

CONNECTIONS

January—March 2023



Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.

Helen Keller

President's Column	2-3	CT Chapter Director Awarded 2022 Top Lobbyist!	13-14
Executive Director's Column	4-5	Upcoming February Webinars	15
2023 Legislative Agenda	6-7	Chapter to Focus on Workforce issues	16-17
Advocacy Fund Drive	8	Latino/a Social Work Network Mentoring Program	19-20
Changes to Elder Mandatory Reporting Law	9	Bills, Bills, Bills	21-22
Upcoming Chapter Election	10	Time to fix the CT Income Tax on Retirees	22
Monthly Peer Ethics Support Group	11	Licensure Exam Prep Classes 2023	24



Single Parenting and Mental Health (The Forgotten Population)

Cheryl Wilson, LCSW, MBA
President, Connecticut Chapter

Single parenting and mental health are connected for more than one reason. To this day, it still surprises me how many single parents are currently raising children alone in the United States.

The path into single motherhood looks different for different people but regardless of the reason we need to acknowledge that parenting alone is physically and emotionally demanding. And for many single moms, this can take a toll on their mental health. According to the research, single mothers are more likely to have mental health challenges as opposed to their married counterparts. Depression, anxiety, and PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) are some of the few areas of concern for single moms. Oftentimes single moms will self-medicate with alcohol and drugs in order to cope with daily life challenges.

Sleep Deprivation

One of the important areas of concern is sleep deprivation. Inadequate sleep is the foundation of deteriorating mental health for single mothers. Having to maintain the household with cooking and cleaning and laundry and in some cases, single moms are working night shifts or might be

studying and taking classes in addition to working and raising children, and all of these responsibilities undermine a parent's chance of a good night's rest. We also know that sleep is the foundation that helps you to cope with other challenges. If sleep deprivation exists, it makes that foundation fragile and promotes poor mental health.

Self-Care

Lack of self-care is another area of concern; single moms are so busy with their children, they don't get to spend enough time on themselves. Single moms are challenged with being able to find time for themselves and it is often that single moms will put themselves last because they have other responsibilities before them.

Financial Insecurity

Financial insecurity is another area of concern; it is also at the forefront of a single mom's experience. Single motherhood is prevalent, especially in the aftermath of a divorce or the loss of a partner. Single moms often become economically vulnerable. The other issue of concern for single moms is the inability to sustain a livable wage for

Parenting, continued

themselves and their children. Unfortunately, in America, homeless shelters are a refuge for single-mom families and are overloaded. It is no surprise that poverty and economic hardship are linked to anxiety and depression.

Relational Conflict with Ex-Partner

Relational conflict with the ex-husband/boyfriend or the partner can pose its own challenges as well. Unhealthy conflict, manipulation, child support issues, and violating boundaries are among the many things that single moms experience while they are raising their children.

Whether a woman becomes a single mom by choice or by circumstance, she will more than likely experience a loss of her friendship/support network, and there will be moments of uneasiness as well as the inability to connect with her new reality. There is also a high possibility of a lack of support from family and this can lead to feelings of alienation and hopelessness.

Children with Special Needs

Typically, single moms who find themselves with a child or children with special needs take on the brunt of managing these experiences with their children, and end up performing the bulk of the responsibility of the kids' care. Dealing with children with special needs as single parents also aids in diminishing mental health.

History of Abuse

The history of abuse also plays an important role in women who end up in single-mom roles. Oftentimes domestic violence is the primary reason that a woman would end up as a single mom. When a woman decides to leave an abusive marriage or relationship, that is a sign of bravery but also there is psychological trauma that lingers and can be easily triggered at any point during a single mom's life. These unresolved traumatic experiences can often express symptoms of PTSD, depression, and other mental health conditions.

Stigma

Lastly, stigma and judgment are also an area of concern. Stereotypes of single motherhood are prevalent and always will be a thing. A lot of times these judgments can come from the outside world, the small and larger community that the mom and children are a part of. It can come from the child's teacher, another parent, a coworker, and other important relationships that exist. I think it's important for us to acknowledge and recognize the efforts that single moms make every day and the sacrifices they continue to bear. The daily assault of negative assumptions about their parenting skills and character is demoralizing and it's unfair. I think it's time for us to have a discussion about single moms in this country because they are invaluable to the fabric of American Society, and we need to treat them as such.



Workforce Issues to be Addressed (?) in 2023 Legislature



Steve Wanczyk-Karp, LMSW
Executive Director
Connecticut Chapter

In December I watched a press conference from the CT Education Association regarding the very high rate of teachers who are considering leaving the teaching field. This got me to thinking, what are our members planning as to career paths? I am hearing workforce issues will be given special attention at the Legislature. Based on this, I thought it best to survey our members. We issued a survey this past December and thank our 321 members who completed it.

I have seen estimates that up to 30% of social workers are thinking about leaving the field as an outcome of Covid-19. The problem with these reports is there has not been any citation as to how the percentage was attained. Still, I thought our survey would have double digit percentages of members being burned out and considering career changes. The good news is that overall, the percentages reporting discouragement was far less than I expected. In fact, only .31% indicated planning to leave the field within the coming two years.

We asked members how many years they were in practice that ranged from 13% being in the field below five years to 28% over 30 years. Most respondents were LCSWs at 74% and LMSWs at 17%. Respondents work sector was led by private sector at 48%; non-profit sector at 30% and 22% in the public sector. From my recall of past surveys, the

public sector percentage has remained consistent, however the non-profit sector had been higher and private sector lower. This no doubt speaks to a move toward private practice.

