



April 26, 2018

**Legislative Activities:**

Congress has had a flurry of activity around the opioid epidemic and this week is no exception!

This past Wednesday, April 25, the House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health held a markup to consider 64 bills and discussion drafts (legislation that has yet to be introduced), aimed at addressing the opioid epidemic. Of the 64 bills/drafts on the docket, 56 were approved and now head to the full Energy and Commerce Committee for further deliberation. Some of the legislation that advanced included:

- *H.R. 3192- CHIP Mental Health Parity Act*: Requires all CHIP plans to cover treatment of mental illness and substance use disorders.
- *H.R. 1925, At-Risk Youth Medicaid Protection Act of 2017*: Prohibits state Medicaid programs from terminating a juvenile's medical assistance eligibility because the juvenile is incarcerated.
- *H.R. \_\_, Require Medicaid Programs to Report on All Core Behavioral Health Measures*: This will help provide a more complete view of behavioral health quality of care to inform Congress, CMS, and stakeholders on how to target improvement moving forward.

Those remaining bills that were not considered at Wednesday's markup, such as H.R. 4998, Health Insurance for Former Foster Youth Act, will require continued discussions and we are hopeful that the Subcommittee will bring these bills back up in the future for further review.

Subcommittee Chairman Michael Burgess (R-TX-26) anticipates that the full Energy and Commerce Committee will mark-up these opioid related bills in the coming weeks.

The House Ways and Means Committee also took steps to advance the effort on opioids by releasing a [bipartisan white paper](#) with solutions to combat the opioid epidemic. This white paper is a compilation

of responses the Committee received in response to an Request for Information (RFI) sent in February. The solutions highlighted in the white paper offer policy options for preventing and treating opioid abuse and dependence in the Medicare program.

Over the past several months, and at seven bipartisan hearings, the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP), have heard from state and local officials, families, key professions, and Agencies on how to best address the opioid crisis. With all of this input, Chairman Lamar Alexander (R-TN) and Ranking Member Patty Murray (D-WA), introduced bipartisan legislation, – [S. 2680: The Opioid Crisis Response Act of 2018](#), on April 17, 2018, to address this epidemic. Composed of 40 different proposals, The Opioid Crisis Response Act of 2018 aims to accomplish many items including:

- Address the effects of the opioids crisis on infants, children, and families, including by helping states improve plans of safe care for infants born with neonatal abstinence syndrome and helping to address child and youth trauma.
- Strengthen the health care workforce to increase access to mental health services in schools and community-based settings and to substance use disorder services in underserved areas.
- Authorize the Department of Labor to address the economic and workforce impacts for communities affected by the opioid crisis, through grants targeted at workforce shortages for the substance use and mental health treatment workforce, and to align job training and treatment services.

The Senate HELP Committee marked up S. 2680 – The Opioid Crisis Response Act of 2018, along with other pieces of legislation, Tuesday, April 24, 2018. The HELP Committee unanimously advanced S. 2680 out of committee. Senator Lamar Alexander (R-TN) stated that he hopes the Senate will move the opioid legislation this summer.

NASW continues to monitor these developments closely, with social workers and their clients in mind, as Congress works to address this opioid crisis.

### **Key NASW Legislation:**

NASW continues to advocate for the **bi-partisan 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. We encourage NASW members to continue to advocate for **S. 2613/H.R. 1290- Improving Access to Mental Health Act** by [asking your Senators and Representative to cosponsor today!](#) A full list of cosponsors in the House can be found [here](#).

NASW has updated the Issue Brief for S. 2613/H.R. 1290, which you can find [here](#).

The NASW [action alert](#) for [H.R. 1484 the Social Worker Safety Act of 2017](#) is still active. This bi-partisan 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, which includes our newest cosponsor, and social worker, Rep. Barbara Lee (D-CA-13). We look forward to continued outreach to gain additional cosponsors for this vital piece of legislation.

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](#).

**Coalition and Collaborative Activities:**

**Ten Years After the IOM "Retooling" Report, Workforce Needs Persist**

April 11, 2018, marks the 10th anniversary of the Institute of Medicine's report "[Retooling for an Aging America: Building the Health Care Workforce](#)." In recognition of this anniversary, the [Eldercare Workforce Alliance](#), of which NASW is a member, is leading the campaign [#TogetherWeCare--Advancing a Well-Trained Workforce to Care for Us as We Age](#). This year-long campaign will examine progress since the 2008 report and identify solutions to address workforce needs.

NASW is continuing its partnership with the CDC's [Tips From Former Smokers Campaign](#) to promote tobacco cessation.

NASW participates in the [Families USA Protect Our Care Coalition](#) weekly calls and activities.

NASW 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***.

NASW staff is participating in the National Navigation Roundtable Training & Certification Task Force with the American Cancer Society **to advance competencies for Patient Navigation**.

NASW staff is participating in work groups to promote comprehensive pain care through the **Integrative Pain Care Policy Congress**.

NASW staff attended a Congressional Briefing, **Meeting the Behavioral Health Needs of Veterans and their Families**, on April 12.

NASW staff attended a National Academy of Sciences meeting, **Implementing Quality Measures for Accountability in Community-based Care for People with Serious Illness: A Workshop**, on April 17.

