EXEMPLAR
Counseling Academic and Professional Honor Society International

ADVOCACY
An Ethical Imperative
Editor Insights

Personal is political. Many of us have heard this phrase and recognize the inherent meaning. It originated from a paper written by Carol Hanisch in 1969 and became known as part of the Women’s Liberation movement in the ‘70s (http://www.carolhanisch.org/CHwritings/PIP.html). The purpose of the paper was to outline relationship power struggles and not to point to politics specifically. In essence, the meaning of the phrase is that personal struggles are connected to oppression from larger community and societal systems. As counselors, we recognize this on a day-to-day basis as we work in the best interests of our clients regardless of personal political affiliations. In this Exemplar issue, we highlight how counselors have responsibilities in recognizing this connection and doing something about it. We chose to highlight some politically-based issues that have gained a lot of attention over the last 10 months. Healthcare is an issue that impacts every individual in the United States and counselors live the ramifications of healthcare decisions in multiple ways. Immigration and conversion therapy affect specific populations but counselors and the profession live this impact in working with clients, school systems, and legal systems to advocate for ethical and appropriate mental healthcare. In diving in deep on these issues, our hope is that CSI members will recognize and act to promote wellness for all they serve, furthering our society’s vision.
Headquarter’s Update
by Holly J. Hartwig Moorhead, CSI Chief Executive Officer

“There is no profession of counseling if counselors do not identify themselves with pride when they explain to people who they are and what they do.”

Dr. Carol Bobby
CSI President 1992-1993
#CSILeaders

As a new academic year begins this fall, we work toward accomplishing many goals both individually and as a society. Follow #CSILeaders and #WhyCSI posts on CSI’s social media sites (Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter) to read quotes from CSI members who are some of the most prominent leaders within the counseling profession. When you do, we hope you will feel renewed pride in your counselor professional identity and inspired to join more than 118,000 initiated CSI members in contributing to our society’s mission, to promote excellence in counseling, in the many different activities that this new season brings.

CSI Days at the 2018 ACA Conference & Expo

Start making plans to be part of CSI Days at the 2018 ACA Conference and Expo in Atlanta! Information about CSI Days events will be posted on the CSI website, including registration for delegates to attend the CSI Annual Delegate Business Meeting. (Reminder: Every CSI chapter must have a delegate attend the annual Delegate Business Meeting at least once every three years in order to maintain active chapter status and to be eligible to receive a chapter rebate.) CFA and Chapter Leaders Trainings will be offered. Be sure to highlight the CSI Leadership Workshop, two CSI-sponsored educational sessions, and 25 CSI-sponsored poster sessions in your conference schedule. CSI looks forward to being part of the 2018 ACA Conference and Expo and thanks ACA for providing accommodations for CSI Days events!

CSI Excellence in Counseling Research Grants

Consider applying for one of the many CSI Research and Grant Funding opportunities available this fall.

Excellence in Counseling Research Grants

Individual CSI members may apply for CSI’s Excellence in Counseling Research Grants that specifically relate to these funding priorities: Professional Advocacy Research, Leadership Research, Wellness Counseling Research, and Developmental Counseling Research. Find more information about Excellence in Counseling Research Grants online, including funding guidelines developed by the Excellence in Counseling Research Grants Committee, and submit applications by November 15, 2017 at 5pm EST.

Chapter Development Grants

Both small and large chapters may apply for CSI’s Chapter Development Grants to receive $50-$250 seed money to develop projects that promote and recognize excellence in leadership, professional identity, advocacy, scholarship, and enhanced member involvement through active counselor community engagement. More information is available online and applications are due October 15, 2017 at 5pm EST.

Statewide-Regional Networking Grants

Individual chapters and collaborating chapters are encouraged to apply for CSI’s Statewide/Regional Networking Grants to receive $100-$400 to develop networking opportunities among CSI chapters in the same state and/or region. Read more on CSI’s website about how previous grant recipients have used these funds to develop successful statewide/regional networking programs. Applications are due October 15, 2017 at 5pm EST.

CSI Day at the 2017 ACES Conference

Be part of CSI Day on Thursday, October 5, 2017, during this year’s ACES Conference in Chicago! CSI’s Chapter Faculty Advisor (CFA) Committee will offer CFA Training and the Chapter Development Committee will provide Chapter Leaders Training as well. CFAs and chapter leaders are encouraged to attend these leadership trainings to gain helpful support and practical tips for leading their chapters successfully. Also join us for the CSI-sponsored Leadership Session, Chi Sigma Iota’s Historical and Ongoing Commitment to Professional Counseling Identity and Excellence in Counseling. CSI thanks ACES for welcoming us to be part of the 2017 ACES Conference!

Dr. Holly Hartwig Moorhead
CSI Chief Executive Officer

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CSI Committees

Volunteer servant leadership is at the heart of our society’s productivity and influence within the counseling profession, and CSI International appreciates the many volunteers who serve in chapters, on the Executive Council, and as part of committees, review panels, editorial boards, and task forces. More information about CSI’s leadership can be found on CSI’s website within the Directory of Leaders. We also thank several members who have recently accepted leadership positions within our society.

• Leadership and Professional Advocacy Committee - Dr. Cheryl Fulton (Sigma Tau Sigma Chapter) has been appointed as the new Chair.

• Awards Committee - Dr. Kristen Dickens (Gamma Sigma Chapter) begins serving a second term as Chair.

• Professional Member Committee - Dr. Barbara Mahaffey (Alpha Chapter) has started another term as Chair.

• CSI Counselors’ Bookshelf - Dr. Barbara Mahaffey (Alpha Chapter) serves as Senior Editor. Dr. Jaime Castillo (Alpha Upsilon Xi Chapter) will serve as the Bibliotherapy Section Editor and Dr. Everett Painter (Upsilon Theta Chapter) will serve as the Music Section Editor. Ms. Vanessa Doran (Phi Sigma Chapter) has started a three-year term as the Counselors’ Bookshelf Editorial Assistant.

• The Journal of Counseling Leadership & Advocacy (JCLA) - Dr. Melissa Luke (Sigma Upsilon Chapter) starts her term as Editor and Dr. Michael Brubaker (Upsilon Chi Chi Chapter) begins serving as Associate Editor. As a 2017-18 CSI Leadership Intern, Ms. Lisa Dunkley (Rho Zeta Chapter) is serving as the JCLA Editorial Assistant.

• CSI Exemplar – Dr. Donna Gibson (Omega Lambda Iota Chapter) serves as Editor, Dr. Bradley McKibben as Associate Editor (Delta Iota Chapter) and Dr. Sandra Logan-McKibben (Delta Iota Chapter) as Assistant Editor. As a 2017-18 CSI Leadership Intern, Dr. Cynthia Bevly (Rho Kappa Chapter) will serve as the Exemplar Leadership Intern Editor.