One of the questions I particularly wanted to get at was the impact of the pandemic on our members' stress levels. The percentages were somewhat surprising to me as I thought it would be higher than reported. 57% of respondents reported increased stress, surely not a low figure but I was expecting closer to 70%. We had 36% of members responding no change and 7% with lower stress than pre-pandemic days. What most caught my attention was not the percentages, rather the numerous comments. Most comments dealt with the stressors facing clients. I was expecting (and seeking) a more personal response as to how the pandemic affected us as social workers. This speaks to how our profession, even amid a pandemic, puts client concerns front and center.

When questioned if one had left an agency for private practice since the pandemic began, 14% said yes, 64% no and 23% responded not applicable (assuming they are already in private practice). A follow-up question as to whether one was considering leaving agency practice for private practice showed nearly 29% are considering such a move, 33% are not and 39% marked it not applicable. Given that agencies are reporting

Workforce, continued

having difficulty filling positions, the finding that almost three in ten agency based social workers are thinking about leaving for a private practice setting is a significant finding.

We asked if our members felt they had sufficient support for their practice. Here again, I found the percentages to be better than expected, with 55% saying yes, they had practice support. Just over 21% responded no on this question, and 24% marked it non-applicable. However, there was a comment section with 68 responses that gave greater definition to the percentages. A lack of supervision was frequently cited. Hassles with insurance companies with nowhere to turn for help was the most common complaint. Insufficient staffing, lack of resources, waiting lists for having clients seen and poor salaries were frequently mentioned. One member answered that it would be nice if they could just afford their apartment.

The survey asked LCSWs if they could handle added LMSW supervision as the Lamont Administration is seeking to increase the number of MSWs graduating CT schools. 49% said they could handle added supervision tasks, 27% said no they would not be able to, and 24% were unsure. As a follow-up we asked what the LCSW would want in return for added LCSW supervision responsibilities? A salary increase was listed by 37%, release time from current workload came in at 4%, seeking both release time and salary adjustment was selected by 46% and 14% indicated no change would be sought.

As a final non-demographic question, we asked what actions would our members like to see the 2023 legislature take to support the social work workforce. These answers largely depend on the setting the member is in, for example private practitioners may have different needs than an agency based social worker. Still, the findings are helpful and consistent with the Chapter's recommendations to policy makers (see

recommendations in this newsletter). Members were asked to check all that they wanted to see happen. The largest response was making the license renewal biennial sought by 85% of respondent and lowering the license fees supported by 76%. Insurance reimbursement rates being increased was checked by 62%, salary increase marked by 50%, and creation of an ombudsman office to assist independent practitioners deal with insurers was sought by 45%. Paid mental health days was requested by 42% (in the comments section some members said this was already available) and 33% wanted employer paid licensing fees.

The survey results will be used to bolster NASW/CT's campaign to adopt improved workplace supports for social workers. Some of our recommendations, such as an Ombudsman, the Legislature can create. Other recommendations, such as clinical career paths with salaries comparable to managers, and longevity bonuses are recommendations that employers would need to adopt, but they are recommendations that policy makers can advocate for amongst possible solutions toward supporting and maintaining the current social work workforce.

I encourage members to keep up a dialogue with the Chapter as to the workforce issues you are facing and the solutions you seek. Social workers are the backbone of mental health and social service delivery in our state, and we in turn have the right to expect our policy makers will provide us with the support necessary for our profession to carry on its critically important work.

The survey has limitations of only reaching NASW members and practice settings may have affected responses. A lack of previous years' data does not allow us to determine potential trends. To read the survey go to: https://www.surveymonkey.com/results/SM-pXo2wDlkh5KaLQ8eh7cpig_3D_3D/

2023 Legislative Agenda

Advancing Racial, Economic, Environmental, and Social Justice

NASW/CT supports legislation that specifically promotes elimination of inequities and disparities relating to race, class, gender, ethnicity, and disability. We seek actions that promote anti-racist policies and culturally responsive practices in all aspects of community life, including but not limited to social services, health care, mental health and addiction services, child care, education, affordable housing, employment, transportation, and equitable access to capital and justice; that address the feminization of poverty through the lens of intersectionality; and that address the inequitable impact of Covid-19.

NASW/CT supports legislation that bans child marriage; expands and strengthens current paid sick days law and which specifically includes allowing mental health days as an approved reason; and zoning reforms which include diverse housing and transportation options.

Protecting Safety Net Services

NASW/CT holds the position that every Connecticut resident and family should be able to meet their basic human needs. We oppose cuts to safety net programs that serve Connecticut's most vulnerable populations and support programs that prevent individuals from falling into poverty, including temporary assistance for unbearable high energy costs.

NASW/CT promotes actions that advance Medicaid expansion within the state, including dental care; and that protect and provide families with economic stability regarding the benefits cliff.

NASW/CT calls for raising the lifetime limit of Connecticut's Temporary Family Assistance to 60 months; and establishing a grant program to fund social workers in emergency shelters.

Expanding Access to Comprehensive Medical and Behavioral Health Care

NASW/CT believes that every Connecticut resident has the right to accessible, comprehensive health care. Specifically, we support public options for health coverage, expansion of Medicaid/HUSKY eligibility to 201% of the federal poverty level, and Medicaid coverage for undocumented immigrants.

