Chapter Update

ELEVATE SOCIAL WORK
March 25-27, 2019

At NASW-SC, we are up to our eyeballs in preparing for the next Spring Symposium which has the theme: Elevate Social Work! The program is done. Registrations are pouring in. And, best of all—we received final confirmation that US Representative James Clyburn will be our opening speaker! Other plenary speakers are Dr. William Hallman and our own Anton Gunn, who made a video about his presentation: https://vimeo.com/306798615/8cf84bcaae

You’ll notice a few changes from the past several years. Rather than contracting out for registration, we are managing it ourselves, and offer on-line and mail-in options. This led to a simplification of the registration process: you won’t pre-select your sessions at registration. This means if you see a workshop you are DYING to attend, make sure you’re first to arrive and stake out your seat. You may not get your first choice of session, but we have so many fabulous workshops to offer you won’t be disappointed.

Also, we moved the conference to the Doubletree Hotel on Bush River Road. While we loved the central location of the Marriott, we outgrew it—particularly when it came to parking. The Doubletree has undergone a major renovation and we believe it will meet our expanded needs. Also, the parking lot is MASSIVE.

You can check out a draft of our program here: https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.scnasw.org/resource/resmgr/symposium_2019/Program_2019_website_draft.pdf

To register, go to our website at www.scnasw.org Early bird registration ends February 11.

We can’t WAIT to see you in March!

ELEVATE SOCIAL WORK

WHAT'S INSIDE:

From Where I Sit 2
President’s Letter 3
Editor’s Column 4
Student’s Perspective 5
Symposium Speakers 8
Agency Blocks LGBT Adoptions 8
On January 17, two men died in separate apartments at Allen Benedict Court Apartments, an old public housing complex in downtown Columbia. When severe gas leaks were discovered there, four hundred other residents, including families with young children, were shuffled out and moved to hotels around Columbia.

Autopsy results showed the two men died of carbon monoxide poisoning. Columbia Fire Department noted “life-threatening code violations” at the complex: missing smoke detectors, inoperable fire extinguishers, and “heightened levels of gas” in 63 apartments. Reportedly, tenants had complained about smelling gas multiple times but nothing was done.

Soon after the incident, a board member contacted our office about what support we could offer the residents. Attempts to contact the CHA proved fruitless; they never returned calls or replied to emails (in fairness, this situation has probably overwhelmed them).

When I reached out to the county, I was told to call the city. When I contacted the city, I was sent to CHA. Officials seemed to be distancing themselves from this tragedy.

Why wasn’t anyone advocating for the residents? Where was the outrage? Where were the politicians screaming that something must be done?

Some local churches came forward, bringing gift cards that the residents could use to buy meals. After several missteps and numerous calls, the American Red Cross offered disaster counseling.

When we reached out to the mayor, he described his plan for a long-term solution, which includes a mixture of vouchers to be used in local apartment complexes and the construction of 98 more modern on-site public housing units. All of this must be funded by HUD.

I’m grateful that Mayor Benjamin is taking a long-term stance, but I worry about what will happen short-term. Where will the residents go? They cannot be returned to Allen Benedict Court. We have a waiting list of 1000 for people needing Section 8. Housing resources are severely limited because we’ve never adequately funded this basic need.

Once the media has moved on, what will happen? How many of these residents will end up homeless?

Another—darker—question resonates for me: What if this happened at a complex where mostly white people lived? If a gas leak had been discovered at Still Hopes or The Waterford (retirement communities in the Midlands) that led to two deaths, imagine the outrage. Imagine the resources offered to help. Imagine all the politicians standing in front of TV cameras, promising justice, promising to fix the problems. Promising that each resident would get all the help they need.

We must not see the residents of Allen Benedict Court as less worthy, less deserving, of all the help we can offer. As social workers, we know this in our DNA. As advocates, we must remind others of this truth. The residents from Allen Benedict Court must not be forgotten.

https://www.thestate.com/news/local/article225042355.html?fbclid=IwAR0bnsaQv7lJ8bmHlDOi0H9TT1uVicp5vKW8tpy5LLHauG2T6eW_Shi8IhQ
These past few months have been most difficult for our country and our state. First, we’ve had to suffer through a partial government shutdown; the longest in history. Then, we had to mourn the loss of two who died at the hands of the silent killer known as carbon monoxide here in Columbia.

