

## 2017 North Carolina Clinical Social Work Advocacy Achievements

NASW North Carolina engages in a multitude of advocacy efforts for clinical social workers, especially areas in which members have identified specific concerns. For the year 2017, NASW's advocacy efforts on behalf of clinical social workers are described in this document.

Our advocacy efforts this year brought many historic changes and successes on behalf of clinical social workers and would not have been possible without the voices of you, *our members*. Countless times this year, you let us know when action was needed with the state, with an LME/MCO, with a hospital, or another entity. Your work is critical to the success of our communities and we are here to continue to protect and advance the social work profession at the local, state, and national level.

[You can view National's 2017 Clinical Social Work Advocacy Efforts here.](#)

### Historic North Carolina Supreme Court Ruling

NASW filed an amicus brief in a case that went to the North Carolina Supreme Court that would impact **all social workers** in North Carolina. The case would have determined if a third party, someone who is not your immediate client or seen by you but connected to a client, **can sue you** for harm done to them based on your actions with your client. The case was heard by the North Carolina Supreme Court and NASW-NC was there to follow this important case. In its review, the North Carolina Supreme Court was evenly split in its decision, which automatically resulted in the prior decisions being affirmed and the appellate court dismissing the case against the social worker. Because this ruling was split, it can be challenged in the future and NASW-NC will continue to advocate on your behalf. This type of ruling not only would affect all social workers but all health professionals and would greatly impact the likelihood of individuals reporting suspected child abuse for fear of legal action by a third party.

### Social Work Licensure Changes

In February, the North Carolina Social Work Certification and Licensure Board approved multiple rule changes to social work licensure in North Carolina. NASW-NC was involved in recommending rule changes to the Board based on member feedback. A few of the changes include: LCSWs will be able to provide no more than 20 hours of supervision for the LCSWA through the use of technology and social workers will be able to receive up to 5 hours of CE renewal credit for presenting at a conference or workshop. The final rule changes took effect on February 1, 2017. [Click here to view NASW-NC's side-by-side comparison document providing more information on the exact changes.](#)

### TRICARE/Humana

In April, several members let the chapter office know that their TRICARE provider **rates were being cut by 35%**. Because of YOU we were able to successfully advocate on your behalf and STOP these rate

reductions! NASW-NC involved the offices of U.S. Senators Richard Burr and Thom Tillis, several state NASW Chapters, our national NASW office, and TRICARE/Humana to lend a voice and stop these rate reductions. **Our efforts were successful** and Humana plans to keep existing contracts that providers had with Health Net in place as they take over services January 1, 2018. If you already signed a contract with the rate reduction, please ask Humana to void this contract and keep your old contract in place. If they refuse to do this, please contact NASW-NC immediately so we can help resolve the issue.

### Electronic Health Records Legislation

Are you connected? All providers serving clients insured by Medicaid, NC Health Choice, State Health Plan or providers that receive any state funding will need to be connected to the state's [Health Information Exchange Authority](#) (HIEA). **NASW-NC successfully advocated in the 2017 legislative session to push the deadlines back for providers.** If you are a provider already using an electronic health record, your deadline to connect is June 1, 2018. If you do not currently have an electronic health record, your deadline to connect is June 1, 2019!

NASW-NC currently serves on the HIEA Behavioral Health and I/DD workgroup and is actively working with them to provide opportunities for social workers to connect, potentially receive funding to set up an electronic system, and answer individual member questions. We will continue to advocate to ensure providers are ready, connected, and receive the help they need to meet these deadlines. Members needing assistance should contact Kay Castillo, Director of Advocacy, Policy, and Legislation at [advocacy.naswnc@socialworkers.org](mailto:advocacy.naswnc@socialworkers.org).

### Medicaid Transformation

The NC Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) released their [Medicaid Transformation Plan](#) earlier this year and there was only a scarce reference to the role or place of social workers. [NASW-NC made significant public comments](#) on the draft plan imploring the DHHS to include social workers as the key profession in the integration of physical and behavioral health in Medicaid initiatives. NASW staff and volunteer leadership had the opportunity to meet with Secretary Cohen and her team to speak to proposed revisions that would enhance the reference to the importance of social workers in the *Medicaid Transformation Plan*. Many of our recommendations were included in a final waiver submitted to the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services. Medicaid Transformation is not over yet and NASW-NC will continue to advocate for the profession throughout the design and implementation that will happen in our state.

*NASW-NC advocates for social workers regardless of clinical licensure status. The achievements detailed in this update do not cover all of NASW-NC's advocacy efforts. If you have questions about any topic covered in this document, please contact Kay Castillo, BSW, Director of Advocacy, Policy, and Legislation at [advocacy.naswnc@socialworkers.org](mailto:advocacy.naswnc@socialworkers.org).*