NASW/CT supports encouragement of integrated health care that provides a continuum of care and applies "no wrong door" practices and procedures; legislation that addresses the tsunami of behavioral health needs brought on by Covid-19, focusing on the needs of all; continued expansion of school-based mental health clinics and employment of school social workers, school psychologists and school counselors in every school; harm reduction legislation that allows for the distribution of fentanyl test strips to the public to test for the presence of fentanyl; legislation that limits retroactive denials of health insurance claims for behavioral health services; and requiring the Connecticut Insurance Department to take affordability into consideration when reviewing and approving health insurance rates proposals.

NASW/CT calls for telehealth provider services made permanent; and removal of the sunseting date of June 30, 2024 for out of state licensed social workers to treat existing clients temporarily in Connecticut without state licensure and encompassing all licensed behavioral clinicians.

Policing, Justice, and Prison Reform

NASW/CT supports legislation that reduces recidivism rates by reallocating funds from incarceration to decarceration by focusing on more culturally responsive community-based programs to address substance misuse, domestic violence, crisis interventions, and mental health care.

NASW/CT supports legislation that specifically promotes youth justice reform: raises the age of

Agenda, continued

child arrest from 10 to 12 years old; automatically erases youth records at age 18; bans the use of chemical agents on youth; and establishes differential response programs for children under the age of 12.

NASW/CT supports legislation that eliminates money bail and promotes community-based sentencing for specific offenses by low-risk primary caregivers.

NASW/CT calls for the implementation and enforcement of 1) the Protect Act, including appointment of the full Correction Advisory Committee and independent ombuds position; and 2) the statutory plan addressing the provision of health care services, including, but not limited to, mental health care, substance use disorder and dental care services, to individuals incarcerated in Connecticut correctional facilities.

Voting and Election Reform

NASW/CT supports encouragement of voting by all eligible residents and calls for implementation of early voting that enables the greatest access for all.

NASW/CT encourages the legislature to consider retention of voting rights upon an individual's incarceration.

Tax Reform

NASW/CT supports tax reform that promotes economic justice. We support increased income taxes on the wealthy, expansion of the estate and gift tax, and establishment of a surcharge on investment income and a sunset on corporate tax breaks.

To address the growing inequity, we support a permanent state Child Tax Credit to supplement, and supplant, the temporary relief of the federal and state credits.

Protecting and Strengthening the Profession

NASW/CT supports legislation that allows social workers to practice at their highest level of scope of practice. We support measures to assure workplace safety, inclusive of physical and emotional trauma and personal protective equipment. We recommend concrete steps to support the current workforce of social workers in all areas of practice. We call for reasonable staffing ratios in direct practice settings such as, but not limited to schools, correctional facilities, child welfare, health care facilities and mental health clinics. We promote inclusion of social workers on relevant statutory advisory committees, task forces, commissions, and working groups, including those related to policy development.

NASW/CT supports a 50% reduction in the social work licensure fees given that Connecticut has the highest annualized licensure fees of any jurisdiction.

NASW/CT calls for increased social work salaries and retention bonuses.

NASW/CT supports a suspension of the entry-level LMSW licensure exam until an equitable exam is developed.

NASW/CT promotes the inclusion of social workers as professionals in the capacity of community organization, social policy, and administration. We support the expansion of social work professional positions to include communication organization and policy work at the LMSW level. Upon completion of required supervised hours of practice, we recommend advanced Macro licensure to enhance the specialization in these areas of social work. We recommend including an expansion of positions within the Department of Administrative Services and social service agencies for those LMSW's with a specialization in community organization and social action.

The 2023 Advocacy Fund Drive

Out of crisis comes opportunity.
This is Social Work's Time!

Our Legislative Agenda Includes:

Social Justice Issues

- Protecting the safety net for Connecticut's most vulnerable citizens;
- Addressing access to comprehensive health and behavioral health;
- Expanding mental health services in schools;
- Furthering criminal justice reforms;
- Advancing racial, economic, and environmental justice;
- Adding Medicaid coverage for undocumented immigrants of all ages;
- Increasing funding for community non-profit providers;
- Banning child marriage;
- Promoting progressive revenue sources to pay for human services.
- Passing rules for early voting.

Social Work Legislation

- Reducing annual licensing fees and making the license biennial;
- Increasing compensation by employers and insurers;
- Passing paid mental health days as sick days eligible;
- Regulating "claw backs" by insurers to one year limit;
- Creating an Ombudsman Office for behavioral health providers;
- Making the telehealth statute permanent;
- Acting to support the current social work workforce;
- **Defeating any bills that infringe on social work practice;**

All donations of \$35 or greater received by March 15, 2023 will be entered in a drawing for \$100 American Express Gift Cards.

YES I AM BUILDING SOCIAL WORK POLITICAL POWER!

\$500 _____ \$250 _____ \$100 _____ \$50 _____
\$35 _____ \$25 _____ \$10 _____ Other _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Name on Credit Card _____

Credit Card Type: _____ Card No. _____

Expiration Date: _____ 3 Digit Number on Back of Card: _____

Send Checks To: NASW/CT Advocacy Fund, 2139 Silas Deane Hwy. Ste. 205,
Rocky Hill, CT 06067 or donate online www.naswct.org

Contributions are an investment in your profession but regrettably not tax deductible.

