



May 31, 2018

Legislative Activities:

On May 7, 2018, the U.S. Senate passed the **Improving Access to Behavioral Health Information Technology Act (S. 1732)**, which would authorize the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to incentivize behavioral health providers to adopt electronic health records.

On May 9, 2018, the House companion bill, H.R. 3331, was referred to the House Committees on Energy and Commerce and Ways and Means. Sens. Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI) and Rob Portman (R-OH) introduced the **Improving Access to Behavioral Health Information Technology Act** in the summer of 2017. Reps. Lynn Jenkins (R-KS-02) and Doris Matsui (D-CA-06) introduced the House version in the summer of 2017.

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

[Contact Your Members of Congress Regarding Funding for Aging Programs](#)

The Older Americans Act (OAA) helps older adults to engage in their communities and to maintain and improve dignity, health, and independence. Services funded through the OAA include case management, elder abuse prevention, family caregiver supports, nutrition programs, transportation, and in-home assistance. Yet, the OAA has been underfunded for many years. In partnership with the Leadership Council of Aging Organizations and other groups, NASW has advocated consistently for OAA funding. Thanks to this persistence, funding for some OAA programs was increased or held steady in the omnibus funding legislation for fiscal year (FY) 2018. Send an e-mail to your members of Congress to underscore the importance of continued FY 19 funding for the OAA and other aging programs.

NASW sent an [action alert](#) to Advocacy Listserv members asking them to urge their members of Congress to vote no on the **Farm Bill (H.R. 2)**. On May 18, the House failed to pass H.R. 2, a bill that would have thrown millions of people off the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). There is a chance that the House will have a revote in June.

NASW attended a presentation on the status of the **Violence Against Women Act (VAWA)**. Staff from the office of Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee (D-TX-18) discussed the status of getting VAWA reauthorization introduced in the House. There are delays in getting the bill prioritized as well as concerns that there are policy disagreements among a few members about provisions in the current bill. Rep. Jackson Lee has a lead role in moving the bill forward. VAWA is priority legislation for NASW.

Staff represented NASW in testifying on a panel of the **House Committee on Education and the Workforce's Roundtable Discussion on the Opioid Epidemic**. NASW testimony covered the need for child welfare services for families directly impacted by opioid abuse and addiction. Additionally staff discussed related health, behavioral health and policy implications of opioid abuse and use.

NASW continues to monitor Congress' activity as they work to address the opioid epidemic. In the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pension (HELP) Committee, they marked up and reported out of Committee [S.2680: The Opioid Crisis Response Act of 2018](#), a comprehensive package made up of 40 different proposals. On Wednesday, May 23, the Senate Finance Committee released their [22 bipartisan opioid related bills](#) and are hoping to mark up these pieces of legislation in the coming weeks. These 22 bills encompass ways of incorporating telehealth into treatment, informing seniors about opioids, providing comprehensive screenings and review of current opioid prescriptions for seniors, improving access to care for women, babies, and infants impacted by substance use disorder, among others legislative efforts aimed at addressing the opioid epidemic.

Over in the House, the Energy and Commerce Committee has advanced [57 bills](#) offering a wide range of solutions to this public health crisis, including, but not limited to:

- *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.

On May 16, the [House Ways and Means Committee](#) also marked up bills to combat this epidemic. A vote on opioid legislation in the House could come as early as the week of June 11.

Key NASW Legislation:

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. 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](#).

The NASW [action alert](#) for *H.R. 1484 the Social Worker Safety Act of 2017* is still active. 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 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:

Social Justice staff attended the Spring meeting of the Board of Directors for the **National Commission on Correctional Health Care (NCCHC)** in Minneapolis. Staff represents NASW and the social work profession on the Board. This was a three-day meeting that included participating in discussions as a member of the Juvenile Committee and the Policy Committee.