The government shutdown was rather concerning for us as social workers because the American people were used as hostages in a non-negotiable plight to secure billions of dollars for a physical concrete wall to supposedly strengthen border security. While the Democrats and Republicans were standing firm to each of their platforms, Americans were rationing life saving medications. One woman, who was a diabetic, was skipping days in order to preserve her insulin as she didn’t have the money to pay the copay. A husband, who is an air traffic controller by day, had to secure a second job as a Lyft/Uber driver to ensure his mortgage was paid and his family was fed. Finally, after weeks of outrage and the politicians sticking to their game plan, the partial government shutdown ended…but only for three weeks. Will the Democrats stand firm? Will the Republicans? Will the American people become collateral damage? We shall see.

Now on to the crises in our state called “The Displaced Residents of Allen-Benedict Court.” A couple of weeks ago 2 men died at the Columbia Housing Authority’s Allen-Benedict Court. The suspected culprit was carbon monoxide poisoning; but we didn’t know for sure until the toxicology report came back this week and confirmed that the two men did indeed die from the silent killer. Immediately after the two deaths, the fire department swooped in and assessed all apartments and deemed the property unfit due to the high levels of toxins. All 400 residents were immediately removed from their apartments and relocated to hotel rooms all around the city. Because of this mass relocation, The Columbia Housing Authority is issuing Section 8 vouchers to all families who are interested; the National Association of Social Worker-SC Chapter is assisting with the relocation assessments to ensure all families are provided applicable information so they may make informed decisions going forward. Until these vouchers and appropriate housing are secured, the residents and their families will continue to rest their heads wherever there is a safe and secure vacancy.

These are both tragic events, but our support through advocacy can help bring about awareness and action to help support those who are negatively impacted.

In the Event of a Second Shutdown:
Please contact your Senators and ask them to advance legislation that will re-open the federal government.

Sample Wording of Letter to Senators
As a constituent, social worker and member of the National Association of Social Workers, I am writing to ask you to advance legislation that will re-open the federal government without delay.

The effects of the government shutdown are being felt across the county, both by government employees and those who rely on government services.

[Please feel free to add your specific concerns for the clients you serve.]

(from NASW National )
Making the Most of Your NASW Membership

What is the National Association of Social Workers (NASW)? According to the organization, the NASW was founded in 1955 and is the “largest membership organization of social workers in the world.” As an organization the NASW aims “to enhance the professional growth and development of its members, to create and maintain professional standards, and to advance sound social policies.” There are 55 chapters, including our local SC Chapter, that can offer members local and more personalized opportunities which include continuing education, involvement in state-based policy change and advocacy, and professional networking. Currently, South Carolina has between 1,000 and 2,000 members less than half the number of members in our neighboring states. I personally believe this is due to the fact we do not see the benefit of being a member- especially given the cost of annual dues. I want to remind you of the benefits membership offers and how you, as a current member, can get the most of your membership this year.

Membership with the NASW provides you with exclusive member discounts not available to the general public as well as affords you opportunities to advance your career, protect your practice, be an advocate, and connect with peers. How, you may ask? You are given access to the Social Work journal- one dedicated to improving practice and advancing social worker’s knowledge in the field of social work and social welfare by publishing articles that look at current practices, examine social problems, and evaluate research. You may have also noticed you have begun receiving a copy of the Social Work Advocates magazine which is published every two months and serves to communicate “association activities and developments in professional practice and social policy.”

Through socialworkers.org you can access updates on various specialized areas of practice which include LGBT, aging, school social work, and child welfare. You can become credentialed as an ACSW or DCSW, credentials only available to NASW members, which select employers may incentivize through additional pay. A major part of advancing our careers and maintaining licensure is continuing education. NASW offers multiple free and discounted CEUs to members online through the Social Work Online CE Institute. You can even track your licensing renewal requirements using the online CE Tracker tool:

