

ADVOCATING FOR SOCIAL WORKERS IN

.....
AGING | BEHAVIORAL HEALTH | CHILD WELFARE |
CLINICAL SOCIAL WORK | HEALTH CARE |
SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK



NASW Clinical Team

Mirean Coleman, MSW, LICSW, CT
Clinical Manager

Sharon Dietsche, MSW, LICSW
Senior Practice Associate, Behavioral Health & School Social Work

Carrie Dorn, MSSW, LMSW, MPA
Senior Practice Associate, Health

Chris Herman, MSW, LICSW
Senior Practice Associate, Aging

Roxanna Meruvia, MSW, PMP
Senior Practice Associate, Child Welfare

The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) is the world's largest membership organization of professional social workers, with chapters in each state and U.S. territory and members in every congressional district. NASW promotes federal legislation and policies that support effective social work practice; enhance the lives of the individuals, groups, and communities we serve; and uphold fairness and well-being. We remain concerned about a broad range of issues that affect the quality of life for people in the United States and recognize that professional social workers have the necessary education, training, and experience to help solve many of the current national and global social challenges.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Aging	1
Behavioral Health	6
Child Welfare.....	8
Clinical Social Workers	11
Health Care	15
School Social Workers	20
Summary	23



FOREWORD

One of the most frequently asked questions from NASW members is, “What is NASW doing to advocate for social workers?” In response to this popular question, the clinical team developed this advocacy booklet for members.

NASW engages in a multitude of advocacy efforts for social workers, especially areas in which members have identified specific concerns. This document highlights NASW’s advocacy efforts on behalf of social workers in aging, behavioral health, child welfare, clinical social work, health care, and school social work during the year of 2018. Many of these advocacy activities are ongoing and cross over into 2019. Other NASW advocacy efforts can be found on NASW’s advocacy website at www.socialworkers.org/Advocacy.



AGING

Gerontological social workers work directly with older adults in the context of the social environment, providing services such as screening, biopsychosocial assessment, supportive counseling, resource linkage, system navigation, service coordination, and advocacy.

In 2018 NASW represented gerontological social workers in more than 20 advocacy coalitions and other external initiatives. Within each collaboration, NASW practice staff advocated not only for older adults, but also for the role of social workers in maximizing older adults' health, independence, and well-being. Highlights of the association's recent advocacy for social workers in aging follow.

Federal Workforce Programs

NASW supported the Geriatrics Workforce and Caregiver Enhancement Act (H.R. 3713, 2017) during the 115th session of Congress. The goal of this bill was to establish formal funding for the Geriatrics Workforce Enhancement Program (GWEP), the only federally funded program to enhance workforce capacity in aging. GWEP establishes and operates geriatrics education centers by developing partnerships between academia (including schools of social work), primary care, and community-based organizations, thereby improving value-based care for older adults. H.R. 3713 would also reestablish the Geriatric Academic Career Awards (GACA), a previously funded program for developing academic clinical educators specializing in aging. All social work practitioners and students are eligible for training through GWEP—currently available at 44 sites in 29 states—and clinical social workers are eligible for GACA.

The Eldercare Workforce Alliance (EWA) (<https://eldercareworkforce.org>), of which NASW is a member, worked with Representatives Janice Schakowsky (D-IL), Doris Matsui (D-CA), and David B. McKinley (R-WV) to introduce H.R. 3713. In January 2018 NASW sent a letter of support to the original bill sponsors. The association also created an advocacy alert to urge Congressional representatives to support the bill. That alert generated 800 responses from social workers and other stakeholders. NASW and EWA are advocating for passage of GWEP–GACA in both chambers of Congress during the 116th Congressional session.

The Eldercare Workforce Alliance

EWA works to enhance the capacity of the entire health care team—professionals, direct care workers, family caregivers, and older adults.

NASW practice staff played a central role in developing EWA's issue brief, *End-of-Life Care: Preparing the Eldercare Workforce*, which featured both psychosocial concerns and the role of social workers. EWA continues to use this issue brief to educate policymakers, the media, and the public. NASW practice staff also participated in two EWA-led Twitter chats in 2018—one addressing GWEP and community-based organizations (May 9) and the other addressing mental health and aging (October 10). During these events, NASW highlighted the role of social workers in service provision to older adults and in workforce training.

