



NASW-NYC

2017 Legislative Agenda

Written By
Karin Carreau, MSW
Carreau Consulting @ The Elk
Street Group

CC-BY-SA-3.0/Matt H. Wade

A primary benefit of NASW-NYC membership is the comprehensive political and legislative representation we provide you on a daily basis. While you are busy practicing, we are your voice at the state capitol, protecting your career, defending your scope of practice, advancing legislation to expand practice opportunities, securing funding for membership workforce development programming and providing visibility on a number of social justice issues you've identified as a priority concerns.

The 2016 Legislative Session was enormously successful, as we secured additional funding for the State's loan forgiveness program, thwarted a five - year exemption to licensure and an attempt to gut our scope of practice. In addition, we derailed efforts to: infringe on our scope of practice in school based settings and expand the scope of practice of other mental health practitioners seeking diagnosis privileges. Further, we've advanced several bills and have had two new legislative initiatives introduced. With 2016 in our rear-view mirror we are gearing up for yet another robust legislative session.

The official start of the 2017 session will begin with the Governor's State of the State Address on January 11th. As such, the NASW-NYC Agenda will include to following issues

Career Protection

Workers Compensation Program

Adding LCSW's as providers to the Workers Compensation Program

Social Work Licensure Exemption

Implementing 2002 Social Work Licensure Law across all sectors of service delivery.

Social Work Investment Initiative

Collaboration with NASW-NYS that seeks to secure a substantial state investment into the social work profession, specifically in settings operated, funded or regulated by OMH, OASAS, OPWDD, SOFA, DOCCS, OCFS, and DOH. Such an initiative will be tied to resolution of the licensure exemption.

Social Justice Issues

- A \$4million Loan Forgiveness Program for Social Workers specifically working in currently exempt settings. Such an initiative would not supplant the current loan forgiveness program available to a broader network of social workers.
- An \$18 million incentive program for currently exempt agencies to increase the number of licensed social workers available to provide supervision. Such an investment will provide for a stronger career track and also reduce reported staff turnover.
- \$500,000 for the development and distribution of culturally sensitive and ESL test preparation to assist those who are vulnerable to, or have already, failed the exam.
- \$250,000 for the development and implementation of a workforce data collection survey to be utilized (upon mandate) by the NY State Education Department at registration and re-registration of all Article 154 licensees (Licensed Clinical Social Workers and Licensed Master Social Workers). This will assist us in better understanding where licensees are currently working and where gaps persist.

Preserving and Increasing School Social Work Positions

Initiative to encourage appropriate school social work / student ratio's

Parity Implementation

Advancing an initiative requiring insurers to report certain information regarding parity compliance.

**Juvenile Justice Reform-
Raise the Age of Criminal Responsibility**

New York continues to be only one of two states that continues to automatically prosecute 16 and 17 year olds as adults.

Conversion Therapy

NASW-NYC and NYS will continue to lead the charge to prohibit mental health professionals from engaging in sexual orientation change efforts with a patient under the age of eighteen years and expanding the definition of professional misconduct with respect to mental health professionals.

Racial Equity

NASW-NYC will continue to lead the charge to advance an initiative that calls upon the NY State Legislature to develop a Racial Equity Committee; a legislative body tasked with viewing legislative proposals through the lens of racial equity.

Close Rikers Island

The CLOSERikers campaign of JustLeadershipUSA seeks to close Rikers Island and create smart solutions for decarceration and building communities. The campaign is a holistic perspective of the conditions at Rikers and a community-wide effort to shut it down. While acknowledging that a mass criminalization epidemic exists in the United States, NASW-NYC supports the effort to decarcerate Rikers, one of the most oppressive jail systems in the country. The CLOSERikers Campaign calls for completely shutting down Rikers Island and NASW-NYC Chapter is in solidarity with and endorses this campaign as a community partner.