Working with Dr. Stephen Kennedy, Chief Operating Officer, CSI International’s Committees have been busy planning many projects for the 2017-18 year. Be sure to look for new Advocacy Heroes and Heroines Interviews that will be developed by the Leadership and Professional Advocacy Committee in the coming months. The Counselor Community Engagement (CCE) Committee responded quickly to support CSI chapters affected by Hurricane Harvey’s devastating impact on Texas and Louisiana. Members interested in offering assistance may utilize the CSI Chapter Directory to directly contact leaders of chapters in the affected areas and offer support. Follow CSI’s social media sites to connect with and stay informed about the important work being done by CSI’s Committees.

2016-2017 Chapter Rebates

CSI Headquarters was pleased to issue more than $94,000 in chapter rebates for the 2016-17 year, returning $10 to chapters for every active member. As new CFAs and chapter leaders begin serving this fall, we look forward to working with them to help every chapter qualify to receive a rebate this coming year by fulfilling these requirements:

1. Submit an Annual Report by April 30th (present officers) at least once every two years.
2. Submit an Annual Plan by September 30th (incoming officers) at least once every two years.
3. Recruit and initiate new members at least once every two years.
4. Have a representative attend an annual CSI Delegate Business Meeting on CSI Day at least once every three years.
5. Comply with CSI policies as determined by the Executive Council.
6. Send CSI Headquarters contact information of officers including the Chapter Faculty Advisor(s) annually and when there are changes.
7. Have the required number of approved, qualified Chapter Faculty Advisors who are active members of CSI as required in the CSI Bylaws. CFA changes may be proposed by submitting the online CFA Change Form.

CSI Store

CSI members may access the CSI Store, the only authorized provider of CSI logo merchandise and graduation regalia, when logged into their member profiles on www.csi-net.org. Visit the store to order CSI apparel, including customized chapter t-shirts and a variety of CSI-logo shirts, as well as CSI-logo office items like laptop skins, pens, and portfolios. We’ve worked hard with the supplier for the CSI Store to provide quality items at the most affordable price for CSI members.

Since the CSI Logo is a registered trademark, our Society must carefully monitor and authorize its use to maintain our mark. We encourage chapter leaders to be familiar with CSI’s Trademarks Policy to ensure that any use of the CSI Logo and Chapter Logos is consistent with CSI policy.

NBCC-Approved Webinars

For the cost of becoming a new CSI member ($50) or renewing membership ($40), members can earn hundreds of NBCC-approved clock hours by attending live or viewing recorded webinars on many different professional and clinical topics, including psychopharmacology, leadership and professional advocacy, legal and ethical issues, play therapy, trauma, supervision, and wellness. Attend our fall webinars, including a neurofeedback series that will introduce basic and more advanced elements of qEEG Brain Mapping, Neurofeedback, and biofeedback certification.
Good things continue to happen within CSI – thank you for being part of this special society. As always, we welcome your comments and ideas about ways to continue to support our members in recognizing and promoting excellence in counseling (holly.moorhead@csi-net.org). We look forward to seeing you in Chicago and Atlanta!

CSI Day at ACES Conference
Schedule of Events
Thursday, October 5, 2017
Hyatt Regency Chicago

CSI Chapter Faculty Advisor Training
10:00-10:50 AM
Room: Crystal B

CSI Chapter Leaders Training
11:00-11:50 AM
Room: Crystal B

CSI Sponsored Educational Session
Chi Sigma Iota’s Historical and Ongoing Commitment to Professional Counseling Identity and Excellence in Counseling
1:30-2:20 PM
Room: Crystal B

CALL FOR AWARD NOMINATIONS
Kristen N. Dickens, CSI Awards Committee Chair
Gamma Sigma Chapter, Georgia Southern University

It is time to nominate deserving CSI members, programs, and chapters for awards! The Awards Committee encourages you to submit your recommendations so that we may recognize those who exemplify the mission of CSI. Individual, program, and chapter awards will be presented during CSI’s events at the 2018 American Counseling Association Conference & Expo in Atlanta.

The CSI Awards webpage provides information about the awards nomination process as well as eligibility criteria for each of the awards. We are pleased to share that Chapter Training Modules are available to help you prepare a successful awards nomination packet and organize your own chapter awards process. You can also visit CSI’s Recorded Webinars webpage to watch a Chapter Leaders Training entitled, “Developing a Chapter Awards Program.” Awards categories include:

- Outstanding Chapter
- Outstanding Chapter Individual Program
- Outstanding Chapter Newsletter
- Outstanding Entry-level Student
- Outstanding Doctoral Student
- Outstanding Practitioner
- Outstanding Research
- Outstanding Practitioner Supervisor
- Outstanding Service to the Chapter
- Outstanding Chapter Faculty Advisor
- The Thomas J. Sweeney Professional Leadership Award ($1000 stipend)
- The Jane E. Myers Lifetime Mentor Award ($1000 stipend)
- The Edwin L. Herr Fellowship for Excellence in Counseling Leadership & Scholarship ($1000 stipend)

A chapter can submit one nomination per award by completing the corresponding online submission form and uploading all nomination materials as a .pdf formatted document no later than December 1, 2017 at 5:00 PM EDT. Chapters are also encouraged to submit nominations for CSI’s Internships and Fellowships.

CSI’s yearly Internships and Fellowships include:
- Two Leadership Internships
- Eight Leadership Fellowships
- The Edwin L. Herr Fellowship for Excellence in Counseling Leadership & Scholarship ($1000 stipend)

Awards nomination forms must include a short endorsement letter from the Chapter Faculty Advisor. Please verify that nominees are active CSI members. Further information about the awards nomination and selection processes is available at the CSI website, or you may contact Dr. Kristen Dickens, CSI Awards Committee Chair, at awards.committee@csi-net.org. If you are interested in serving on the 2017-18 Awards Review Panel that considers nominations, please contact Dr. Dickens (awards.committee@csi-net.org) and Dr. Stephen Kennedy, CSI’s Chief Operating Officer (stephen.kennedy@csi-net.org).
It was an honor to be granted an interview with Christian Chan, MA, NCC, a doctoral candidate at George Washington University and Counselor Educator at Idaho State University beginning Fall 2017. He is the Past President of the Maryland Counseling Association and Member-at-Large for the Association for Adult Development and Aging (AADA). This article documents his work as a passionate and effective advocate for the counseling profession.

Mr. Chan was inspired to become involved in professional advocacy early on in his master’s program when he noted gaps in the profession. In particular, he recognized the importance of having a clear professional identity as a counselor, a need for explicit conversation regarding the unique role of counseling within the broader mental health field, and concerns regarding parity with other professional identities. His early involvement in leadership positions with Chi Sigma Iota further bolstered his inspiration to engage in professional advocacy.