Older Americans Act and Older Americans Month

In its annual promotion of Older Americans Month, NASW highlighted the role of social work in serving older adults and the association's advocacy not only for the previously described GWEP–GACA bill, but also for the Improving Access to Mental Health Act (S. 2613, 2018/

H.R. 1290, 2017). During the month of May, practice staff also represented NASW at the first National Older Adult Mental Health Awareness Day, cosponsored by the National Coalition on Mental Health and Aging (of which NASW is a member), the Administration for Community Living (ACL), and Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

Advocacy to fund the Older Americans Act (OAA) and other aging-focused federal programs was a central part of NASW's 2018 Older Americans Month celebration. OAA-funded programs, many of which employ social workers, help older adults to engage in their communities and to maximize their dignity, health, and independence. As a member of the Leadership Council of Aging Organizations (LCAO) (www.lcao.org), NASW successfully advocated for OAA increases in and maintenance of funding for some OAA programs in fiscal years (FYs) 2018 and 2019. An NASW advocacy alert to thank members of Congress for FY 2018 funding and to underscore the importance of future funding for the OAA generated more than 1,500 responses from social workers and other stakeholders. In 2018 NASW

practice staff also participated in an LCAO work group to generate proposals for OAA reauthorization, which expires on September 30, 2019. LCAO anticipates releasing the consensus-based recommendations by early spring.

Elder Justice

Advocacy to prevent and address elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation—and to emphasize the role of the social work profession in elder justice—was a central priority throughout 2018. NASW practice staff represented the association on the advisory board of the National Center on Elder Abuse (NCEA), a resource center funded by ACL and based at the University of Southern California Keck School of Medicine (<https://ncea.acl.gov>); at the Fourth Global Summit on Elder Justice, convened by the National Adult Protective Services Association, the National Center for Victims of Crime, and the International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (www.napsa-now.org/get-connected/weaad); and at the December 2018 meeting of the Elder Justice Coordinating Council (<https://acl.gov/programs/elder-justice/elder-justice-coordinating-council-ejcc>), a federal interagency body that coordinates activities related to elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation. Moreover, as a member of the Reframing Elder Abuse Committee, NASW helped inform and disseminate an NCEA–FrameWorks Institute initiative to reframe communication about elder abuse, thereby promoting effective social policy solutions. NCEA invited NASW practice staff to write a blog on the parallels between communications framing—and the Reframing Elder Abuse initiative, in particular—and the social work profession. This blog was promoted extensively by NCEA and NASW as part of each organization’s observance of World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (June 15). A three-hour NASW preconference workshop presented by NASW, NCEA, and FrameWorks Institute staff in June and an NASW Practice Perspective published in the fall continued to generate enthusiasm for the Reframing Elder Abuse initiative and to position the social work profession as a leader in elder justice.

SAMHSA

As an invited field reviewer for a draft of SAMHSA's Treatment Improvement Protocol on substance use among older adults, NASW ensured that the social work profession's role in substance use prevention and treatment was incorporated in the publication.

Sign-on Letters

- » Community statement advocating for Medicare Part B coverage of medically necessary oral and dental health services (December 2018)
- » LCAO letter urging the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to seek Congressional appropriations to house children who have been detained at the U.S. border rather than reallocating funds from other HHS programs (October 2018)
- » Open letter urging the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) to extend Medicare's time-limited equitable relief policy and to develop a permanent relief pathway for beneficiaries who made a Medicare Part B enrollment error because of misinformation about Medicare and the Marketplaces (September 2018)
- » Open letter urging CMS to withdraw its proposed restructuring of Medicare payments for evaluation and management services (September 2018)
- » Open letter urging CMS to withdraw a proposed rule that would prevent independent home care workers from deducting health care costs, union dues, and training costs from their pay (August 2018)
- » Open letter urging timely implementation of the Recognize, Assist, Include, Support, and Engage (RAISE) Family Caregivers Act (P.L. 115-119) (June 2018)
- » LCAO letter urging Senate and House appropriators to support funding for aging-related programs in FY 2019 (June 2018)
- » Open letter supporting the Concentrating on High-Value Alzheimer's Needs to Get to an End (CHANGE) Act in the Senate (S. 2387) and the House (H.R. 4957) (June 2018)
- » Open letter urging CMS to oppose Florida's request to eliminate three-month retroactive coverage protection for Medicaid-eligible individuals within its 1115 waiver (June 2018)