https://naswinstitute.inreachce.com/

Being a Social Worker affords us the opportunity to play an integral role in many of our client’s lives. But this can potentially put us at risk for liability and lawsuits. The NASW helps social workers protect themselves and their practice by providing several legal resources including the Legal Defense Fund. Social Workers are guided by the Code of Ethics and NASW members are given access to free Ethics Consultations to address ethical dilemmas and help answer ethics related questions. You can use this resource by calling 1-800-742-4089, Mondays and Wednesdays 1-4pm EST or Tuesdays and Thursdays 10am-1pm EST. Additionally the NASW provides its members with training and resources on HIPAA as it relates to the practice of social work. To further protect your practice and yourself, NASW Assurance Services provides members not only with affordable liability insurance but automobile and home insurance in addition to other programs and services.
The NASW Code of Ethics calls us to advocate in our Ethical Responsibility to the Broader Society. The NASW helps bring our focus and attention to social justice by identifying the organization’s priorities which are currently: voter’s rights, criminal justice/ juvenile justice, environmental justice, immigration, and economic justice. The NASW website can assist you by identifying your elected officials and candidates to provide you important information and make you a more informed constituent. The website also highlights current bills that affect our profession and our clients. The NASW also has Political Action for Candidate Election (PACE), a committee which endorses and financially contributes to candidates from any party who supports NASW’s policy agenda. Each local chapter has a PACE committee you can be involved with which focuses on state and local races. Advocacy is challenging for some and taking action can be hard to navigate- but the NASW provides us with information and tools to fulfil our obligation to society.

Connecting with other social workers may be one of the greatest benefits of membership. When social workers come together we create waves of positive change for our profession, those we serve, and society as a whole. MyNASW is a members-only online community. You can network and engage in discussions about topics that are important to you and be informed about upcoming webinars and events. There are also NASW national and chapter conferences where you can network and attain continuing education. The NASW-SC Symposium is March 25th-27th, 2019 in Columbia, SC and registration is open now! The easiest way to take advantage of all the NASW has to offer is to: 1. Browse socialworkers.org for all it has to offer and 2. Identify and become an active member in your unit.

The NASW SC Chapter has six units which divide up the 46 counties in South Carolina- Western, Northern, Central, Pee Dee, Southern, and Catawba. Your unit has representatives to help meet your needs and assist you with navigating all the NASW has to offer. Many of the chapters hold regular meetings to allow the opportunity for fellowship, networking, and idea sharing. The units also work to provide you with continuing education. I strongly encourage you to reach out to your unit representative to let them know what you would like to see for your area. Become more active in your unit this year and take advantage of all that your NASW Membership has to offer you!
Ashley Thomas is a social worker and the founder of The Hive Community Circle for sexual assault and intimate partner violence survivors. The Hive is a support network comprised of families, peers, and professionals who are committed to preventing and supporting all survivors of sexual assault and intimate partner violence. When Thomas earned her B.A. in Psychology from Columbia College, she knew she wanted to work with underserved children, youth, and families. She felt very passionate about education and recognized that children with Adverse Childhood Experiences were faced with greater challenges that needed more assistance than schools.

Thomas also has her own personal survival story from sexual assault. She wanted to create an environment that was non-judgmental and would provide compassion and unconditional acceptance for those affected by sexual assault. She strived to provide community tools and resources to help them move forward in their journey of healing.

What Thomas wants to imprint most on survivors from her own traumatic experience is to love one self and to recognize and understand the abuse was an experience but doesn’t define them. She hopes for survivors to give themselves the freedom to breathe, to smile, and to live unapologetically, not bound by their experience of abuse. Survivors have the right to extend themselves grace and remember there will be good and bad days, healing is fluid. How one chooses to approach their healing will change the impact and outcome.

Thomas noted that there are many barriers preventing women of color from seeking help: a history of oppression, stigma from others, and victimization within the system. African American women experiencing sexual assault are statistically more likely to be a victim of domestic violence. Before The Hive was established, Thomas conducted a needs assessment which was informed by community members, local organizations and the police department to identify the barriers and support needed within the realm of interpersonal violence. It was identified that lower income and communities of color (particularly Black/African Americans) were not only more at risk of experiencing interpersonal violence, but there was also a lack of presence and preventative services being delivered among the communities.

The Hive provides prevention training as young as age 11 and topics include healthy relationships, sexual violence, intimate partner violence, and training clergy leaders how to respond to survivors whom disclose as well as creating sexual misconduct policy. The Hive also provides advocacy to survivors and holds a bi-weekly healing circle, “Queens Gather”, for female identifying survivors 18+.

When asked what the community can do to assist with preventing interpersonal violence, Thomas shared the following three steps. The first step is prevention: starting the dialogue with families about what is consent, how to set boundaries, and what assault looks like. Teaching children about their body parts without shame or embarrassment, respecting one’s body as well as others, defining consent, reinforcing autonomy, and healthy parent child communication assist adults and children build healthy relationships. This will decrease sexual violence.

The second step is intervention: being aware of resources in the community. Having services listed in a nearby community activity center, church, school, or other location with consistent updates on topics and trends can be useful. These four steps are important when responding to a survivor:

One: Listen
Two: Share Compassion
Three: Believe the survivor
Four: Ask them how you can offer support?