Changes to Elder Maltreatment Reporting Law

On July 1, 2022, Public Act No. 22-145 went into effect. This law reduces the timeframe by when mandated professionals must report suspected elder maltreatment. The law requires that if such individuals have reasonable cause to suspect or believe that any elderly person has been abused, neglected, exploited, or abandoned, or is in a condition that is the result of such maltreatment, or needs protective services, must report those concerns to the PSE Program within **24 hours**. This is a change from the previous timeframe of 72 hours. This law also changes the penalty for failure to report, by requiring a mandated reporter to retake the elder abuse training upon their first offense. Any mandatory reporter who subsequently fails to make such report within the prescribed time period shall be fined not more than five

hundred dollars and shall retake the mandatory training. **In addition, Public Act No. 22-58 requires that a mandatory reporter complete the educational training program developed by the Department, or an alternate program approved by the Department, not later than June 30, 2023, or not later than ninety days after becoming a mandatory reporter.** Social workers are amongst the professionals who are mandated reporters.

To take the mandatory training video go to https://portaldir.ct.gov/dss/learncenter/ElderAbuse/Elder%20Abuse%20-%20Identification%20and%20Reporting%20Mandatory/story_html5.html

Celebrating Our Social Worker Legislators



We are pleased to report that there are now 7 elected social workers in the CT Legislature! This is more than exists in the entire U. S. Congress and more than most (if not all) other state legislatures.

House Members

Jillian Gilchrest – Co-Chair Human Services
Anne Hughes – Chair Progressive Caucus
Toni Walker – Co-Chair Appropriations
Cristin McCarthy Vahey – Co-Chair Public Health

Senate Members

Rick Lopes – Co-Chair Environment
Ceci Maher – Co-Chair Children
Lisa Seminara – Ranking Senate member Human Services, Aging, Children

Upcoming Chapter Election

Have you thought about taking on a leadership role in your chapter?

Or perhaps you know someone who would make a terrific chapter leader?

If so, now is the time to let us know!

Being an elected leader on the Board of Directors of the NASW/CT Chapter provides you with the opportunity to have a direct say in the chapter's programs, policies, use of resources, and future directions. It's also a terrific way to meet colleagues from throughout the state and to gain a feel for the pulse of social work practice in Connecticut. You will be providing the Association with your expertise and in turn making networking connections that will help in your own career advancement. Truly it is a win, win situation that's enjoyable too!

In developing the ballot, the chapter seeks to successfully meet the chapter's diversity plan, geographic representation, and representation from diverse fields of practice. All nominees are given full consideration and while we may not be able to offer all nominees a place on the ballot these individuals are often considered for other leadership appointments within the Chapter.

NASW/CT is seeking members to serve on the Board of Directors as **Second Vice President for Budget & Finance, BSW & MSW student representative, and At-Large Members**. Terms of office for the Board are for three years, except for students who serve one year.

The Board of Directors meets virtually on alternating months on the second Tuesdays of the month from 6 – 8 PM.

If you are interested in being considered for a chapter leadership position, would like to know more about available elected opportunities or would like to recommend a colleague please contact Steve Wanczyk-Karp at the Chapter Office – 860-212-4054 or skarp.naswct@socialworkers.org

Monthly Peer Ethics Support Group



NASW/CT Ethics Committee is proud to announce the first Virtual Monthly Peer Ethics Support Group! This group is free and open to all NASW Members. The purpose of this group is to provide social workers professional, educational, and peer support related to ethical challenges and dilemmas. The first group will occur on January 26, 2023, and all spots are filled! Interested in registering for February? See below for details!

Who can join the Peer Support Group?

-NASW Members from any chapter can join the support group. Social workers who work in a variety of practice settings are welcome to attend!

When does group take place?

-Group will occur the 4th Thursday of each month from 6:30pm-7:30pm (EST) starting January 26, 2023.

How do I sign up?

-An email can be sent to Yvette Tyndale, Ethics Committee Chair at

yvette.tyndale@outlook.com to register. 10 spaces will be available each month.

Is the group open or closed?

-This is an open group. New members are welcome each month!

For additional questions or information, contact Yvette Tyndale at yvette.tyndale@outlook.com.

The next meeting will be on February 23rd.

APPLY TODAY



2023

February 24 & 25

Friday (8:30 - 4pm)
 Saturday (8:30 - 3pm)
 The Hartford Club
 Hartford, CT

**Registration Opens
 December 5th**

\$50 UConn SW Students
 \$99 Students
 \$199 Others*
 *Attendees eligible to earn
 12 CECs

Schools who wish to register
 students can email:
 ssw.ce@uconn.edu

For travel information and more, go to
politicalinstitute.uconn.edu

For questions, email
politicalinstitute@uconn.edu

**Register early!
 Space is limited!**



Politics affects everything we do as social workers and citizens. Yet, it can also feel overwhelming and a game for insiders only. The Campaign School for Social Workers is for anyone who wants to be more politically active as a volunteer, advocate and/or candidate to amplify their impact. You will learn from political social workers and national experts why you belong in politics. The time is now to take your seat at the table. Therefore...

Consider yourself asked!