He identified H.R. 3032, which includes counselors under Medicare coverage, as an important current issue in the field. Based on his efforts to reach out, build a relationship, and offer education about counselors and the profession, Mr. Chan was able to help inspire his local congressional representative, Jamie Raskin, to co-sponsor the bill. In his words, this “was a reminder that every effort, large or small, can make a difference to advocate for our profession”. Mr. Chan also has recently been involved with advocating for the expansion of funding of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). He remarked that even though ESSA may be most relevant to school counselors, professional advocacy must be a united front such that every counselor, regardless of their role, works together to advocate for all issues important to the profession.

He also identified several keys to successful advocacy. When advocating on Capitol Hill, Mr. Chan noticed that every meeting involved being asked “what is a counselor?” and “how is a counselor different than a social worker, psychologist, or therapist?” He recommends that all counselors use consistent messaging about who counselors are and what we do so that these questions can be well addressed. Being prepared to educate others about counseling, noting that there are more than 140,000 LPCs in the U.S., and that we have rigorous curriculum and training standards is vital. He also relayed that there is power in numbers so bringing others along when meeting with legislators is helpful as it communicates strength and passion. Getting involved with leaders in the profession and taking on leadership positions are also important to becoming a successful advocate.

He learned two important lessons along his advocacy journey. First, it is our professional and ethical responsibility to advocate for the profession and this can be done at every level. Counselors don’t have to go to Capitol Hill to have an impact, but rather can approach local representatives; building relationships is what counselors do. Second, counselor educators can be advocates at the grassroots level by educating students about counselor professional identity, offering consistent messaging about the unique role of counseling, and being a good advocate role model. In essence, education is essential to advocacy efforts and there is a need for both at all levels of counselor leadership.

**JCLA Call for Manuscripts**

Through high-quality research, scholarship, and professional dialogue, JCLA will promote the development of leaders to serve in diverse counseling settings, bring awareness to professional and client advocacy initiatives, and provide a forum for discussing professional issues. JCLA welcomes empirical, theoretical, and conceptual manuscripts focused on leadership, professional and client advocacy, and professional identity for counselors, counseling students, and counselor educators. Because evidence-based practice is at the heart of the counseling profession, JCLA will occasionally publish exemplary scholarship related to evidence-based practice in counseling practice, supervision, and education.

JCLA is published twice a year with a circulation in excess of 15,000. The editorial board accepts research and practice manuscripts on a rolling basis. To learn more about the journal aims and scopes and author guidelines, please visit www.tandfonline.com/ucla. Our manuscript submission portal is located at http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/ucla. You may also address inquiries to jcla@csi-net.org.
Working with Immigrant Students & Families: Perspectives from School Counseling

By Sandra Logan-McKibben, Exemplar Assistant Editor
Given the current political climate, many individuals, whether those in the LGBTQ+ community or those who are non-U.S. citizens, feel they are living in an unsettling time. While some may refer to the United States as “the land of the free,” many feel anything but free!

As professional counselors, we have an ethical obligation to our clients and students “to advocate at the individual, group, institutional, and societal levels to address barriers and obstacles that inhibit access, growth, and development” (ACA Code of Ethics, 2014). The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) also states that school counselors have the personal responsibility to:

- Monitor and expand personal multicultural and social-justice advocacy awareness, knowledge and skills to be an effective culturally competent school counselor.
- Understand how prejudice, privilege and various forms of oppression based on ethnicity, racial identity, age, economic status, abilities/disabilities, language, immigration status, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity expression, family type, religious/spiritual identity, appearance and living situations (e.g., foster care, homelessness, incarceration) affect students and stakeholders (ASCA Code of Ethics, 2016).

School counselors and school counselor educators are in a position to be able to advocate for the unique needs of immigrant students and families. In 2017, ASCA added a new position statement, “The School Counselor and Working with Students Experiencing Issues Surrounding Undocumented Status.” Notably, this position statement highlights some of the stressors that students and families may experience related to immigration concerns:

- Language barriers and interpretation for families
- Anxiety, fear, grief and loss regarding their personal or family members’ detention and deportation
- Concerns about their future
- PTSD due to traumatic immigration events

Perhaps, more importantly, this document discusses the roles that a school counselor has in supporting and advocating for this population.

Recently, I had the opportunity to connect with a counselor educator and with a school counselor who have substantial experience in working with this population. Dr. Diana Wildermuth, a counselor educator at Temple University in Philadelphia, has taught a course titled “School Counselors Meeting the Needs of English Language Learners (ELL).” In this unique course, she expects her students to engage in the course material by thinking beyond just the educational needs of ELL students, and considering the familial and societal needs of this population. Assignments for this course include selecting a novel about students, families, or educators to gain a deeper appreciation and perspective; interviewing an expert in the field of ELL; and a culminating project in which students must research a dilemma, issue, question or challenge that school counselors may encounter while working with ELL’s. In speaking with Dr. Wildermuth, she believes that many school counselors have not had education or training on how to work with students who have such needs. Yet, she emphatically stated, “We need to be ahead of it [training], not behind!” So, she feels very grateful to be able to address these needs in counselor preparation programs, especially since this is a notable population in the greater Philadelphia area.

Working as a school counselor in San Diego County, California has brought forth many opportunities for Cory Way to engage with undocumented students and families at his high school. What would you do if you heard one adolescent say to another “…why do you care? You’re not even a citizen of America?” Operating from a collaborative approach with teachers and families, he has been able to support dozens of undocumented students. This prompted Cory, along with a concerned teacher, to wonder about how many undocumented students felt safe and supported at school. Being a data-driven school counselor, he created a survey for students to complete which contained questions such as “Will you be filing out the FAFSA or DREAM Act for college financial aid?” and through this survey, he was able to identify about three dozen students. Speaking individually to these students, Cory learned that many students were scared to talk about their status and felt that they were the only ones facing stressors.

To address these students’ needs, he collaborated with a local organization, Alliance San Diego, which helped the students to understand their status, their rights, and how to access resources. This is one of Cory’s recommendations: make use of study surveys and invite speakers who can present on such topics of interest, as well as make sure to follow-up with those identified students. Along with this, Cory recommends that families have access to a legitimate lawyer that can help them navigate the complex legal system. Hopefully, this person can answer questions like “If for whatever reason, parents are undocumented and deported, what will happen to the children?” Lastly, memorizing contact phone numbers is important if someone is picked up from Immigration & Customs Enforcement, as they will only get one phone call.

While we are living in unsettling times, there is plenty of work to be done by school counselors and counselor educators to advocate for the unique needs of students and families facing immigration-related issues.

In hearing the insightful perspectives that Dr. Wildermuth and Cory Way shared, I couldn’t help but wonder what resources are available in my own community. What I realized is that it is important to advocate for and with these students and families. I encourage all of our readers to take some time and research what resources are available in your community.