- » Open letter urging House and Senate Labor–HHS–Education Subcommittee leaders to fund the Senior Community Service Employment Program in FY 2019 at the FY 2018 authorized level (May 2018)
- » Open letter describing how the Federal Communications Commission’s proposed changes to the Lifeline discounted phone and broadband program would harm older adults (May 2018)
- » Open letter urging CMS to oppose Arizona’s request to eliminate three-month retroactive coverage protection for Medicaid-eligible individuals within its 1115 waiver (May 2018)
- » Open letter urging Congressional appropriators to prioritize funding for housing for older adults with low incomes in FY 2019 (May 2018)
- » Open letter describing how changes to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program within the farm bill would harm older adults (April 2018)
- » Partnership for Part D Access letter urging to HHS to maintain Medicare Part D coverage of the five protected classes of prescription drugs (April 2018)
- » LCAO letter supporting the Building Our Largest Dementia-Capable (BOLD) Infrastructure for Alzheimer’s Act (S. 2076) (March 2018)
- » LCAO letter opposing the Americans with Disabilities Act Education and Reform Act (H.R. 620) (March 2018)
- » LCAO letter urging the Office of Management and Budget to restore and enhance data collection on gender identity within the 2019 version of the National Survey of Older Americans Act Participants (March 2018)
- » Leaders Engaged on Alzheimer’s Disease coalition letter supporting the BOLD Infrastructure for Alzheimer’s Act (S. 2076/H.R. 4256) (March 2018)
- » Open letters urging Congressional leaders in the House and the Senate to pass legislation extending the Money Follows the Person program (March 2018)
- » Representative Debbie Wasserman Schultz’s “Dear Colleague” letter urging colleagues to sponsor the Nursing Home Comfortable Air Ready for Emergencies (CARE) Act (H.R. 4704) (February 2018)
- » LCAO letter advocating for health extenders in the FY 2018 omnibus bill (January 2018)

Comments, Letters, and Advocacy Alerts

- » Comments opposing the Department of Homeland Security's "public charge" rule (November 2018)
- » Letter of support for the Senior Scams Prevention Act (S. 3522) (November 2018)
- » Comments to CMS regarding the proposed Medicare Physician Fee Schedule for calendar year 2019 (September 2018)
- » Advocacy alert supporting funding for the Older Americans Act and other aging programs (May 2018)
- » Letter of support for the Geriatrics Workforce and Caregiver Enhancement Act (H.R. 3713) (January 2018)
- » Advocacy alert urging Congressional representatives to support the Geriatrics Workforce and Caregiver Enhancement Act (January 2018)

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Social work practice in behavioral health promotes well-being through assessment, diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of mental illness, substance use, and other addictions. It incorporates knowledge of human behavior, sociology, psychiatry, psychology, and many other social science disciplines. Individual, group, and family therapy are common treatment modalities.

NASW develops resources to support behavioral health social workers in a variety of settings including private practice, hospitals, community mental health, primary care, treatment centers, and other agencies. NASW's primary focus in behavioral health is on substance use and addictions. Highlights of NASW advocacy efforts in behavioral health follow.

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders Grant

Fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASDs)—the general term for the range of adverse effects associated with prenatal alcohol and drug exposure—is estimated to affect 400,000 newborns annually in the United States.

NASW, the University of Texas at Austin School of Social Work, Baylor College of Medicine, and the University of Missouri are working together to represent social work as part of the Centers for Disease Control and

Prevention's (CDC's) cross-discipline partnership targeting FASD prevention and care. Social work is collaborating with leaders in the professions of family medicine, obstetrics and gynecology, pediatrics, medical assistance, and nursing to prevent FASDs by improving health care practice, education, and awareness among health care professionals.

NASW collaborated with the CDC to offer free online learning modules for social workers who serve women potentially at risk of alcohol-exposed pregnancies or individuals living with FASDs. Information on the trainings are available to the social work workforce and can be found at www.socialworkers.org/Practice/Behavioral-Health/Behavioral-Health-Professional-Development.

Recovery Month

NASW advocated for social workers as a participant with SAMHSA's Recovery Month planning efforts. Every September, SAMHSA sponsors Recovery Month to increase awareness and understanding of mental and substance use disorders and celebrate the people who recover. The annual theme for 2018 was Join the Voices for Recovery: Invest in Health, Home, Purpose, and Community. More information can be found at www.recoverymonth.gov.

The Opioid Alliance

NASW participated with the Opioid Alliance, bringing together the best in the field to provide the highest quality of training and solutions to the current opioid epidemic happening in Pennsylvania's backyard. NASW provided input for social workers.