DAY ONE TOPICS INCLUDE:

- Political Campaign Basics
- Fundraising
- Digital & Mail Communications
- Leadership

DAY TWO TOPICS INCLUDE:

- What it's like to run and serve
- Social Work & Democracy
- Difficult Conversations
- Supporting Diverse Power & Representation
- Ethics



Easily register by
 scanning here!
 (or visit:
s.uconn/cs2023)

UConn | SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

NANCY A. HUMPHREYS INSTITUTE FOR
 POLITICAL SOCIAL WORK

Steve Wanczyk-Karp Named Top Lobbyist 2022!

Nominated by NASW member Kathleen Callahan, Chapter Executive Director Steve Wanczyk-Karp was selected one of the country's Top 100 Lobbyists of 2022 by the National Institute for Lobbying & Ethics (NILE)!

The National Institute for Lobbying & Ethics (NILE) announces its 2022 Top Lobbyists, Grassroots, & PAC Professionals. After a seven-week nomination process that saw overwhelming submissions, 100 individuals were chosen from across the nation. Our 2022 designees represent associations, non-profits, small firms, large firms, and corporations. Everyone chosen showed significant 2022 success, took an innovative approach to their field, and demonstrated commitment to giving back to their community, as well as adherence to the highest ethical standards.

Kathleen's nomination submission included this summary:

Stephen Wanczyk-Karp, the Executive Director of the National Association of Social Workers, Connecticut Chapter (NASW/CT), received the high honor of being named one of the National Institute for Lobbying & Ethics 2022 Top 100 Lobbyists!

Wanczyk-Karp led the chapter through the 2022 legislative session, the most productive for advancement of social work in at least 30 years. It was, in many ways, the Year of the Social Worker.

Over the years, he has established and nurtured working relationships with many statewide cross-discipline coalitions, focused on advancing racial, economic, environmental, and social justice; protecting safety net services; expanding access to comprehensive medical and behavioral health care; and reform in policing, prison, voting, and taxation. Wanczyk-Karp mobilized chapter members and activated coalition networks to lobby in support or opposition to various provisions and bills aligned with our legislative agenda goals.

And without fail, Wanczyk-Karp continued to work tirelessly to protect and strengthen the profession of Social Work. With his decades of experience, relationships, and networks, he recognized immediately that the 2022 legislative session provided a unique opportunity for our profession. As racial, economic, environmental, and social justice inequities and disparities have grown, the internet and social media have provided the platform for immediate sharing of examples happening in real time. It was Covid-19, though, that elevated the essential nature – and the many roles – of social workers.

Wanczyk-Karp's innovation in 2022 may go down as legendary in our field. He had the respect and cooperation of the recently established legislative Social Worker Caucus, with more social workers in our general assembly than most, if not all, other states. He trusted the Education and Legislative Action Network's members to concentrate on the social issue goals of our legislative agenda while he focused on the profession. Some highlights:

- He continually lobbied for retention, respect, and benefits for those with experience in addition to full-on recruitment efforts, when need overwhelmed capacity. In a time where demand for services could lead to a desire for expansion of services that will hurt the clients and the profession in the long-term, Wanczyk-Karp displayed restraint and intentional concern for impact on all.
- He crafted and delivered *Recommendations for Addressing Children's Mental Crisis in CT* to key legislators and members of the Children, Public Health, and Labor and Public Employees legislative committees at the start of the session and used the document as a lobbying tool throughout. This successful model will continue for important bills in 2023.
- He lobbied for the successful passage of a bill that allows trauma-informed LCSWs to conduct mental health assessments of police officers,

Lobbyist, continued

joining psychiatrists and psychologists on the original bill.

- He lobbied for allowing out-of-state social workers who have an existing therapeutic relationship to continue treating their client through telehealth when the person is in Connecticut. While this sunsets on June 30, 2024, Wanczyk-Karp's efforts have already resulted in a bill this session requesting permanence.
- He lobbied for nursing home social work ratios and has also been giving free consultation to a committee on long-term care social work in Virginia about the issue.

Wanczyk-Karp also lobbied successfully at the federal level as well. The 2022 priority bill of NASW National was *Improving Access to Mental Health Act S.870/H.R.2035* and Connecticut was the only state that had both senators as co-sponsors with a majority of our House delegation as co-sponsors.

In addition to his role at NASW/CT, Wanczyk-Karp serves on Advisory Boards for three schools of social work and the Office of Health Care Advocate.

NASW/CT congratulates Steve on this well-deserved honor!



Top 2022
Lobbyist

“

In my 30 plus years of policy work 2022 was by far the most successful in the legislative arena. The pandemic made policy makers realize the importance and value of social workers. My work allowed me to expand the roles of social workers and advance social issues. This is what I most appreciate about my profession, being able to work for both social work practice and social justice.

”



Stephen Wanczyk-Karp

Executive Director, National Association of Social Workers, Connecticut Chapter

Presented by: **Leadership connect**

Upcoming Training Webinars in February

Adverse Childhood Experiences and Trauma Informed Practices

Monday, February 6th, 2023, 2:00pm-3:30pm ET

This workshop is approved for 1.5 continuing education credits

This program will outline trauma informed care and Adverse Childhood Experiences, and address the following questions: how has ACEs research included cumulative/generational/racial trauma?; and how can we create environments that address ACEs and trauma? This workshop will provide steps for social workers to examine safety and belonging, in order to provide trauma informed services for clients and cultivate trauma informed practices within an organization.