References
Further Resources

Alliance San Diego [http://www.alliancesd.org/]
American Immigration Council [https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/]
Florida Immigrant Coalition [https://floridaimmigrant.org/]
National Immigration Law Center [https://www.nilc.org/]
Stand with Immigrants [http://www.standwithimmigrants.org/]
We are America Alliance [http://weareamericaalliance.com/]

Welcome New CSI Chapters!!!

**Alpha Upsilon Xi**  
Alfred University

**Delta Lambda**  
Viterbo University

Conversion Therapy Bans Gaining Momentum: Implications for Counseling Practice & Advocacy

by W. Bradley McKibben, *Exemplar* Associate Editor & Christian D. Chan, Phi Omicron Chi Chapter, Idaho State University
Conversion therapy, sometimes referred to as reparative therapy or sexual orientation change efforts (SOCE), refers broadly to practices aimed at changing a person’s sexual and affectional identity or gender identity. These practices focus almost exclusively on changing gay, lesbian, or bisexual identities to heterosexual or transgender identity to cisgender. Conversion techniques have historically included electroconvulsive therapy, castration, lobotomies, and aversion techniques (e.g., giving a client nausea-inducing medication, then presenting them with same-sex erotic photos). Today, practitioners of conversion therapy have attempted to mainstream their ideas and techniques into counseling by aligning with talk therapy practices. Reparative techniques rest upon the idea that same-sex attraction is unwanted by the client and is rooted in childhood trauma (typically sexual abuse). These techniques focus on resolving the trauma and engaging in dialogue with the client about the motivations for their same-sex attractions so that the client can learn to reduce or let go of their same-sex attractions.

The American Counseling Association (ACA), American Psychiatric Association (APA1), American Psychological Association (APA2), American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT), National Association of Social Workers (NASW), National Association of School Psychologists (NASP), American Medical Association (AMA), American Association of Pediatrists (AAP), and Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) are just a few of the professional organizations who collectively oppose the practices of conversion therapy. As legislative attention paid to minors because their capacity for failure? There has been particular attention paid to minors because their capacity to consent to treatment may be trumped by a primary caregiver. The identified public health risks to consumers of conversion therapy has led some lawmakers to ban conversion therapy. Conversion techniques pose a risk of harm to clients while aiming to “remediate” a nonexistent mental health concern, opposition to these techniques has become a public health issue. That is, should helping professionals be allowed to offer conversion therapy services to the public given the risks posed and the likelihood for failure? There has been particular attention paid to minors because their capacity to consent to treatment may be trumped by a primary caregiver. The identified public health risks to consumers of conversion therapy has led some lawmakers to ban conversion therapy. Because conversion techniques pose a risk of harm to clients while aiming to “remediate” a nonexistent mental health concern, opposition to these techniques has become a public health issue. That is, should helping professionals be allowed to offer conversion therapy services to the public given the risks posed and the likelihood for failure? There has been particular attention paid to minors because their capacity to consent to treatment may be trumped by a primary caregiver. The identified public health risks to consumers of conversion therapy has led some lawmakers to ban conversion therapy.

So far in 2017, Connecticut, Nevada, New Mexico, and Rhode Island have passed state laws banning conversion therapy for minors, joining California (2012), District of Columbia (2014), Illinois (2015), New Jersey (2013), Oregon (2015), and Vermont (2016). At the time of this writing, 14 other U.S. State legislatures are considering bills to ban conversion therapy. In Florida, state-level legislation banning conversion therapy have been introduced twice (2016 and 2017), but both died in a House subcommittee. Encouragingly, 15 cities in Florida have passed their own city ordinances banning conversion therapy within their city limits, and two counties and a 16th city are considering similar bans. On April 25, 2017, U.S. Representative Ted Lieu of California introduced H.R. 2119, the “Therapeutic Fraud Prevention Act,” to the U.S. House of Representatives. If passed, this bill could enact a federal ban on conversion therapy throughout the United States. H.R. 2119 has been referred to the Subcommittee on Digital Commerce and Consumer Protection.

There is increasing interest and discussion at local, state, and federal levels regarding the practice of conversion therapy. As legislative efforts continue to snowball forward, the conversion therapy issue will likely gain broader attention, meaning that more and more laypersons outside the helping professions will form and offer opinions on the matter. It is critical that professional counselors step up and join the efforts to pass legislation banning conversion therapy. Our sister professions, including psychologists, marriage and family therapists, and social workers have been consistent allies in a united effort to enact the bans already in place or under consideration.

Perhaps the most needed form of advocacy is educating the public, particularly lawmakers and legal counsel. The people who consider and ultimately vote on these laws and ordinances are likely not professional counselors or other helping professionals, meaning that they rely on us to inform them on ethical best practices in our field and on objective, valid, and reliable research. Legislators, city council members, and others are looking for, listening to, and favoring objective, research-based evidence. They take notice that the flagship organizations of the helping professions (i.e., ACA, APA, APA, AAMFT, NASW, AMA, AAP, PAHO and others related to conversion therapy) speak out against conversion therapy and do not actually consider it a therapeutic practice.

If you have not done so, read the research on conversion therapy. Read the statements from ACA, APA, AAMFT, NASW, NASP, AMA, AAP, PAHO and others related to conversion therapy. Then, get to know your local leaders, your state legislators, and your U.S. representatives and senators. Offer to speak with them about conversion therapy and present them with this information. They particularly thrive on data and outcomes, as do the lawyers with whom they seek legal counsel. Ask them about their thoughts and reactions, and ask them to consider appropriate action to ban conversion therapy in your city/county/state. Ask your U.S. representatives and senators to support H.R. 2119.
As you consider these steps, remember that you do not have to work alone. Activism, advocacy, community organizing, and collaboration rely on the synergies developed from collective responses and group work. Groups and communities participating in collective efforts develop both transformative and meaningful change. It is important for professionals within and across disciplines to be united against conversion therapy so that legislators are not confused about where the helping professions stand on the issue. It is also important that legislators receive accurate information. To that end, connect with other professional counselors, with people in our sister helping professions, and with other allies. The Association for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Issues in Counseling (ALGBTIC) is a great place to find allies and resources in professional counseling. For example, ALGBTIC and the Association for Assessment and Research in Counseling (AARC) have jointly released recent guiding documents to synthesize data, outcomes, the research process, and the assessment process through the Standards of Care in Assessment of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Gender Expansive, and Queer/Questioning (LGBTGEO+) Persons (Goodrich et al., 2017) and Standards of Care for Research with Participants Who Identify as LGBTQ+. The Human Rights Campaign supports initiatives worldwide, in the U.S., and at the state level, including support for conversion therapy bans. Much of the success at the local level in Florida has stemmed from advocacy efforts by the Palm Beach County Human Rights Council. Working alongside others with a collective, unified voices can not only have a profound impact, but it also provides you and others with a support network. Advocacy for social change is often a slow process and not always easy.