The final step is fostering safe communities. Reducing violence begins with safety, accountability, respect, and creating an environment free of judgement.

For the future of The Hive, Thomas would like to expand the organization’s capacity via staffing, programming, and reaching other communities.

To learn more about The Hive you can visit their website at www.thehivecc.org
Helping Today to Provide Hope for Tomorrow

Specializing in helping people effectively manage and cope with mental health and substance abuse issues, we provide quality behavioral health treatment for adolescents, adults and senior adults in South Carolina and the Lowcountry.

OUR PROGRAMS

ACUTE INPATIENT TREATMENT
- Adult Crisis Stabilization Program
- Adult General Psychiatric Program
- Alcohol and Substance Abuse/Medical Detoxification Program
- Adolescent Program

OUTPATIENT TREATMENT
- Psychiatric Partial Hospitalization Program
- Psychiatric Intensive Outpatient Program
- Substance Abuse C.A.R.E. Program

SPECIALTY TREATMENT
- Patriot Support Service Center offering treatment for military personnel

Palmetto Lowcountry Behavioral Health

2777 Speissegger Drive · Charleston, SC 29405
843-747-5830 or toll-free 877-947-3223
palmettobehavioralhealth.com

Treatment is covered by most insurance plans including Medicare and TRICARE®.
At this time, South Carolina Medicaid can be accepted only for patients under 21 years old.

TRICARE® is a registered trademark of the Department of Defense, Defense Health Agency. All rights reserved. Physicians are on the medical staff of Palmetto Lowcountry Behavioral Health, but, with limited exceptions, are independent practitioners who are not employees or agents of Palmetto Lowcountry Behavioral Health. The facility shall not be liable for actions or treatments provided by physicians. Model representations of real patients are shown. Actual patients cannot be disclosed due to HIPPA regulations. For language assistance, disability accommodations and the non-discriminatory notice visit our website.
Meet Our Symposium Plenary Speakers

US Representative James Clyburn

A native of Sumter, SC, Representative Clyburn has served the 6th congressional district since 1993 and returns this year as Majority Whip in the US House of Representatives. A noted and well-respected civil rights leader throughout his life, he has championed rural and economic development throughout his career. He’s also been a strong advocate for healthcare and for combating poverty and racial disparities.

William K. Hallman

A professor and Chair of the Department of Human Ecology and is a member of the graduate faculty of the Department of Nutritional Sciences, and of the Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy at Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey. Dr. Hallman’s research examines public perceptions of controversial issues concerning food, health, and the environment.

Anton Gunn

For more than 20 years, Anton has been a leadership advisor to some of the biggest brands in the United States of America, including the President of the United States. He has worked with hundreds of leaders and organizations in the public, private and nonprofit sector. He is the Founder of 937 Strategy Group, a consulting practice that provides services to leaders and healthcare organizations who want to build a world-class leadership culture that transforms employee engagement and service outcomes.

SC Faith-Based Agencies Block LGBT Adoptions

By Samantha Winkelman
https://www.thedailybeast.com/trump-administration-helps-faith-based-agencies-block-lgbt-adoption

Last year, two states passed bills targeting same-sex couples who wish to adopt or foster children. As it turns out, that was only the start of a renewed attack on LGBT adoption. On Wednesday, the Trump administration gave those anti-LGBT efforts a boost by granting a request from the governor of South Carolina to allow federally-funded child welfare agencies to turn parents away based on religious beliefs.

As CNN reported, South Carolina Gov. Henry McMaster had asked the Department of Health and Human Services in February of last year to exempt the state’s faith-based child welfare agencies from Obama-era non-discrimination regulations protecting LGBT and other couples.

Although McMaster’s February 2018 letter made no direct mention of sexual orientation or same-sex couples, he specifically referenced a subsection of the Code of Federal Regulations which requires child welfare agencies that receive federal funding to “treat as valid the marriages of same-sex couples,” in accordance with the 2015 Obergefell v. Hodges Supreme Court decision.

That particular subsection, McMaster claimed, forced faith-based child welfare agencies like Miracle Hill in Greenville to “abandon their religious beliefs or forgo the available public licensure and funding.”

Dozens of civil rights organizations wrote a letter to HHS regarding the McMaster request, saying that granting an exemption would be, in effect, “taxpayer-funded discrimination.”
In response on Wednesday, HHS issued a first-of-its-kind exemption for the state.