[Click here to for more information or to register.](#)

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Working with LGBTQ+ Students and their Families: Navigating Ethical Concerns School Social Work Series: Best Practices, Ethics, Minimizing Liability, and Self-Care

Wednesday, February 15th, 2023, 6:00pm to 7:30pm ET

This workshop is approved for 1.5 continuing education credits

This workshop is designed for school social workers who are interested in learning about how to manage ethical concerns that may arise when working with LGBTQ+ students and their family members, in the context of the NASW Code of Ethics, NYS law, and policies in NYS schools. Ethical concerns may arise when social workers, teachers, and other helping professionals lack certain knowledge, skills, and resources to provide LGBTQ+ students with appropriate support, including gender-affirming care, dealing with discrimination, screening for crisis situations, and creating safe spaces within a school environment.

[Click here for more information or to register.](#)

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Ethical Considerations in School Settings School Social Work Series: Best Practices, Ethics, Minimizing Liability, and Self-Care

Wednesday, February 22nd, 2023, 6:00pm to 7:30pm ET

This workshop is approved for 1.5 continuing education credits

School social workers are in a position that requires them to critically analyze the best approaches to ethical dilemmas, with a responsibility to students, families, and school processes. This training will utilize key NASW and SSWAA Ethical Principles to present general ethical considerations in school settings, with a focus on confidentiality. The presenter will discuss best practices for using ethical frameworks to resolve ethical dilemmas and how to apply these frameworks to school-based case studies. Recommendations for minimizing liability and maximizing ethical practice will be emphasized.

[Click here for more information or to register.](#)

Chapter to Focus on Workforce Issues in 2023 Session

The CT Legislature returns on January 4, 2023 for its “long” session of five months. In 2022 the Legislature had a significant focus on children’s mental health. We are hearing that the 2023 session will have an emphasis on workforce development, especially diversity of the workforce. We anticipate that close attention will be paid to the fields of health, behavioral health, and education, all areas of worker shortages or anticipated shortages. NASW/CT will be offering recommendations to legislators with our focus being on the current social work workforce. The 2022 session saw numerous bills passed to assist individuals in entering the field of social work. We want the 2023 session to assist and support social workers currently in the field.

Not all of our recommendations have legislative solutions. Some require action by employers, however, the legislature can spotlight the needs and bring public pressure to those ideas that are not within their purview. Some of our suggestions are carry-overs from 2022 while others are newly developed asks. All the following are, in the view of NASW/CT, necessary to preserve and retain the state’s social work workforce.

Lower licensure costs: On an annualized basis, CT has by far the highest social work licensing costs of any jurisdiction in the nation. We are also one of only six states that have an annual renewal. When the state ran into fiscal deficits in the past, professional licensing fees were raised. So, with the state projecting a \$2 + billion-dollar surplus, it is only fair that fees be lowered. NASW/CT calls for a 50% reduction in the licensure renewal fees, and renewing every two years as 41 other states do. This will set the fee at approximately the median for all jurisdictions and be in the mainstream of biennial renewal.

Create a Behavioral Health Advocate: The state has a long-standing Office of Healthcare Advocate that has been a model for other states. This office assists consumers in understanding health insurance and

advocates for consumers to assure they receive the health care they deserve and are covered for. We call on the Legislature to use this successful model to create a Behavioral Health Independent Provider Advocate to assist independent providers in addressing problems with health insurers.

Paid Mental Health Days: Two years ago, the legislature passed language allowing for public school students to have up to two non-consecutive excused absences for mental health. Employers who offer paid sick time need to explicitly recognize mental health as an accepted reason for using a sick day. A bill will be introduced to expand the current paid sick days law and NASW/CT will support the bill and advocate for mental health to be clearly written into the definition of sick time. Starting in mid-2022 NASW began offering two mental health days as acceptable use of an employee’s accrued sick time based on this Chapter’s advocacy of this idea.

Stay on Bonuses: Many employers now offer “sign on” bonuses to attract applicants. But how about the current employees? We call on employers to offer “stay-on” bonuses to those social workers who have been employed for five or more years.

Increased Salary and Reimbursement Rates: Social work is largely a women’s field. Women get paid less than men. This needs to change. We call on the legislature to increase funding that is dedicated for increased social work salaries. Private sector salaries should have equity with State of Connecticut social work salaries in the social worker and clinical social worker classifications. Likewise, insurers must increase reimbursement rates. Insurance rates go up each year, with most insurers having gotten double digit increases approved for 2023. It is time reimbursement rates rose too.

Support for Providing LMSW Supervision: Governor Lamont has launched the CT Health Horizons Program that will fund MSW schools of social work (and schools of nursing) to expand faculty and

Workforce Issues, continued

increase graduation numbers. Most of those graduates will become LMSWs who must be under professional clinical supervision until such time that they become an LCSW. The LCSWs who provide the supervision need to have a reduction in workload to conduct the supervision and should be compensated for the added responsibility. Furthermore, the legislature needs to create a tax credit program for the supervisor in recognition of both the significant amount of work and added professional liability of supervising LMSWs.

Build Clinical Career Paths: Employers need to develop career paths for senior clinicians to advance in the organization and be paid at an enhanced salary comparable to management. Experienced clinicians should not feel they must move into management positions to improve their economic status.

Provide Funds and Release Time for Continuing Education: Licensed social workers are required to attain 15 hours of continuing education per license year. Employers should offer reimbursement for completion of continuing education and release

time during work hours to attend relevant continuing education programs.