Celebrating diversity and enacting movements linked to social justice have served as major features of counselor professional identity due to our extensive work with diverse and marginalized communities across settings. At the roots of counselor professional identity, there is an integral component that affirms diversity, human rights, authenticity, growth, and wellness as informed by social, cultural, and political contexts and factors. As a unified front, we as counselors act as advocates every day in the clients and students we serve along the systemic efforts we implement to change systems. Instituting bans to conversion therapy increases safety, promotes access to counseling services, and identities methods to reinforce wellness. Every single effort makes a difference (e.g., raising awareness among colleagues, agencies, and communities; providing data to legislators; dialogues with legislators; empowerment with clients and students served). Counselors at their core have a stake in affirming LGBTQ+ communities and advocating for disrupting conversion therapy. We would also recommend the following references (ALGBTIC, 2009; Goodrich et al., 2017; Griffith et al., 2017; Harper et al., 2012) as a possible list of resources and point of departure to increase affirmiative practices.
2017-2018 Leadership Essay Contest
Co-sponsored by Chi Sigma Iota and CACREP
Contest Submission Deadline: November 15, 2017, at 5:00 PM EST

For the fourth year, the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) and CSI are co-sponsoring a Leadership Essay Contest. The two organizations have a strong history of mutual support and cooperative relationships, with a dual focus on enhancing the counseling profession through recognition of excellence in our field.

For the 2017-2018 Leadership Essay Contest, participants are invited to respond to the following prompt:

How can counseling students be prepared to serve with excellence in a dynamic, diverse, and complex international society?

We also encourage participants to address the following questions in their essays:

• How can counselors support the evolution of the counseling profession in different cultures around the world, while also being respectful of unique contributions other cultures can make to the profession?

• How can counseling students engage with policymakers and/or make small steps in their local communities so that mental health care will be inclusive of the needs of diverse citizens?

• In what ways can counselors develop multicultural competence for working with an increasingly diverse and global population of clients (e.g., immigrants and refugees)?

Essays can be submitted in one of two membership categories:

• Entry-Level Students
• Doctoral Students/Professional Counselors/Counselor Educators

Award recipients in each category will receive:

• First place: $500, a one-year membership renewal in CSI, and publication of the essay in the CSI Exemplar, the CACREP Connection newsletter, and at csi-net.org and cacrep.org.

• Second place: $200, a one-year membership renewal in CSI, and publication of the essay at csi-net.org.

• Third place: $100, a one-year membership renewal in CSI, and publication of the essay at csi-net.org.

Submission and Contest Rules
• Only currently active members of CSI are eligible for the contest.
• Members in any active chapter of CSI may participate, regardless of the accreditation status of their program.
• First place award recipients from previous years are not eligible to enter the contest again, but prior second and third place award recipients can submit another essay.
• All essays will be written by one person and submitted as sole authored; only one essay submission per member is allowed.
• Essays may not exceed 500 words; references can be entered separately and are not included in the word limit.
• All essays must be in English.
• Only original work will be accepted; all contest participants must verify that their submission is original.

Essays can be submitted using the online entry form until November 15, 2017, at 5:00 PM EST.

Submitted essays will be reviewed by a panel comprised of leaders from CSI and CACREP. Evaluation criteria will include originality, clarity, and relevance to the counseling profession. Essays will not be returned, and any submissions will become the property of Chi Sigma Iota International. If you have questions about the contest, please contact Dr. Cheryl Fulton (clfulton@txstate.edu), Chair of the CSI Leadership & Professional Advocacy Committee, and Dr. Stephen Kennedy (stephen.kennedy@csi-net.org), CSI Chief Operating Officer.

If you are interested in reviewing past submissions, previous award recipients’ essays can be downloaded on CSI’s Leadership webpage.

Resources
The following list of resources may be useful as you develop your Leadership Essay Contest submission. Although a literature review is not required, we encourage you to include citations when appropriate.


As an annual reminder, voting for Chi Sigma Iota International officers occurs each year by a collective vote per active chapter. This year, CSI members will be voting for the President-Elect and Secretary officer positions. Most importantly, all active chapter members are invited to vote for the candidate they believe will serve CSI best in these respective positions through their home chapters.

In the coming weeks, CSI Headquarters will send instructions to Chapter Faculty Advisors about how to download a list of their chapter’s active members from the CSI website. During October, each chapter’s leaders should contact their members about the CSI chapter voting procedures. Once all individual votes within a chapter are received, Chapter Faculty Advisors will tally their chapter members’ votes and report the candidates receiving the highest number of votes to the Nominations Committee no later than 5 pm EST on December 1, 2017. Overall, the potential candidates that receive the highest number of chapter votes will be elected to CSI office.

It is helpful to remember that current Social Media sites (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, chapter websites) are a viable way to communicate information about the CSI election process at the chapter level. We want to urge chapters to include active alumni members in their election outreach efforts. This year’s candidate information is available through our website, Facebook, Exemplar, and the E-News.

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2017-2018 PRESIDENT-ELECT CANDIDATES

Dr. Amanda La Guardia
Chi Chi Chapter

BIOGRAPHY
Dr. Amanda La Guardia joined the Omega Delta chapter of Chi Sigma Iota as a doctoral student at Old Dominion University where she served as chapter president. Since that time, Dr. La Guardia has served on the CSI Executive Council as Secretary, Awards Committee Chair, and serves as a Chapter Faculty Advisor. Currently, Dr. La Guardia is the mental health counseling program coordinator at the University of Cincinnati. She is committed to professional leadership and is an active scholar in adolescent non-suicidal self-injury, professional identity development, inter-professional collaboration, and gender issues. Dr. La Guardia has published over 40 journal articles, book chapters, and contributions to professional texts. She previously served as secretary for the Southern Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (SACES) and is the current assistant editor for CE&S, the official journal of ACES.

GOAL STATEMENT
Since its inception, the membership of Chi Sigma Iota has focused on fostering wellness, believing it central to health. Wellness is a complex construct, integrating personal strength, community interest, social advocacy, and behaviors meant to achieve the greatest levels of personal and interpersonal potential. If I am selected as assistant editor of Chi Sigma Iota, I will continue the work of my predecessors through the development of initiatives and events meant to foster both individual growth as well as collective, collaborative engagement in our professional and social communities. Often, I notice that the focus on transformation seems to be either personal or professional; however, I believe that lasting, meaningful change comes through the development of insightful actions that engage each of us intra- and interpersonally. Leaders within Chi Sigma Iota have spent decades developing and communicating a mission relative to the needs of the organization itself (its membership) and the broader needs of the professional community. Organizational shifts have been measured, insightful, and above all, collaborative. I think there is a lot that each of us can learn from the history of this organization as we work to develop our own
identities as leaders, advocates, and professional collaborators. Thus, I will focus on goals that will help foster a stronger sense of individual and professional identity while linking us to our role as active community collaborators.