NASW is an affiliate member of The Medical Society Consortium on Climate and Health. NASW co-sponsored its annual meeting, **Climate & Health Solutions for Our Future**, on April 9 and 10. Resources about the impact of climate change on well-being and the role of health care providers are available on the [Consortium website](#).

NASW staff attended a Child Poverty Action Group **Congressional Briefing on Solutions to Child Poverty** on April 12.

The Immigration Task Force held a conference call to plan next-steps and receive updates on the status of **DACA (Dream Act)**. The deadline for Congress to pass the Dream Act was March 5, 2018. The consensus of the Immigration Taskforce is that any action by Congress was unlikely. There are a several analyses of the impact of the absence of a bill by the deadline date. The reality is that those who are

DACA eligible – but not yet approved – will be in limbo. Since the 9th Circuit Court has placed an injunction against deportation actions until it decides the challenge to ending DACA, the Department of Homeland Security will continue to process applications.

NASW staff was invited to **meet with representatives from the Canadian legislature** to discuss issues of community policing in the United States. The meeting was organized by the Leadership Conference for Civil and Human Rights (LCCR). NASW staff was asked to speak to the issue from a mental health perspective, which included the need to train law enforcement on managing encounters where there are clear mental health implications.

NASW staff participated in a **briefing on community corrections** (parole and probation). The briefing was important to social workers' role in alternative sentencing, diversion programs in lieu of incarceration for parole/probation violations, and speaking to behavioral health assessments and referrals for pre-trial reports to the courts.

The **Census Taskforce** is a national coalition dealing with monitoring and responding to the overall planning (by the Department of Commerce) for the 2020 census. There are many important civil rights, voting rights, and economic justice aspects of the U.S. Census. One of the major concerns discussed in this meeting was the fact that the Secretary of the Department of Commerce had publicly indicated that the 2020 census would include a "citizenship" question on the main census form. The Census Taskforce is opposed to that decision and will mobilize opposition to it.

NASW is a member of the Every Child Deserves a Family Coalition which deals with **non-discrimination in LGBTQ adoptions and foster care**. The Coalition is concerned about so-called "religious exemption" policies and laws that allow discrimination against the LGBTQ community based on the provider's religious beliefs. The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has a proposed rule change that would allow adoption and foster care providers to claim such as "religious exemption". NASW – along with other Every Child Deserves a Family Coalition members – submitted comments to HHS opposing the proposed rule.

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

- 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

### **NASW Resources:**

**Self-Study Webinar: [Immigration & Health Care: What Social Workers Need to Know in the Current Environment](#)**, is made possible through the NASW Foundation and Council on Social Work Education's Social Work HEALS program, funded by the New York Community Trust. This webinar presents the legal and social work perspectives regarding the intersection of immigration and health services. Presenters Jen Scott, PhD, MSW, MIA, Louisiana State University, and Mayra Joachin, JD, National Immigration Law Center, educate participants about the legal rights of undocumented immigrants in health care settings and the current policy climate's influence on health services. Presenters speak to factors that contribute to health status in immigrant communities and recommend ways in which social workers can positively impact health outcomes in health care settings and the broader environment. The webinar is available for \$10 for NASW Members and provides 1.5 CEs.

**National Healthcare Decisions Day** was Monday, April 16 and social workers play an important role in encouraging advance care planning conversations. NASW has a new [Practice Alert](#) and additional training material is available from the [Conversation Project](#).

### **Items of Note:**

#### **Older Americans Month Tool Kit Available**

Older Americans Month (OAM), recognized every May, is less than a month away. Visit the [Administration for Community Living's OAM 2018 website](#) for materials, resources, and activity ideas to help you promote this year's observance: "Engage at Every Age."

### **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 regarding how changes to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program \(SNAP\) with the farm bill would harm older adults \(4/17/2018\)](#)
- [NASW signs onto Partnership for Part D Access letter to HHS Secretary Alex Azar \(4/9/2018\)](#)
- [NASW signs onto letter urging funding for SAMHSA's new Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Grants in FY19 appropriations \(4/6/2018\)](#)
- [NASW signs onto letter seeking FY 2019 WIC Appropriations \(3/30/2018\)](#)
- [NASW signs on to Leadership Council of Aging Organizations letter supporting the Building Our Largest Dementia-Capable \(BOLD\) Infrastructure for Alzheimer's Act \(S. 2076\) \(3/23/2018\)](#)

- NASW signs on to Leadership Council of Aging Organizations letter opposing the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Education and Reform Act (H.R. 620) (3/19/2018)
- NASW signs on to Leadership Council of Aging Organizations 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 (3/19/2018)
- NASW signs onto letter Supporting the STOP School Violence Act (3/16/2018)
- NASW signs onto MHLG letter Urging Congress to Support important mental health and addiction prevention and treatment priorities in the upcoming FY2018 omnibus spending package (3/16/2018)
- NASW signs onto BHIT Coalition letter applauding the members of the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Ways and Means and the Committee's Health Subcommittee for their continued dedication to comprehensively address the opioid epidemic (3/15/2018)

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

- [NASW comments on the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force Draft Recommendation Statement, Weight Loss to Prevent Obesity-Related Morbidity and Mortality in Adults: Behavioral Interventions \(Mar. 19, 2018\)](#)