

NASW-PA 2009–2010 Legislative Agenda

SOCIAL WORK PROFESSIONALS

- ▶ Improve positive outcomes for vulnerable populations and address professional standards by creating a licensing category for bachelor level direct service providers.
- ▶ Build support to enact legislation clarifying LCSW have the ability to diagnose emotional disorders.
- ▶ Create the school social worker designation in the school code as outlined by current Department of Education regulations providing a clear understanding of who can provide social work services and mental health services.
- ▶ Advocate for an increased investment in social services by supporting legislative changes to ensure adequate reimbursement rates for services provided in order to positively impact the quality of services.
- ▶ Include licensed social workers in the governor's Access to Basic Care of licensed health care providers who can practice to the fullest extent of their education and training.
- ▶ Advocate for equal pay for equal work especially in the treatment of addiction.
- ▶ Support legislation granting loan forgiveness for social workers targeted at mental health/mental retardation staff members, drug and alcohol addiction counselors and child welfare workers.
- ▶ Create and introduce a practice act defining the role of licensed social workers and licensed clinical social workers.

SOCIAL POLICY

- ▶ Work towards enlarging health care coverage to uninsured and underinsured people until universal health and mental health coverage are achieved.
- ▶ Increase community-based funding for long-term care for older adults, those with developmental disabilities, mentally ill, and chronic illness allowing these populations to have independence and self-determination.
- ▶ Support increased funding for community based mental health services for unmet populations, specifically for veterans and the elderly.
- ▶ Work to promote the inclusion of any group or individual by preventing discrimination and oppression.
- ▶ Actively participate in the Pennsylvania Welfare Coalition to move forward a comprehensive welfare reform agenda.
- ▶ Support efforts to expand mental health parity to ensure health insurance providers offer coverage for mental health and behavioral health services and make sure they are covered to the level of other medical services.
- ▶ Eliminate the requirement for more than one pre-authorization for mental health services.
- ▶ Protect children and strengthen families by being a member of the Protect Our Children Committee and supporting legislation championed by the committee.
- ▶ Advocate for a level playing field for students in completing high school, higher education, and moving to the work force to ensure a smooth transition into adulthood.
- ▶ Support coalition efforts to protect adjudicated youth against self-incrimination during the course of mental health screening, assessment, evaluation or treatment.
- ▶ Support the mental health of children during and after divorce by advocating for co-parenting planning and education.
- ▶ Protecting populations requiring therapy, counseling or other behavioral health services by ensuring those providing the treatment have adequate professional licensure and educational degrees.

FAST FACTS

The National Association of Social Workers, Pennsylvania Chapter (NASW-PA) is a chapter of the National Association of Social Workers, the largest association for professional social workers serving over 150,000 members. NASW-PA serves over 6,100 members and works to enhance the professional growth and development of social workers, to create and maintain professional social work standards, and to advance sound social policies.

Social work is the professional activity of helping individuals, groups, or communities enhance or restore their capacity for social functioning and creating societal conditions favorable to this goal. Social workers provide services in a number of different settings. Professional social workers hold bachelor's, master's, or doctoral degrees in Social Work.

Social workers are the largest provider of mental health services. In Pennsylvania, according to the Pennsylvania Department of State, there are over 6,400 LSWs and more than 3,400 LCSWs compared to approximately 5,500 psychologists. Social workers are a necessary component of the mental health service provision continuum.