Congressional Staff Briefing

To advocate for the role of social workers in substance use interventions, NASW hosted on June 6, 2018, a Congressional briefing on the opioid crisis which can be viewed on You Tube at:

<https://youtu.be/7dq8D2Wo51A>. Social work experts in the field of substance use were available to answer present and answer questions from Congressional representatives and staff.

Sign-on Letters

NASW signs on to letters with coalition partners to demonstrate unity on an issue and to push for changes. In 2018, NASW advocated for behavioral health related issues by signing on to the following letters:

- » Mental Health Liaison Group (MHLG) letter supporting the Behavioral Health Coverage Transparency Act of 2018 (H.R. 4778) (November 2018)
- » MHLG letter regarding Medicaid Substance Use Disorder Provider Capacity (September 2018)
- » Adding enforcement authorities for the U.S. Department of Labor to the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee bill, the Opioid Crisis Response Act (S. 2680) (April 2018)
- » MHLG letter urging Congress to support important mental health and addiction prevention and treatment priorities in the upcoming FY 2018 omnibus spending package (March 2018)
- » CARA 2.0 Policy Solutions for the Chronic Pain and Opioid Misuse Crises (February 2018)
- » MHLG letter supporting the Behavioral Health Coverage Transparency Act of 2018 (S. 2301) (January 2018)

CHILD WELFARE

Social workers play a critical role in supporting the children and families involved with child welfare. On behalf of NASW members, the association engages in advocacy efforts to improve child welfare practice. NASW is creating resources and conducting advocacy efforts to support child welfare workers and the children, youths, and families whom they serve.

Building the Capacity of the Child Welfare Workforce: Supporting Healthy Adolescent Brain Development

Building on the work of the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative, Success Beyond 18, NASW is establishing a national advisory committee that includes older foster youths to create a training-of-trainers (TOT)

curriculum and field and pilot test the TOT training to promote the healthy brain development for youths in foster care. A partnership between the Annie E. Casey Foundation and NASW is promoting opportunities for young people in foster care to ensure their success and well-being.

Congressional Briefing on Innovations and Opportunities to End Child Maltreatment Fatalities

NASW has joined the National Coalition to End Child Abuse Deaths (NCECAD), whose goal is to advance law and policy at the federal level to best support vulnerable children and families and prevent future fatalities. The coalition also works to preserve existing law and policy important to keeping children safe and healthy.

NASW participated in a NCECAD event on April 26, 2018. This briefing discussed and celebrated some of the exciting recent developments at the state and federal level that reflected the Commission to Eliminate Child Abuse and Neglect Fatalities' recommendations, identified some of the challenges in ensuring safety—particularly at the height of a drug epidemic—and identified discrete actions needed to advance fatality prevention in Congress.

National Child Abuse Coalition

NASW also worked with the National Child Abuse Coalition to coordinate advocacy efforts on behalf of the abused and neglected. In 2018 much of the coalition's efforts were centered on the Child Abuse Prevention Treatment Act (CAPTA) reauthorization.

Bills and Laws

NASW took a stand on a number of issues.

NASW supported Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA). FFPSA was signed into law on February 9, 2018, as part of Division E in the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018 (H.R. 1892). FFPSA includes long-overdue historic reforms to help keep children safely with their families and avoid the traumatic experience of entering foster care; emphasizes the importance of

children growing up in families; and helps ensure children are placed in the least restrictive, most family-like setting appropriate to their special needs when foster care is needed.

NASW provided background information on the impact of the opioid crisis on children, youths, and families to the Senate Committee. NASW's CEO, Angelo McClain, submitted a written statement highlighting how social workers are on the frontlines of the opioid crisis in an array of settings, from health care to mental health to child welfare, providing critical prevention and intervention services for substance-exposed infants and their families. The Senate HELP Committee held a hearing on February 8, 2018, titled "Impact of the Opioid Crisis on Children and Families."

NASW's brief Migrant and Asylum-Seeking Families: Analysis of Federal Government Policies and Procedures includes recommendations for policy reforms, best practices for justice, and comprehensive approaches to addressing the psychosocial needs of immigrant children families, many of whom are at risk of child welfare involvement.

NASW opposed the Aderholt Amendment, added on July 11, 2018, to the House Labor–HHS appropriations bill, because it would harm the nearly half a million children in our foster care and child welfare system. It would allow taxpayer-funded service providers to turn away qualified adoptive and foster care parents based on religion, marital status, sexual orientation, and gender identity, thus limiting the number of permanent homes for children in care. In addition, this amendment would allow service denials and discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and LGBTQ youths, and could allow youths to be subjected to harmful, medically discredited conversion therapy—or encourage them to hide their identity to ensure future adoptions, causing further damage. The amendment would punish states that prohibit discrimination by cutting 15 percent of their child welfare funding—up to \$1.04 billion in funding nationwide.