Increase DPH Staffing in the Licensure Unit: A shortage of DPH staffing in the licensure unit has caused delays in processing of licensure applications. It also has led to unanswered emails and phone calls from social workers seeking guidance on licensing inquiries.

NASW/CT has already begun to advocate for these recommendations with the Lamont administration, the Office of Health Care Strategy, the Office of Workforce Strategy, legislators, and other policy makers. We will continue to advocate for the current workforce, for if nothing changes, we will not have a net gain in practicing licensed social workers. We will instead lose experienced social workers, replace them with newer graduates and miss the opportunity for addressing the shortage of practicing social workers at this critical time of greatest need for an expanded social work workforce.



NASW/CT 36th Annual Statewide Conference

will be held on

June 9, 2023

at the

Wyndham Southbury

Details coming soon!

Call for Proposals 2023

NASW/CT 36th Annual Statewide Conference

June 9, 2023
Wyndham Southbury

Call For Proposals

NASW/CT is now accepting papers for its 36th Annual Statewide Conference to be held on June 9, 2023 at the Wyndham Southbury Hotel in Southbury, CT.

In this unique profession of ours, we strive to help people in all stages and walks of life. The professional social worker needs to acquire knowledge in numerous arenas including prevention, treatment, direct service, private practice, social policy, cultural competency, administration, community organization, and legislation.

The conference committee is seeking proposals that explore topics in varying fields of social work practice and at all levels (micro, mezzo, or macro).

The workshop presentations should appeal to experienced social workers and others in allied fields.

Guidelines for Proposals

The committee recommends that one of the presenters has a BSW or MSW degree or be a social work student but this is not required for a proposal to be accepted.

To make the presentation informative and rewarding for the Conference audience, the committee suggests that presenters plan to address their remarks to professionals with **intermediate** or **advanced** levels of experience and knowledge. Social Workers appreciate specific "how to" comments and relevant examples. Please do not plan to read a power point or only lecture as our participants prefer interactive programs.

Submit a copy of the Proposal which includes a description of your professional experience, the Abstract, and the Brief Summary Abstract by **February 28, 2023**. We request that you include your objectives in the Abstract as well as a few sentences regarding how the presentation incorporates social work values.

NOTE: No Personal Identification should appear in the Abstract to provide anonymity in the decision making process.

The Proposal form can be obtained from the NASW/CT office at 860-257-8066 or info.naswct@socialworkers.org

Presenters attend the Annual Conference at no charge but they are asked to pay \$40 if they are joining us for lunch.

No additional presenters may be added after the Proposal is accepted. We ask that you limit your presenters to 5 should you be planning a panel.

Conference Committee decisions and notifications will be sent mid-March 2023.

**Send Proposals to NASW/CT Annual Conference Committee
2139 Silas Deane Highway, Suite 205, Rocky Hill, CT 06067**

Or Email to pnixon.naswct@socialworkers.org

Any questions, please call Pamela Nixon at 860-371-8183



National Association of Social Workers
Connecticut Chapter
LATINO/A SOCIAL WORKERS NETWORK

~2023 MENTORING PROGRAM~

SOCIAL. MENTORS. CULTURAL. EDUCATIONAL. PROFESSIONAL.



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Mentoring for Latino/a BSW/MSW Students & Recent MSW Graduates

This is a unique opportunity to be mentored by senior professional social workers, who will provide support, guidance, and the tools necessary to cultivate and advance your career opportunities. Join our network!

The mentoring program includes four virtual group mentoring meetings that require attendance to be considered a mentee.

Virtual Mentoring Meetings and Titles/Themes are as follows:

- January 27, 2023, @ 6 pm: "Leadership in Social Work"
- February 24, 2023, @ 6 pm: "The Art of Negotiation: Salaries & Making Money"
- March 24, 2023, @ 6 pm: "Get Licensed: Learn All About the Licensing Process"
- April 28, 2023, @ 6 pm: "Private Practice Blueprint & Beyond"

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE PROGRAM OR
TO APPLY TO BECOME A MENTEE
Contact us at LSWCTMentoring@gmail.com

Latino/a Social Workers Network 2022-2023 Mentoring Program Q & A

What is the Latino/a Social Workers Network Mentoring Program?

The main purpose of the mentoring program is to provide Latino/a social work students with the unique and empowering opportunity to be mentored by senior professional social workers. This culturally attuned program focuses on developing and strengthening relationships between experienced social workers (mentors) and Latino/a social work students (mentees). The Latino/a cultural values of familismo, personalismo, confianza, and colectivismo play a vital role in building relationships between mentors and mentees. **The goal of the program is to help Latino/a social work students more competently and effectively navigate the challenges of practicing in a variety of professional settings.**

What is the format or structure of the Mentoring Program?

The 2023 Mentoring Program is a community mentoring model. The community mentoring portion of the program will consist of four (January-April) virtual, interactive, and discussion-based meetings. These four community meetings will focus on topics such as program orientation, social work professionalism, negotiation skills, cultural development, and program evaluation/celebration. There will also be an opportunity to meet in person as a community at an outdoor event in April). One-on-one relationships between mentors and mentees can be established during the program. Mentors and mentees will then communicate outside of community meetings and interact with each other via phone, online, and/or in-person to develop one-on-one mentoring relationships. The Mentoring Program liaisons will periodically check in with mentors and mentees on their relationship and help resolve any issues or problems that may arise.

Who can participate in the Mentoring Program?

