare implications of Zero-Tolerance.

NASW is continuing its partnership with the CDC's *Tips From Former Smokers Campaign* to promote tobacco cessation. The 2018 NASW National Conference featured a session with Doug Tipperman, MSW, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), that explores smoking among people with behavioral health conditions and how tobacco cessation can significantly improve mental health and addiction recovery outcomes. SAMHSA's Tobacco and Behavioral Health resources are available [here](#).

NASW is pleased to be a partner in [Care Can't Wait](#), a social media campaign organized by SAGE: Advocacy & Services for LGBT Elders. The campaign, [prompted by recent anti-LGBT actions by the Trump administration and by the Supreme Court case \*Masterpiece Cakeshop v. Colorado Civil Rights Commission\*](#), enlists individuals and organizations in supporting LGBT older adults, whose livelihoods and care would be threatened by a license to discriminate. Join NASW in supporting Care Can't Wait by taking a pledge to spread the message of antidiscrimination, whether as an [individual](#) or as an [organization](#). Look for social media posts by NASW and other supporters by searching for #CareCantWait or @sageusaSAGE

NASW staff copresented a three-hour preconference workshop, [Reframing Communication About Elder Abuse to Enhance Practice, Policy, and Education](#), with the National Center on Elder Abuse (NCEA) and the FrameWorks Institute at the 2018 NASW National Conference. The workshop took place five days after World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD), an observance promoted widely in NASW media.

- Read this [blog](#), written by NASW at the invitation of NCEA (for which NASW serves on the Advisory Board), to learn more about the parallels between the Reframing Elder Abuse initiative and social work.
- Access the FrameWorks [Talking Elder Abuse tool kit](#), to find tips for reframing your own communication about elder abuse and to read a summary of the qualitative research on which the Reframing Elder Abuse communications strategy is based.
- Visit the [NCEA Web site](#) to access information and resources about elder abuse; read this [summary](#) to learn about NCEA's recent work to improve the national response to elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation.
- It's not too late to plan an event for WEAAD; access NCEA's [WEAAD tool kit](#) for tools, tips, activities, public service announcements, and other resources.

Staff is participating in a coalition to advance the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine consensus study, *Integrating Social Needs Care into the Delivery of Health Care to Improve the Nation's Health*. The National Academies is soliciting public comments to help inform the deliberations

of a consensus study committee. Written comments may be sent to [socialneedscare@nas.edu](mailto:socialneedscare@nas.edu) and more information is available [here](#).

Staff participated in the **Police Equity and Justice Roundtable**. This invitation-only event allowed staff to discuss and provide input on the data collection needs related to policing statistics such as police stops, arrests, use of force and racial disparities. The Police Equity- Science and Justice organization is a highly regarded think tank on issues of the importance of data in police reforms. The two-day meeting included break-out and report-back sessions allowing for input from law enforcement, the legal community, and the criminal justice reform advocacy community.

Staff participated in a **bail reform briefing** and planning held by the Google Corporation. Bail reform is a high social justice for Google. The meeting was to announce an initiative to develop projects that assist low-income individuals with either accessing legal support or accessing cash assistance for bail in non-violent crime proceedings.

Staff participated in a Criminal Justice Coalition call to discuss the proposed **First Step Act (H.R. 5682)**. This call was critical to criminal justice reform advocates because there is not a consensus among advocates as to whether or not to support this legislation. The consensus among the participants on this call was to withhold support because key provisions eliminating mandatory minimum sentencing were stripped out of the bill- even though Sen. Grassley supported the original version. Additionally, the bill did not include sufficient support for reentry support, especially for the seriously mentally ill.

NASW worked on a **Congressional Briefing on Mental Health in Prisons** along with the American Psychological Association, the American Association of State Corrections Directors, the Legal Action Center and the American Psychiatric Association. Dr. Angelo McClain, NASW CEO, moderated the briefing that had approximately 60 attendees.

Staff participated in the annual meeting of the **Safe Alternatives to Solitary Confinement Advisory Board**. Corrections administrators from the participating states in the project joined the meeting. This is a Vera Institute and Department of Justice Office of Justice Assistance program. Important and key decision-making about the needs and impact of solitary confinement on the severely mentally-ill were made. The social work perspective was a meaningful part of the planning.

NASW participated in meetings of the following coalitions or other external initiatives:

- World Elder Abuse Awareness Day Global Summit
- Eldercare Workforce Alliance
- 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
- Child Welfare and Mental Health Coalition

- Public Service Loan Forgiveness Coalition
- Behavioral Health Information Technology Coalition
- National Coalition on Mental Health and Aging

### **NASW Resources:**

#### **Physician Aid in Dying: Understand the Legal, Clinical, and Ethical Practice Implications for Social Workers**

When adopted at the state level, physician aid in dying (PAD) is a process that allows physicians to write a prescription for a terminally ill person to self-administer medication to end his or her life. It's important for social workers to understand the PAD process and its legal, clinical, and ethical practice implications. Social workers who serve patients with terminal illness should be prepared to respond to inquiries about PAD and address them appropriately, regardless of personal opinion or preference.

### **Items of Note:**

On June 5 the **Elder Justice Coordinating Council (EJCC)**, an interagency entity created to coordinate activities related to elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation across the federal government, met in Washington, DC. The meeting, which was open to the public, included testimonies by nongovernmental elder justice experts on how the opioid crisis has exacerbated elder abuse. [Visit the EJCC Web site](#) to access a video archive and printed materials from the meeting.

#### **2019 Aging in America Conference**

The American Society on Aging (ASA), with which NASW works closely, will hold its 2019 "Aging in America" conference April 15 through 18 in New Orleans.

#### **Recognize Innovation in Palliative and End-of-Life Care**

Submit your nominations and applications for the 2018 [Circle of Life Awards](#) by August 13, 2018. The award honors [innovative programs in palliative and end-of-life care](#) in hospices, hospitals, health care systems, long-term care facilities, and other direct service settings. Shine a light on programs and organizations that can serve as models or inspiration for other providers. NASW is a cosponsor of the Circle of Life Awards.

Staff participated in the PATRIOTlink event launch on June 14. [PATRIOTlink](#) is the nation's first cloud-based solution that enables any user free access to vetted, direct, cost-free veteran services.

### **Support Letters:**

NASW has signed onto several 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 open urging House & Senate appropriators to increase funding for the Lifespan Respite Program and the National Family Caregiver Support Program in fiscal year 2019 (6/8/2018)
- NASW signs on to letter with the Campaign for Tobacco- Free Kids Coalition requesting that the House Appropriations Subcommittee maintain adequate funding for the CDC's Office on Smoking and Health for tobacco prevention and cessation efforts (5/24/2018)
- NASW signs on to letter with the Campaign for Tobacco- Free Kids Coalition requesting that the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee maintain adequate funding for the CDC's Office on Smoking and Health for tobacco prevention and cessation efforts (5/24/2018)

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