NASW supported the Victims of Child Abuse Act Reauthorization Act of 2018 to ensure that abused children receive the services they need through increasing funding. It has also been the key funding program to train prosecutors and law enforcement and child abuse professionals on best practices on how to approach child abuse.

CLINICAL SOCIAL WORKERS

Clinical social workers are one of the largest mental health care providers in the nation. They are licensed or certified to provide clinical services and diagnose and treat mental illness in private practice, psychiatric hospitals, community mental health settings, and rural health centers. They are the largest specialty group of social workers in the United States. As independent providers, they are able to seek reimbursement from third-party payers.

NASW's advocacy efforts for clinical social workers presented below are just a few highlights of what the association is doing to advocate on their behalf.

Mental Health Parity

Members have expressed concerns that not all third-party payers have implemented mental health parity policies with medical services. NASW is a committee member of the ClearHealth Quality Institute, Mental Health Parity Accreditation Standards Committee. ClearHealth Quality Institute is an accreditation organization that develops and offers accreditation and certification programs. The committee is representative of payers, providers, and consumer advocates and is developing mental health parity accreditation standards for use by third-party payers. When completed, these accreditation standards will provide guidelines for all payers to use and help to ensure that mental health parity policies are consistently administered across payers and their patients.

Current Procedural Terminology Codes

Each quarter NASW sends two representatives to the Current Procedural Terminology (CPT) Editorial Panel Meeting to provide input to procedural codes to identify services developed for use by clinical social workers and other providers. Through this process psychotherapy codes are created, revised, or deleted. The Health and Behavioral Assessment and Intervention (HBAI) codes are currently under revision and NASW is involved in the revision process to ensure that the definitions continue to identify the health services that social workers provide. NASW advocates for new and revised codes for clinical social workers continuously.

Work and Practice Expense Values

NASW also sends two representatives each quarter to the Health Care Professional Advisory Committee of the Relative Value System Update Committee of the American Medical Association. This committee

determines the work and practice expense values of CPT codes based on provider surveys. The cost of providing services is divided into three components: work, practice expense, and professional liability insurance. The work component consists of 50.9 percent of the code value. The practice expense value consists of 44.8 percent of the code, and the professional liability insurance consists of 4.3 percent of the value of the code. NASW represents clinical social workers on this advisory committee and advocates for the best work and practice expense values for clinical social workers.

Skilled Nursing Facility

In 2002, enforcement of the Consolidated Billing Act of 1997 prevented clinical social workers from receiving reimbursement of psychotherapy services within a skilled nursing facility. NASW has been advocating to restore payment of these services to private practitioners through meetings with CMS and reminders to them through proposed rule comments on the Physician Fee Schedule. NASW continues to advocate for this issue through Congress. The Improving Access to Mental Health Act of 2017 (H.R. 1290) was introduced to ensure that skilled nursing facility residents have access to clinical social work services by excluding clinical social work services from consolidated billing. The act is expected to be reintroduced again in 2019. Additional information on this subject is available at www.socialworkers.org/Advocacy/Policy-Issues/Medicare-Reimbursement.

Reimbursement

Clinical social workers have expressed concerns about low reimbursement rates. To address their concerns, NASW advocated for the Improving Access to Mental Health Act of 2017, for clinical social workers to receive 85 percent of the physician fee schedule, a 10 percent increase in reimbursement. Some clinical social workers have requested 100 percent reimbursement comparable with the psychologists and psychiatrists. Because the MSW is a terminal degree, it would be

difficult to obtain 100 percent. Many insurance companies recognize the value of a doctorate in clinical social work and have voluntarily chosen to reimburse those with a doctorate in clinical social work and a clinical license at the same rate as that of psychologists and psychiatrists.

Health and Behavioral Assessment and Intervention Codes

Clinical social workers have requested NASW to assist them in acquiring reimbursement for emotional, behavioral, and psychosocial services related to a health condition. To access payment to HBAI codes requires a change in the Social Security statute that defines the services that clinical social workers are allowed to perform for reimbursement. NASW is also addressing this issue in its advocacy for the Improving Access to Mental Health Act of 2017. Although a limited number of Medicare Administrative Contractors are reimbursing clinical social workers for these services, NASW is advocating for clinical social workers to be reimbursed for the HBAI codes at the national level.