LGBT and other civil rights advocates say it’s a continuation of what we’ve already seen in states like Kansas and Oklahoma, which both passed laws last year carving out room for faith-based child welfare agencies to cite religious beliefs in placement decisions.

“There is absolutely a direct line because there’s a chronology here,” David L. Barkey, national religious freedom counsel for the Anti-Defamation League, told The Daily Beast. “First this happened on the state level, and then Miracle Hill moved forward with the application to HHS.”

Because the exemption is broad, advocates are concerned it may be used to discriminate not just against LGBT parents but also against Jewish parents and other families. Rachel Laser, president of Americans United for Separation of Church and State, said that both the recent state-level adoption bills and the new HHS exemption are examples of “an emboldened religious right which now has a partnership with the Trump-Pence administration.”

“I think it’s important to see the whole here,” said Laser.

In 2018, as The Daily Beast previously reported, the Human Rights Campaign warned that anti-LGBT groups were moving away from more sweeping anti-LGBT legislation toward more “sector-specific” bills targeting areas like education, adoption, and wedding services.

That strategy paid off in Kansas and Oklahoma that same year—although now, according to the Associated Press, Kansas’s new Democratic governor Laura Kelly may find a way to block her state’s anti-LGBT adoption law.

At present, according to the Movement Advancement Project, 10 states including South Carolina allow child welfare agencies to turn away LGBT prospective parents based on their religious beliefs.

Legal challenges around this issue remain underway. LGBT advocacy group Lambda Legal, for example, sued HHS last year on behalf of a lesbian couple who say that the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops denied their application to be foster parents because they did not “mirror the Holy Family.”

Lambda Legal condemned the HHS waiver for South Carolina on Wednesday, saying that the waiver effectively punishes children in the foster care system who need homes.

“Organizations which receive taxpayer funding and provide government functions, like foster care services, are required to comply with constitutional protections which protect Americans from discrimination,” Currey Cook, director of Lambda Legal’s Youth in Out-Of-Home Care Project, said in a statement. “There should not be a special pass around those rules. This is unacceptable and alarming.”

Although the waiver “is specific to South Carolina,” as Cook noted in his statement, the Trump administration’s involvement could have “enormous implications.”

Advocates warn that anti-LGBT groups ultimately want to secure exemptions for all taxpayer-funded faith-based child welfare agencies in the U.S.

Last July, as NBC News reported, House Republicans put forward an amendment from Alabama Representative Robert Aderholt that would bar both federal and state governments from taking “adverse action” against child welfare agencies that operate in accordance with their “sincerely held religious beliefs or moral convictions.”

Ultimately, in September 2018, the “Aderholt amendment” failed in the Senate when it was stripped from a funding bill. But for civil rights advocates, the memory of the Aderholt amendment is still fresh—a reminder of the ultimate goal behind waivers like the one HHS granted to South Carolina this week.

Julie Kruse, director of federal policy for the Family Equality Council, told The Daily Beast, “It really shows where the folks who are behind these efforts are trying to go, and it really shows that the harm is ultimately directed at children.”

Reprinted with permission from The Daily Beast
The PACE online fundraising tool has been officially launched! It can be found at:

http://socialworkers.org/pace/default.asp

There’s also a link to it from www.socialworkers.org. Please remember that all online contributions will be shared with the chapters, just like contributions we receive through membership renewals. So it’s in our interest to promote the new online fundraising capability.

We love your stories!

NASW SC encourages everyone to contribute noteworthy information for Chapter Update. All material should be typed and emailed to the Chapter Office. Chapter Update is published by the National Association of Social Workers South Carolina Chapter.

For information about advertising in the newsletter or renting membership labels, contact the chapter office at (803) 256-8406. NASW reserves the right to accept, reject or edit advertisements and notices of events based on publication schedule, space limitations and appropriateness. The views expressed in Chapter Update do not necessarily represent positions of NASW. Because of the commitment of NASW to nondiscriminatory personnel practices, advertisers in NASW publications, by action of the NASW Board of Directors, must affirm that they are equal opportunity employers. For violations of professional ethics or personnel practices, a person may file a complaint with the NASW SC Chapter Committee on Inquiry. For information, write the Chapter Office at 2537 Gervais Street, Columbia SC 29204 or call 803-256-8406. For information regarding: Social work licensure, call or write the Board of Social Work Examiners, PO Box 11329, Columbia, SC 29211-1329, 803-896-4665, www.llr.state.sc.us