NASW-NC Advocacy Update
Kay Castillo, Director of Advocacy, Policy, and Legislation
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We can hardly believe 2017 is here! The 2017 legislative session is scheduled to begin on January 11, 2017. We anticipate legislators will come into town and be sworn in to their new positions but then adjourn and return a few weeks later to begin the legislative session.

Throughout the legislative session, be sure to subscribe to our weekly advocacy update through Engage! Subscribers of our mailing list receive weekly legislative updates and breaking action alerts throughout the legislative session.

Legislative Meetings

- Governor McCrory called a special legislative session in December to allocate funding for victims of Hurricane Matthew and the wildfires in western NC. Legislators convened to do this and NASW-NC was present during Governor McCrory’s remarks to legislators. This was the third special legislative session during 2016. The first special legislative session in February addressed redistricting and the second special legislative session in March brought the devastating law known as House Bill 2.
- In an unusual move, legislators gathered signatures of a three-fifths majority and called a fourth special legislative session immediately after the Governor’s called session. Legislators limited incoming Governor Roy Cooper’s appointment powers and made changes to the State Board of Elections.
- In another unusual twist, key legislative leaders struck a deal with the city of Charlotte to do a full repeal of House Bill 2. However, in a one-day legislative session the week of the holidays, legislators could not come to an agreement and adjourned without a repeal. NASW-NC was present for this legislative session to highlight our support of a full repeal.

Coalition Meetings

- We attended the Professional Association Council and discussed integrated care, the Health Information Exchange Authority, and licensing board consolidation.
- We took part in the Prison Advisory Coalition where we discussed legislative priorities for the Department of Public Safety that includes a funding request to hire more social workers- both clinical and non, loan forgiveness for healthcare employees, raising the age for juveniles, and more. We also got an update that 15.9% of inmates are receiving mental health care and over 23,000 inmates will return to their communities this next year.
• We attended two meetings of the Coalition on Mental Health/Developmental Disabilities/Substance Use Disorder’s Executive Committee to discuss our overall advocacy goal. The group decided to meet at the legislative building every Tuesday to advocate on specific bills and funding to ensure services are met in our state.

• We participated in a meeting of the Joint Insurance Committee and took part in discussions concerning the federal changes to MIPs which replaces PQRS standards and will be in place for clinical social workers in 2019. More details to come!

Other Advocacy Updates

• We signed on to the SAVE for All campaign with the Coalition on Human Needs.

• We joined a new coalition called the NC Coalition to Protect Child and Family Health through NC Child. Read more about this newly formed group online!

• We provided extensive feedback to our national office about the restructuring of our National Political Action for Candidate Election Committee and the polices that NASW uses with which we endorse candidates.

• We held a conference call with leadership at the national NASW office as well as NASW Assurance Services, our malpractice carrier, to advocate for insurance coverage for NASW members while abroad and push for enhanced programming and services. Assurance Services will cover members while abroad if they are on US soil while working.

• What advocacy efforts are going on at the National Office? Read the NASW Washington Update.

Do you have issues impacting you that you think need to be addressed through advocacy efforts? NASW-NC members can contact Kay Castillo for help, advocacy@naswnc.org.