Quality Measures

Use of measures in health care has become a standard of practice to determine whether quality services are being performed. Health plans are expecting clinical social workers and others to use quality measures. NASW is advocating for patient-centered, integrative measures for use by clinical social workers and has been actively involved with CMS and its designated contractors to create relevant measures. In 2018, NASW participated in measure development in areas such as depression screening, elder maltreatment, substance use, alcohol and tobacco screening, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, and documentation in the medical record. NASW is working with health plans, accreditation bodies, associations, and other groups to assist in the developments of measures that social workers can use in their daily practice.

Due to lack of quality measures, which created improper reporting of quality measures and penalties, NASW advocated for clinical social workers to be excluded in 2019 from the CMS Quality Payment Program Merit-Based

Incentive Payment System (MIPS) and it was granted. This was a victory for clinical social workers who have encountered many problems when reporting quality measures.

Third-Party Payers

NASW advocated for members who encountered reimbursement issues with third-party payers. There were common circumstances with denial of payment, which included lack of documentation, improper coding, and missing information. NASW has been successful in resolving issues in which the third-party payer may have been responsible for the problem.

Global Tech Comparative Billing Reports

On behalf of its members who received reports from Global Tech, NASW contacted Global Tech and CMS to obtain additional information on the comparative billing reports, which informed Medicare providers what they needed to do to improve their documentation. NASW advocated for its members, clarifying their roles as mental health providers and correct billing codes used by them. For details, see www.socialworkers.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=oROHVSM17Y4=&portalid=0.

Other Areas

NASW advocated for clinical social workers in a collaborative, consultative manner on many clinical social work issues with several external groups which included the

- » VA Office of Mental Health & Suicide Prevention Stakeholder Meeting
- » SAMHSA
- » National Partnership on Behavioral Health and Tobacco Use
- » Mental Health Parity Leadership Focus Group
- » CMS

Sign-on Letters

- » Comments on CMS-1693-P: Revisions to Payment Policies under the Physician Fee Schedule and Other Revisions to Part B for CY 2019; Medicare Shared Savings Program Requirements; Quality Payment Program; and Medicaid Promotion Interoperability Program (September 2018)
- » NASW requests CMS to allow clinical social workers to bill in skilled nursing facilities (April 2018)
- » Comments to CMS regarding clinical social workers participation in MIPS reports beginning in 2019 (February 2018)
- » Letter to CMS requesting a review of the 2018 Physician's Quality Reporting System negative payment penalties for the reporting year 2016 (March 2018)

HEALTH CARE

Social workers in health care work closely with physicians, nurses, and other health care professionals as part of an interdisciplinary team to assist patients and their families with their health care needs. They have expertise in helping patients and their families with their emotional and mental well-being.

Over the past year, NASW has worked to highlight the skills and value that social workers bring to health care settings and enhance awareness of emerging trends in the field. In coalition with partner organizations, NASW contributes to initiatives to define and promote health care social work roles, recognize social work leadership in models of care, and promote quality services for patients and families.

Advancing Social Work's Role in Health Care

Staff participate in a coalition to advance the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine (NASEM) Consensus Study, Integrating Social Needs Care into the Delivery of Health Care to Improve the Nation's Health. NASW joined the NASEM Consensus Study public meetings in July and September, as well as a Web conference in

November 2018. NASW submitted articles and resources for the committee to review with health care delivery models that employ social workers.

In 2018 NASW created a brochure, available through the NASW Press, to spotlight social work services in health care settings, entitled Health Care Social Workers: Improving Your Health. The brochure is intended to inform consumers and families about the range of social work services available.

The Social Work Healthcare Education and Leadership Scholarship (HEALS) program, funded by the New York Community Trust, welcomed its fourth cohort in September 2018. The Social Work HEALS program is a partnership between NASW, NASW Foundation, and Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). The program aims to strengthen the delivery of health care services in the United States by advancing the education and training of health care social workers. In October 2018, HEALS field instructors and NASW staff gathered in Portland, Oregon, for a training on health care trends and enhancing mentorship of Social Work HEALS BSW and MSW students. In November 2018, HEALS program coordinators and CSWE staff met in Orlando, Florida, to discuss their planned activities for the academic year.

NASW participates in a quarterly call for social work organizations and allied groups, convened by the Society for Social Work Leadership in Health Care, to enhance collaboration. Participating organizations include the Association of VA Social Workers, Home Care Association of America, Society of Critical Care Medicine, National Association of Perinatal Social Workers, and others.