**FOSTERING IDENTITY**

Great strides have been made over the last decade concerning counselor identity. We have recently witnessed the culmination of years of hard work from counseling leadership. We have accomplished mergers of accreditors, a defining vision for the work we do as professionals, and strong relationships between professional bodies like NBCC, ACA, and CSI all working to advance our field with a combined sense of unity and purpose. At this point in our history, we have an opportunity to define our profession as one focused on empowering the strengths of our clients, supervisees, and students while fostering a strong sense of connectedness to our communities. We will do this not just for others, but also for ourselves. While we continue to have our internal struggles, I value the discourse and dissenting voices continually calling on us to question who we are because I know these conversations force us to push ourselves to be better, more inclusive, and respectful collaborators in both life and practice.

**COMMUNITY COLLABORATION**

Transparency in leadership is vital to equitable, collaborative discourse. In essence, I see collaboration as a process of raising each other up in a way that demonstrates we truly believe each individual is capable of contributing to the wellness of our global society, that each person is valuable no matter their circumstance. If we take the time to listen, we can continue to co-create a strong organization that models what it means to be well, what it means to be inclusive, what is means to be counselor. I would feel immensely honored to represent Chi Sigma Iota as president-elect during this exciting time in our profession. A lot of work still needs to be done, and I am ready to join the effort.

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**BIOGRAPHY**

**Dr. Dana Heller Levitt** is Professor of Counseling at Montclair State University. She served as Graduate Program Coordinator for 5 years at MSU as well as during her tenure as Associate Professor of Counselor Education at Ohio University. Dr. Levitt is a past Chi Sigma Iota Fellow, Rho Beta Chapter President, Alpha Chapter Faculty Advisor, and Exemplar Editor. In addition to CSI leadership, Dr. Levitt’s service during her 20 years in the profession includes: a 5 year term on the CACREP Board of Directors, including 3 years on the Executive Committee; ACA Ethics Committee; Counseling and Values editorial board; and several state counseling association leadership positions. Dr. Levitt remains an active scholar in ethics, counselor development, and pedagogy. She co-authored the books *A Guide to Graduate Programs in Counseling and Values* and *Ethics in Counseling* in addition to more than 30 journal articles and book chapters.

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**GOAL STATEMENT**

CSI celebrates a rich history of excellence. Membership itself is a reflection of individual excellence. We highlight successes with chapter and national recognition and build upon our Association of College Honor Societies certification and other markers of academic excellence. We may demonstrate our standards for professional excellence through chapter engagement and collaboration. We can even further demonstrate our leadership excellence through CSI’s established relationships and collaboration with partner organizations such as CACREP, NBCC, and ACA. As President-Elect, I must ask myself how I can contribute to the visions created by those before me, uphold the mission, and help the organization move forward. My leadership experiences with organizations including CSI and CACREP are successful and meaningful because of two key principles: ethical leadership and values-based engagement and decision-making. There is no other professional counseling association that upholds the principle of excellence by nature of its mission. We can attend to chapter engagement and the broad spectrum of academic excellence through initiatives that reflect the values of CSI, its members, and the counseling profession.
CSI is the penultimate grassroots organization. We can best assist chapters to engage members with one another at the local level. We encourage chapter leadership and activity that is reflective of values and sociocultural needs, creating leaders who engage chapters in dialog and action. Chapters can be so engaged internally that they may forget about their connection to the larger organization. I would like to see CSI undertake strategic initiatives to strengthen connections within, among, and between chapters that reflect our mission, goals, and resources. CSI Fellows and Interns and other national leaders can engage in chapter outreach, partnerships, and consultation. We can support and highlight chapter successes using existing CSI platforms and networking opportunities. Engagement through national leadership partnerships fosters connection and creates opportunities for chapters and leaders to learn from and collaborate with one another.

"Engagement through national leadership partnerships fosters connection and creates opportunities for chapters and leaders to learn from and collaborate with one another.”

Dana Heller Levitt

A mentoring and engagement initiative between chapters and leaders may likewise foster academic excellence. The CSI mission may serve as a call for chapters to validate successes through research and scholarship. Poster sessions at CSI Days at the ACA conference is an outstanding start. Let’s further encourage chapters to write about their initiatives and to engage in research to measure the effects of their work, publishing in CSI’s Exemplar and Journal of Counselor Leadership and Advocacy to promote scholarship, research, and excellence. Let’s capitalize on the mentoring relationships CSI creates with Fellows and Interns, national leaders, and chapter leaders. Publications, presentations, and collaborative speaking opportunities among these leaders at national and chapter events and initiatives may inspire and promote leadership and excellence among our membership. Most importantly, these relationships create academic excellence opportunities and the mentoring that is critical to all leaders in our profession. I value the opportunity to help others reach their potential and spotlight. The relationships I foster and that leaders fostered with me as a student, counselor, and counselor educator are the backbone to the ethical leadership and values-based engagement I hope to continue with CSI.

CANDIDATES FOR SECRETARY

BIOGRAPHY

Dr. Peggy Ceballos is an Associate Professor at the University of North Texas (UNT). Her involvement in CSI started in 2001 when she became president of her local chapter (Sigma Lambda Upsilon) as a master’s student. Currently, she serves as Chapter Faculty Advisor and as chair of the CSI Faculty Advisors Committee. For the past 3 years, she has helped organize and deliver the CSI Faculty Advisors’ trainings at national and regional conferences and in 2016 she was a reviewer for the CSI Essay Contest. Peggy’s other service to the profession includes chairing the SACES Awards committee, serving on the ACES Awards committee, and participating on several committees for the Association for Play Therapy. Her research agenda addresses culturally-responsive play therapy interventions with underserved youth in school settings with a specific focus on Latino populations. She has conducted over 50 professional presentations and is the recipient of 11 professional awards.

GOALS STATEMENT

I am honored to be nominated for the position of Secretary of Chi Sigma Iota International. CSI has been an integral part of my professional and leadership development. My journey with CSI started when I was elected president of my chapter as a master’s student. Thanks to that experience I started developing my leadership skills and a passion for serving the profession. Years later, CSI continues to influence my professional identity. Being a chapter faculty advisor is fulfilling to me because I know the impact CSI can have on students’ professional development. The work that is done through CSI chapters is fundamental to instill the value of service, leadership and advocacy in future counselors and counselor educators. For me, this nomination signifies an opportunity to contribute to fulfilling CSI’s mission of promoting excellence in counseling.