NASW staff participated in a Capitol Hill meeting dealing with the **Opioid Crisis in the Black Community**. The meeting brought together a cross-section of academics, practitioners, legislators and advocates concerned about the impact of opioids in the African American community. NASW is committed to working with the group in future planning and problem-solving meetings.

NASW staff had preliminary discussions about collaborating with the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under the Law on their **Stop Hate Project**. The project is designed to provide a hotline for individuals who are victims of hate crimes or serious hate-related incidents. This included hate associated with race/ethnicity, religion, gender, and sexual identity. The Lawyers Committee is asking NASW to help refine the hotline to address counseling and referring callers suffering from emotional (or physical) trauma from the hate-related incident.

NASW social justice staff attended a two-day national leadership gathering for the **Why Courts Matter Coalition** held in Des Moines, IA. The Coalition is comprised of over 50 organizations from many states who are concerned about nominations and appointments to the federal courts – including the Supreme Court. This was a planning meeting primarily for national organizations that have state affiliates (chapters). Several NASW Chapters have already participated in Courts Matters activities. The plan is to disseminate information and calls to action on key District, Circuit and Supreme Court nominations.

NASW is continuing its partnership with the CDC's [Tips From Former Smokers Campaign](#) to promote tobacco cessation. The American Lung Association and the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center have released a [new toolkit](#) aimed at helping individuals understand what health insurance covers to quit smoking.

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

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 and more information is available [here](#).

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

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

Staff attended a National Academy of Sciences workshop, [Understanding and Overcoming the Challenge of Obesity and Overweight in the Armed Forces](#) on May 7.

Staff attended the [CMS Comprehensive Primary Care Plus National Meeting](#) in Baltimore, MD on May 8.

Staff will participate in the [Strategies to Overcome and Prevent \(STOP\) Obesity Alliance](#) quarterly meeting on May 29.

NASW Blog Underscores Congruence Between Social Work and Reframing Elder Abuse

As a member of the Reframing Elder Abuse Committee, convened by the [National Center on Elder Abuse](#) (NCEA), NASW has helped to inform and disseminate an initiative to enhance communications about elder abuse. Reframing communication about elder abuse is essential to developing and implementing effective social policy solutions that prevent and address the problem. As part of NCEA's observance of World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, NASW wrote a blog for NCEA on the parallels between communications framing--and the Reframing Elder Abuse initiative, in particular--and the social work profession. Read the [blog](#) to learn more about these parallels and watch this brief [public service announcement](#), created by NCEA, for a quick snapshot of the reframing elder abuse strategy. To explore the reframing initiative in greater depth, register for the preconference workshop, "[Reframing Communication About Elder Abuse to Enhance Practice, Policy, and Education](#)," presented by NCEA, the FrameWorks Institute, and NASW.

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day Is Around the Corner

Are you ready for World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD) on June 15? It's not too late to plan WEAAD activities, whether those activities occur on the observance itself or at another time in June. Access the [WEAAD toolkit](#) prepared by the National Center on Elder Abuse (NCEA). As a member of the NCEA advisory board, NASW is honored to support the center's work. Download this [summary](#) to learn about the many ways NCEA improves the national response to elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation. Read this NASW-authored [blog](#) to learn about NASW's involvement in the NCEA-led Reframing Elder Abuse Initiative and to get ideas about how you can communicate effectively about elder abuse.

NASW Participates in Twitter Chat on Workforce to Serve Older Adults

In early May the Eldercare Workforce Alliance, of which NASW is a member, and the Administration for Community Living cohosted a Twitter chat on the importance of the Geriatrics Workforce Enhancement Programs (GWEP) and the role of community-based organizations. NASW participated in the event, highlighting the role of social workers in community-based organizations and in providing workforce

training. Both NASW and EWA support the Geriatrics Workforce and Caregiver Enhancement Act (H.R. 3713). [Send a message](#) urging your Congressional representative to support the bill.

