

## An Update from us on COVID-19 NASW-NYC in Action

Hello NASW-NYC and the larger social work community,

We're reaching out to respond to numerous questions the National Association of Social Workers-NYC Chapter (NASW-NYC) has received on how we are working to address the COVID-19 crisis. Two questions asked repeatedly are how membership is used, and why membership and your support matters.

While like everyone, we are in the midst of turmoil, worry, and uncertainty, we are also at the precipice of a significant opportunity for the social work community to support efforts to ensure equitable access to treatment and address social service needs. This also creates the pathway for partnerships and community building so that legislators and the larger public recognize the power and necessity of the social work profession. We have a small team of six (6) staff at the NASW-NYC office working on behalf of NYC's 30,000+ social workers; only about 15% of NYC's social workers are members of NASW-NYC. The issues and areas that we are able to address depend heavily on our membership support and engagement. Every day, we work tirelessly to advance the cause of our profession. NASW-NYC has been blessed to engage the support and knowledge of an amazing social worker and government relations expert. This allows us to meet with our legislators and other stakeholders in the state capital regularly as we advance the mission and visibility of social work to better serve our communities. The social work profession and your professional advocacy body needs your support and partnership to continue to work on your behalf.

### **Advocacy in Action-What NASW-NYC has been doing:**

- NASW-NYC has been working closely with the New York State Education Department (NYSED) and partners to wade through the myriad of issues associated with the provision of tele-mental health services. As a result of our advocacy and strategic partnership with the amazing team at NYSED, in response to COVID-19, social workers who are up for licensure renewal between March 1, 2020 through June, 2020 will be permitted to complete 100% of their continuing education as self-study so long as the course(s) meet SED requirements.
- We have been able to successfully advocate and clarify with the state department that supervision conducted via appropriate tele-communications as well as the hours accrued during appropriate tele-health, can be credited towards licensure. This is significant and would not have happened without NASW-NYC's advocacy and partnerships that have been

fostered on behalf of our profession. We do strongly recommend you familiarize yourself with SED guidance on the practice of tele-health and their recent updates.

- Now that NASW-NYC has been able to clarify the infrastructure, ability and logistics to providing tele-mental- health in compliance with SED regulations and guidelines, we are now turning our attention to addressing barriers related to the reimbursement of tele-mental-health services with the appropriate state entities. This crisis has brought to the surface a number of long-standing challenges associated with the reimbursement of social work services and as such, we will work to address and mitigate.
- The National Association of Social Workers-NYC Chapter will be coordinating in partnership with Governor Cuomo's office to respond to the call for qualified mental health providers to engage in volunteer efforts to support the behavioral health infrastructure of the state in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. To learn more about how you can support these efforts, please go to <https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/get-involved-how-you-can-help>

This is just a fraction of the work that NASW-NYC does every day. The reality is, we can't continue to advocate on behalf of the profession and the vulnerable communities we serve, without your support. We are limited, like you, by human capital and resources. Advocacy can't happen without people power, partnership, and financial support. We advocate on behalf of the profession every day while being pulled in many directions and while constantly being told we're not doing enough. The reality is that like you, we are not always able to do everything. We can't advocate without you. Imagine how much more we could do, how much stronger our profession would be, how much more impact we could have, if instead of 15% of the estimated 30,000 social workers in NYC being members of the chapter, 30%, 60%, 70% and even 85% were. We need your help to ensure that our association, your advocacy body, and profession survives.

Donate: [click here](#)

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Participate: [click here](#)

The image shows two handwritten signatures in black ink. The first signature on the left is 'Dr. Claire Green-Forde' and the second signature on the right is 'Olanike Oyeyemi'.

Dr. Claire Green-Forde  
Executive Director, NASW-NYC

Olanike Oyeyemi  
Associate Director, NASW-NYC