CSI Secretary upholds the philosophy and principles of CSI through ensuring accurate account of meetings as well as active and timely communication with members. As chair of CSI Faculty Advisors Committee, I understand the importance of open communication between CSI Headquarters and local chapters. It is through accurate and
timely information that the CSI executive committee supports local leaders in fulfilling their duties. Thus, I view the role of secretary as vital to the success of local chapters. If elected, as secretary, I will use social media and other methods of communication to provide local chapters with the resources they need. In addition, I will advocate for and be sensitive to the needs of members within the organization. This position will give me the opportunity to continue advancing the mission of CSI to “promote scholarship, research, professionalism, leadership, advocacy, and excellence in counseling...” For me, it would be an honor to serve CSI, an organization that has been instrumental in my own professional development.

BIOGRAPHY

Dr. Philip Clarke is an Associate Professor in the Department of Counseling at Wake Forest University. He has been a licensed counselor in the state of North Carolina since 2006. His areas of interest in counseling and research include wellness, addictions, and counseling persons with dementia and their families. Dr. Clarke has been a CSI member since 2004 and has served in numerous capacities including Chapter Faculty Advisor (2012-2014), Counselors’ Bookshelf Section Editor (2008-2016), and Chair of the Chapter Development Committee (2015 to present). Dr. Clarke’s leadership experiences outside of CSI include serving on the Advisory Council for the National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC) Minority Fellowship Program. He is currently an editorial board member for the Journal of Counseling and Development and the Journal of Addictions and Offender Counseling.

GOAL STATEMENT

The position of CSI Executive Council Secretary is not a role I would take lightly. CSI is leading the charge in fostering advocacy, excellence, professional identity of counselors, and knowledge on wellness. However, I believe that CSI is at a critical juncture as an organization. Maintaining efforts to strengthen wellness as one of the foundations of counseling is of key importance. Finding ways to facilitate an even better CSI membership experience for students in online counseling programs is critical. CSI continues to strive to increase awareness about the benefits of CSI for members and maximizing the collective impact that members can have on the counseling profession, our clients, and our communities.

If elected as your CSI Secretary, I possess valuable leadership experience to help enact positive growth in CSI. I have been a passionate CSI member since 2004 and have had the opportunity to learn about this great organization from multiple perspectives over the years. As a doctoral student, I was one of the CSI Leadership Interns. In that role, I was able to attend the yearly meeting of the Executive Council. I have thus seen firsthand the important work and mission building that can be done. I have learned about the power that CSI holds in disseminating useful resources to counselors as a Section Editor for the Counselors’ Bookshelf. Additionally, I am starting my third year as Chair of the Chapter Development Committee for CSI. This committee has helped me understand the needs of the chapters, resources available for chapters, and how to develop new resources for chapters.

My first goal, if elected as Secretary, would be to keep clear documentation of meeting minutes in order that the Executive Council members can track ideas, tasks, votes, and other key information. The Secretary’s maintenance of records is vital in the Executive Council articulating and organizing charges for CSI committees, Leadership Fellows and Interns, and assessing progress in committee and Executive Council work. My second goal would be to assist the CSI President in actualizing her or his goals for the organization. In the pursuit of accomplishing goal two, I hope to ensure that decisions are made that support both online and campus counseling programs. Thirdly, I seek to help CSI build upon its role as a hub for wellness information. This may entail identifying further opportunities for infusing wellness into CSI chapters.

REMINDER:

VOTING BY CHAPTERS FOR ALL CANDIDATES BEGINS NOVEMBER 1ST CONCLUDES 5 PM EST, DECEMBER 1, 2017!
Healthcare and Counseling Advocacy by Cynthia Bevly Exemplar Leadership Intern Editor

On July 28th of this year, a majority of the United States Senate voted against H.R. 1628, the Healthcare Freedom Act of 2017. This bill would have repealed the Affordable Care Act’s individual and employer mandates and granted states more flexibility to allow insurance that does not comply with Affordable Care Act protections. However, according to the Congressional Budget Office (2017), H.R. 1628 would have left 15 million more people uninsured next year, with 16 million more by 2026. Furthermore, premiums would have jumped 20% within the next year (Congressional Budget Office, 2017). However, the battle is not over. Most recently the Senate Democrats announced their co-sponsorship of a single-payer healthcare bill. Although it is too early to determine the repercussions for Americans, any policy changes will affect clients that counselors serve.

The most direct effect is billing for services. Many counselors choose to accept client insurance as a way to receive payment for services rendered. The advantages and disadvantages to utilizing a third-party reimbursement system are numerous. On the one hand, counseling becomes more affordable for clients who have insurance, and insurance panels become the main source of referrals and marketing for the counselor. On the other hand, interacting with insurance companies due to their self-employed or private contractor status. This responsibility can create a wealth of issues for the counselor who is just starting in the private practice world. Much of the employer related healthcare options are found in agency or university settings.

Healthcare and Counseling in the U.S.

How does the current healthcare debate affect the field of counseling? The American Counseling Association (ACA) suggested that “the counseling profession shall speak with a united voice when educating the health care insurance industry and advocating for counseling, counselors, or clients” in their future strategies for achieving the goals of 20/20: A Vision for the Future of Counseling, a professional advocacy initiative established to promote the needs of the counseling profession (ACA, 2013). Thus, it seems that advancing the profession does include partnering with the healthcare industry.

The most direct effect is billing for services. Many counselors choose to accept client insurance as a way to receive payment for services rendered. The advantages and disadvantages to utilizing a third-party reimbursement system are numerous. On the one hand, counseling becomes more affordable for clients who have insurance, and insurance panels become the main source of referrals and marketing for the counselor. On the other hand, interacting with insurance companies becomes more time consuming; additionally, a diagnosis is required and coverage is not always guaranteed. Furthermore, not all insurance plans are created equal. In fact, Balkin (2006) examined 89 adolescent clients hospitalized in inpatient psychiatric care and found that clients who used Medicaid had longer lengths of stay than clients who used private insurance. Also, counselors may receive higher or lower reimbursements rates depending on the insurance company, thus creating a potential bias towards clients with certain insurance plans (Lawless, Ginter, & Kelly, 1999). In private practice, the counselor gets to decide to accept insurance or rely exclusively on private pay. However, counselors at many agency or community mental health settings can expect to work with insurance companies.

An indirect effect of the current healthcare situation in the U.S. is the mental and emotional toll clients may experience as result of the financial and physical implications of high premiums or loss of coverage. The lack of universal coverage coupled with the uncertainty of the current political climate may find its way into the counseling room as a topic of discussion. Indeed, in an online poll of 3,511 adults, 57% of those sampled reported that present day political issues, including healthcare, are a source of stress (Bethune & Lewan, 2017).