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
- Public Service Loan Forgiveness Coalition
- Behavioral Health Information Technology Coalition
- Center for Excellence in Assisted Living
- National Coalition on Mental Health and Aging (NCMHA)
- National Older Adult Mental Health Awareness Day—NCMHA, Administration for Community Living (ACL), & Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)

Items of Note:

2019 Circle of Life Call for Nominations

NASW is a co-sponsor of the Circle of Life Awards, which honors innovative programs in palliative and end-of-life care. The Circle of Life is accepting nominations for the 2019 award, until August 13 and more information is available [here](#).

Begin Preparing Now for World Elder Abuse Awareness Day

Join NASW in observing World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD) on June 15. Find resources, tips, action ideas, events, live chat help, and other information in the [WEAAD 2018 tool kit](#) prepared by the [National Center on Elder Abuse](#) (NCEA), of which NASW is an advisory board member. One way in which you, your colleagues, and your clients can emphasize the importance of elder justice is by submitting artwork to the [WEAAD Virtual Art Gallery](#). Submissions are due by June 1.

Access Live Stream Programs for World Elder Abuse Awareness Day

NASW encourages you to participate in two free programs observing [World Elder Abuse Awareness Day](#) (WEAAD). Although WEAAD is observed on June 15, both programs take place on Tuesday, June 5. Tune in from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. EDT to observe the meeting of the [Elder Justice Coordinating Council](#), a federal interagency body that coordinates activities related to elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation. Tune in at 1 p.m. EDT for 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. The summit, which will continue throughout the afternoon, is convened in partnership with international and national partners, including NASW. Visit the [event page](#) to find live stream information or to register to attend one or both events in person in Washington, DC.

[Join NASW in Celebrating Older Americans Month](#)

NASW celebrates Older Americans Month (OAM) each May. Read [NASW's OAM 2018 blog](#) to find resources for your OAM celebration, to learn how NASW is advocating for older adults, and to engage in simple advocacy actions.

Older Adult Population Growing Rapidly in the United States

The U.S. Census Bureau projects that by the year 2030, one in five U.S. residents will be 65 years or older--and that, by 2035, older adults will outnumber children in this country for the first time in history. Learn more about this [demographic shift](#) and read the latest data about the [current population of older adults](#).

On May 17, NASW attended a **briefing on Capitol Hill** to examine the dearth of mental health services for older adults. The event was hosted by the National Coalition on Mental Health on Aging, of which NASW is a member, the National Association for Rural Mental Health, the National Association of County Behavioral Health and Developmental Disability Directors, and the National Association of Counties, in coordination with Congressional representatives Grace Napolitano (D-CA-32) and John Katko (R-NY-24), cochairs of the House Mental Health Caucus.

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 letter to support the Health Equity and Accountability Act of 2018 \(5/15/2018\)](#)
- [NASW signs on to Families USA letter to Congress opposing any efforts to diminish the 340B drug discount program \(5/14/2018\)](#)
- [NASW signs on to letter to HHS requesting that the agency hold off on approving 1115 waivers until a comprehensive evaluation of the effects on Medicaid is conducted \(5/9/2018\)](#)
- [NASW signs onto letter opposing the Farm Bill, H.R. 2, due to changes to SNAP \(5/9/2018\)](#)
- [NASW signs onto letter opposing HHS's proposal to issue regulations that would make non-emergency medical transportation \(NEMT\) an optional Medicaid benefit \(5/7/2018\)](#)
- [NASW signs on to letter with the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids Coalition requesting that the House Appropriations Subcommittee maintain funding for FDA oversight of tobacco products \(5/4/2018\)](#)

- [NASW signs on to letter with the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids Coalition requesting that the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee maintain funding for FDA oversight of tobacco products \(5/4/2018\)](#)
- [NASW signs onto letter in support of adding enforcement authorities for the Department of Labor to the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions \(HELP\) Committee bill, the Opioid Crisis Response Act \(S. 2680\) \(4/23/2018\)](#)

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

- [NASW Requests CMS to Allow Clinical Social Workers to Bill in SNFs \(April 24, 2018\)](#)