NASW staff contributed to planning for the June 2018 NASW National Conference Shaping Tomorrow Together in Washington, DC. Breakout sessions and keynote presentations addressed evolving roles and contributions of social workers in health settings. One highlight was a plenary session, "Patients First: Making Holistic Health Care Accessible for All."

Protecting Access to Health Care and Health Insurance Coverage

NASW continues to be a part of the Families USA Protect Our Care Coalition, working to protect the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA), health care access, and consumer protections. The Protect Our Care Coalition mobilizes national and local partners to educate communities on health care issues, including state Medicaid expansion, prescription drug pricing, and protections for individuals with pre-existing conditions.

NASW circulated alerts and guidance on the Open Enrollment period for the Health Insurance Marketplace in Practice Alert: 2019 Health Insurance Marketplace Open Enrollment. Corresponding social media posts and information from CMS and advocacy organizations were shared throughout Open Enrollment. In December, NASW also provided an update to members regarding the court case challenging the ACA in Practice Alert: Court Decision on the Affordable Care Act: Texas v. Azar.

NASW staff attend monthly Mental Health Liaison Group meetings that cover topics in health care, mental health, and addiction policy. The Mental Health Liaison Group is a coalition of over 70 organizations working to enhance federal policy and promote prevention, treatment, and recovery.

Providing Guidance on Practice Trends

NASW provides guidance on emerging health care and social work trends. One topic that was explored in 2018 is physician aid in dying (PAD). When adopted at the state level, 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 to be prepared to respond to inquiries about PAD and address them appropriately. The topic is examined in Practice Perspective: Physician Aid in Dying: Understand the Legal, Clinical, and Ethical Practice Implications for Social Workers.

Engaging in Smoking Cessation Interventions to Improve Health

In 2018, NASW continued its partnership with the CDC's Tips from Former Smokers campaign to promote tobacco cessation. Social workers are well suited to deliver tobacco cessation interventions. NASW is engaging social workers in smoking cessation activities and raising awareness about the wide-ranging positive effects of tobacco cessation, particularly among youths and individuals with mental illness. One resource developed this year is Practice Alert: Quilines for Tobacco Cessation: A Compliment to Social Work.

NASW staff attend quarterly meetings with the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids Coalition that focuses on federal policy issues in tobacco control. The coalition promotes effective regulation of tobacco products, tobacco prevention, and cessation programs. NASW joined several sign-on letters to stakeholders in 2018.

Promoting Access to Appropriate Pain Care

NASW staff participate in interprofessional workgroups with the Academy of Integrative Pain Management and attended the November 2018 Integrative Pain Care Policy Congress in Boston. This group advocates for appropriate access to pain care and comprehensive treatment options. Workgroups are developing white papers to outline the elements of comprehensive, integrative pain care and the opportunities and challenges to access quality care.

NASW also contributed to the Partners for Understanding Pain Tool Kit published by the American Chronic Pain Association, released in September during Pain Awareness Month.

Recognizing the Role of Patient Navigation

Staff participated in the National Navigation Roundtable Fall Meeting on November 28 and 29, 2018, in Washington, DC, hosted by the American Cancer Society. This year's annual meeting, themed "Moving the Dial in Patient Navigation," included in-depth panel discussions addressing the current and future landscape of patient navigation. NASW is involved in

ongoing workgroups that will look at standardizing the roles and responsibilities of patient navigators, including lay navigators, nurse navigators, and social work navigators.

Defining Quality Palliative and End-of-Life Care

NASW is a supporter of the National Consensus Project Guidelines on Quality Palliative Care (4th edition) and outlined the importance of the standards in an endorsement letter. These guidelines serve to improve access to quality palliative care by fostering consistent standards across settings, with social workers as a critical component of the interdisciplinary team.

National Healthcare Decisions Day is April 16, and social workers play an important role in advance care planning conversations. NASW highlights the importance of advance care planning in Practice Alert: 2018 National Healthcare Decisions Day.

NASW is a cosponsor of the Circle of Life Awards. 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. Each fall applications from outstanding organizations are accepted, and the awardees are announced the following summer.

Understanding the Health Impacts of Climate Change

NASW is an affiliate member of The Medical Society Consortium on Climate and Health. In April 2018, NASW co-sponsored its annual meeting, Climate & Health Solutions for Our Future, and staff will participate in the 2019 meeting, Education for Policy Change. Resources about the impact of climate change on well-being and the role of health care providers are available on the Consortium website. NASW signed on to A Call to Action on Climate and Health that outlines policy actions endorsed by health organizations and was presented to the United Nations at the 2018 Global Climate and Health Summit.