Lastly, counselors, counselor educators, and counselor supervisors are also consumers of medical and mental health services. Counseling professionals need to stay well both physically and psychologically in order to provide quality services to clients, students, and supervisees. Counselors who are in private practice are often the ones responsible for obtaining healthcare coverage due to their self-employed or private contractor status. This responsibility can create a wealth of issues for the counselor who is just starting in the private practice world. Much of the employer related healthcare options are found in agency or university settings.

Learning from our Global Neighbors

The state of healthcare around the world tells a different story than the U.S. There are over 50 countries today that have some form of universal healthcare coverage, including Egypt, India, Israel, People’s Republic of China, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Spain, United Kingdom, Canada, Mexico, Argentina, Brazil, Australia, and New Zealand – just to name a few. Dr. Terence Yee is an assistant professor at Villanova University who spent a considerable part of his life in Malaysia. Dr. Yee continues to be surprised by the healthcare in system in the United States.

Describing what healthcare is like in his home country, he stated, “my country, Malaysia, was labeled as a third world country and surprisingly, we have a better healthcare system in place…in Malaysia, there are two types of healthcare, public and private. The public healthcare is funded by the government and people can access it for an extremely low cost…Because there is public healthcare, there is no need for insurance coverage. Of course, many people still purchase insurance if something were to happen. People with insurance can opt to go to private hospitals and get treated. However, the cost of being treated at a private clinic and hospital in Malaysia is significantly less than that in the U.S.”

When asked about his perspective of healthcare in the U.S., he commented, “In the United States, healthcare is a profit-making industry…healthcare costs in the U.S. are ridiculously high.
when compared to other countries because it is seen as a business model…there needs to be an overhaul of the system to shift the fundamental perspective of healthcare from a profit-making view towards a human-rights perspective."

Dr. Yee went on to say, "when it comes to clinical practice, the profit-making viewpoint of healthcare impacts counselors, supervisors, educators, and clients. Within this system, the ones suffering the most are usually people from lower socioeconomic (SES) backgrounds…it is unfortunate, but the reality of the matter is that clients who can afford insurance premium or out-of-pocket expenses will have better access to mental health professionals. Often times, counseling clinics that serve lower SES communities or provide free services are filled to the brim and have long waiting lists. Counselors serving low SES communities are in the constant dilemma of providing adequate service to current clients and overextending themselves to provide more services to the long waitlist of incoming clients."

Although Malaysia has more accessible healthcare, the stigma of mental health continues to be a topic of advocacy for Dr. Yee. "The healthcare system in Malaysia makes it extremely easy for people to seek out help, because cost is not a barrier. Unfortunately, mental health in Malaysia is still in its infancy and there are still stigmas associated with seeking out a mental health professional. This makes the outreach a little different from the U.S. counselors and mental health providers in Malaysia will need to combat the stigma of mental health and educate the public on mental health care rather than combating costs of services." It seems as if the United States is switched on the issues: although mental health treatment is widely accepted by Western society, people still struggle to access the services they need.

What We Can Do

Part of Chi Sigma Iota’s (CSI) mission is to promote excellence in the profession of counseling through advocacy efforts. Wellness is also one of CSI’s core values. Counselors, counselor educators, and counselor supervisors espousing the principles of CSI hope to promote wellness within themselves and with clients, students, and supervisees. One’s physical and mental well-being are certainly a part of optimal health and wellness (Myers, Sweeney, & Witmer, 2000). For many of the people in our care, this wellness can be supported and promoted with access to healthcare for both physical and mental health needs.

The first step in advocacy is to increase knowledge and awareness of the current issues clients, students, and supervisees face. Some counseling professionals may want to tune out all the political noise; however, the ACA Code of Ethics (2014) calls counselors to advocate not only at the individual level, but also at the institutional and societal level when necessary. It is helpful to understand political issues regarding healthcare at the local, state, and federal arena in order to effectively intervene. Finding this information may include staying updated on political news, getting involved in local, state, or national organizations, or even having conversations with people in the community. Additionally, counseling professionals can choose to petition or vote for lawmakers and leaders who will indirectly create policies that will affect welfare of clients, students, and supervisees.

Furthermore, advocacy efforts may look differently and vary in scope depending on setting and form of care. An example of advocacy at the individual level related to healthcare may encompass assisting clients or parents of clients in enrolling in Medicaid or Medicare benefits. In the community arena, advocacy could involve changing payment policies at the counseling practice or clinic to include payment plans or sliding scales to accommodate clients who struggle to maintain insurance.

Additionally, counselor educators may need to advocate for student healthcare coverage. Many universities have some kind of policy or system in place to provide students with basic medical and mental health services. For example, Dr. Janice Miner Holden is department chair and professor at the University of North Texas and a member of Rho Kappa chapter. Doctoral students in this counseling program who receive a graduate assistantship are also offered healthcare benefits as a part of their scholarship package. Dr. Holden described a situation she faced when the university decided to change funding. "In 2014, my university undertook a very laudable effort: to increase funding to graduate assistants (GAs)...the increase was to take the form of tuition reimbursement, which had not previously been available to these students. Unfortunately, part of the way the administration planned to fund this support was by eliminating health insurance as a benefit that accompanied GA lines...as an alternative to the automatic benefit, GAs could now purchase health insurance at a relatively low price, such that their gain in tuition benefit would outweigh their loss in having to buy insurance."

Dr. Holden went on to say that, “the problem was that this net gain did not apply to all students. Some had come to UNT explicitly for the health insurance benefit because of preexisting medical conditions; for them, switching to the purchase of different health insurance would be substantially more expensive, resulting in a net loss. When I learned about this situation, I advocated strongly with the administration that it should make good on our commitment to these GAs. After expressing this concern several times—both in writing in general and for some individual students in particular and in meetings on the topic—the administration came through: To my knowledge, every GA ended up either with the net gain or with continuation of their original coverage for the duration of their GA position.”

Dr. Holden demonstrated a strong commitment in advocating for the students in her department. Summarizing her felt responsibility in this process, she stated, ‘this situation illustrates how even the most well-meaning transition can be difficult due to unforeseen circumstances, how an administration can rise to the occasion of fulfilling its commitment to its students despite temporary financial stress to the institution, and the crucial role of advocacy in helping an administration maintain integrity in the process of implementing a new policy.’"
It has been a few months since the Senate made the final decision to vote against H.R. 1628. However, many of the people in the U.S. are left wondering about the state of healthcare in this country, especially with the new single-payer bill introduced. These concerns are likely to manifest in counseling rooms and classrooms as consumers and lawmakers continue to discuss and debate healthcare issues. Whether an individual counseling professional is in favor of one healthcare policy over another, the healthcare needs of the people we serve cannot be ignored.

References


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Journal of Counselor Leadership and Advocacy
(www.csi-net.org/?JCLA)

www.csi-net.org
for other CSI publications, webinars, member and chapter resources, and more