Sign-on Letters

- » APA letter to HHS on LGBTQ patients (January 2018)
- » Pain Care in CARA 2.0 Legislation (January 2018)
- » Association Health Plans Letter (March 2018)
- » Comments on Recommendations for Obesity Care for Adults: Behavioral Interventions to U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (March 2018)
- » Letters to Senate and House regarding funding for U.S. Food and Drug Administration and CDC tobacco control efforts (April 2018)
- » Medicaid stakeholders letter to HHS on waivers (April 2018)
- » Families USA 340B drug pricing program letter (May 2018)
- » Letters sent to Senate and House Appropriations Subcommittees regarding funding for CDC tobacco control efforts (May 2018)
- » NASW statement to National Academies on consensus study (June 2018)
- » Families USA letter to Congress opposing repeal of ACA and consumer protections (June 2018)
- » Families USA letter on health care implications of Supreme Court Justice (August 2018)
- » Endorsement letter for National Consensus Project clinical practice guidelines for quality palliative care (4th edition) (August 2018)
- » Call to action on climate and health (September 2018)
- » Families USA: Protecting health care in the next Congress (November 2018)

SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS

School social workers are an integral link between school, home, and community in helping students achieve academic success. They work directly with school administrations and also with students and families, providing leadership in forming school discipline policies, mental health intervention, crisis management, and support services. As part of an interdisciplinary team to help students succeed, school social workers also facilitate community involvement in the schools while advocating for student success.

In 2018, NASW participated in the following advocacy efforts relating to school social work.

National Alliance of Specialized Instructional Support Personnel

NASW participated and collaborated with the National Alliance of Specialized Instructional Support Personnel (NASISP). NASISP represents over a million Specialized Instructional Support Personnel (SISP) nationwide. School social workers are SISP professionals and provide and support school-based prevention and intervention services to address barriers to educational success, ensure positive conditions for learning, and help all students achieve academically and ultimately become productive citizens. The other SISP disciplines included in NASISP are school counselors, school nurses, and school psychologists; occupational therapists, physical therapists, art therapists, dance/movement therapists, and music therapists; speech-language pathologists; and audiologists. NASISP seeks to empower SISP professionals by encouraging multidisciplinary collaboration and affirming their role in education's best practices and their involvement in school improvement efforts.

Campaign for Youth Justice

NASW collaborated with the Campaign for Youth Justice, a national initiative focused entirely on ending the practice of prosecuting, sentencing, and incarcerating youths under the age of 18 in the adult criminal justice system. NASW participated in areas focused on the school-to-prison pipeline.

School Safety Resources

School social workers work to prevent all forms of school violence, including mass killing, in schools and guide schools in recovery after a crisis has occurred. Today more than ever, there is a growing need for school social workers to help prevent school violence and to support students in moments of crisis.

NASW created a School Safety Resources page on the School Social Work web page housed on the NASW website. This page includes the following:

- » Practice Resources
- » NASW News Releases
- » Related Organizations

Public Statement

NASW writes statements and letters to the administration on a wide range of policy issues. In March 2018, NASW released a public statement highlighting the need for school social work positions to prevent school violence. NASW Highlights the Growing Need for School Social Workers to Prevent School Violence can be read here:

www.socialworkers.org/news/news-releases/id/1633/nasw-highlights-the-growing-need-for-school-social-workers-to-prevent-school-violence

Sign-on Letters

NASW signs on to letters with coalition partners to demonstrate unity on an issue and to push for change. In 2018, NASW advocated for students, schools, and school social workers by signing on to the following letters.

- » MHLG letter thanking Senator Smith for introducing the Mental Health Services for Students Act of 2018 (S. 3337) (August 2018)
- » Letter supporting the STOP School Violence Act (March 2018)
- » Letter supporting hearings to assess and address the ongoing education and health crisis in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands (January 2018)

SUMMARY

The highlights in this booklet are a few examples of NASW's advocacy efforts. Additional information is available on the NASW website at www.socialworkers.org. For a full list of NASW's public policy and social justice activities in Washington, DC, read our monthly bulletin, *The Washington Update*, at www.socialworkers.org/advocacy/washington-update.

NASW strives to meet the needs of members and encourages them to inform the association of areas of concerns affecting the social work practice community.



National Association of Social Workers

750 First Street NE, Suite 800 | Washington, DC 20002-4241