This program is open to all Latino/a BSW and MSW students who are or will become NASW members (may join upon starting the program). Potential mentors should identify as Latino/a, possess MSW degrees, be an NASW members, and have at least five years of post-MSW professional experience. For information on NASW membership, please go to www.socialworkers.org/Join.

What is the time commitment needed to participate in the Mentoring Program?

With the exception of the meeting in April, which will be held at a TBD location, all 2023 Mentoring Program community meetings are held via Google Meets on the following Fridays, 6-8 pm: Jan. 27, Feb. 24, Mar. 24, and Apr. 28. Mentors and mentees are expected to attend all four of these meetings. Please consider your availability on these dates/times before applying for the program.

If you're interested in applying as a mentor or mentee or would like more information, please contact the Network Chair, (Reina) Lleydi De Leon at LSWCTMentoring@gmail.com.

Bills, Bills, Bills

NASW/CT Has Record High Number of Proposed Bills

In the 2023 legislative session, the Chapter has requested of legislators a record number of bills to be introduced. Seeking support from CT PACE-endorsed legislators, here are the proposed bills we have requested that have been introduced:

HB 5321: An Act Establishing A State Ombudsman's Office For Behavioral Healthcare Coverage. The purpose is to expand access to behavioral health care by establishing a state ombudsman's office to reduce private and public insurance reimbursement barriers for small and group health care providers. Sponsored by Representative Hughes, MSW.

HB 5453: An Act Prohibiting Health Care Insurers From Retroactively Denying Health Insurance Claims For Behavioral Health and Substance Abuse Services. The purpose of this bill is to prohibit health care insurers from retroactively denying health insurance claims and clawing back payments for behavioral health and substance abuse services: (1) After one year from the date of such service when prior authorization for such service was issued and the health care provider was paid for such service; and (2) when the health care insurer fails to provide written notice and an explanation of retroactive denial of the claim to the health care provider for such service within one year from the date of such service. Sponsored by Senator Lopes, MSW and Representative Turco.

HB 5901: An Act Allowing Out-Of-State Behavioral Health Providers To Provide Telehealth Services To A Resident Of Another State While Such Resident Is In This State: Purpose is to allow, on a permanent basis, a person, who is appropriately licensed as a behavioral health provider in another state or territory of the United States or the District of Columbia, to provide telehealth services to a resident of another state while such resident is in this state, provided the behavioral health provider (1) has a preexisting professional relationship with such resident; and (2) maintains professional liability insurance, or other indemnity against liability for professional malpractice, in an amount that is equal to or greater than that required for behavioral health providers licensed pursuant to chapter 383b of the general statutes. Currently only licensed social workers can provide such services and only until June 30, 2024. Sponsored by Representative Gilcrest, MSW.

HB 5913: An Act Concerning The License Renewal Fee And Schedule For Licensed Clinical Social Workers: The purpose of this bill is to increase licensure periods for licensed clinical social workers and reduce licensure fees for licensed clinical social workers employed by nonprofit entities. The bill will require new licenses be effective for at least 12 months, renewed on the licensee birth month and be renewed biennially. NASW/CT seeks to make the fee reduction effective for all licensed social workers. Sponsored by Representatives Welander, Exum, Foster, Leeper, Berger-Girvalo, and Kavros Degraw.

HB 6104: An Act Extending The Temporary Family Assistance Time Limit For Beneficiaries Engaged In Educational, Vocational Training And Certification Programs In Pursuit Of Stable Employment. The purpose is to afford temporary family assistance beneficiaries engaged in educational, vocational training or certification programs enough time to pursue stable employment opportunities, reduce poverty and homelessness and fill a pressing need in the labor market for educated and trained workers. The current lifetime cap on TFA is 21 months, the shortest in the nation. This bill will extend the lifetime cap to the federally allowed maximum of 60 months. Sponsored by Representatives S. Johnson, Gee, Hughes, MSW, Elliott, Keitt, Porter and Senator Flexer.

HB: 6363: An Act Concerning Paid Sick Time And Mental Health. The purpose is to require employers who offer sick time to employees to provide at least two mental health days per calendar year to eligible employees. Sponsored by Representative Foster. NASW/CT is also asking the Housing Committee to raise a bill for a pilot project to make available grants to emergency shelters for hiring of clinical social workers to provide clinical consultation to staff on working with residents who have mental health and addiction disorders.

Not upon the request of NASW/CT Senator Marx has introduced a bill, **HB: 423: An Act Concerning Medicaid Coverage For Social Worker Visits To Clients Receiving Home Care.** The purpose of this bill is to better serve the needs of Medicaid beneficiaries receiving home care by providing Medicaid reimbursement for up to two social worker visits.

Again, not on the request of NASW/CT there are multiple bills introduced to remove barriers to licensure. We

Bills, continued

believe these bills are for the purpose of eliminating the LMSW exam (not the license). There are also several bills to make the current telehealth statute permanent (the statute expires June 3, 2024).

The introduction of a proposed bill does not mean the bill will be acted upon. All proposed bills must be raised

the committee they are assigned too. All raised bills must have, at minimum, a public hearing where we can make our case on the importance of the bill. As bills are raised we will notify our members who have legislators on the committee the bill is assigned too.

Time to Fix the CT Income Tax on Retirees

By: Rebecca Fogel Anderson, LCSW

The current method for calculating Connecticut income tax on retirement income is deeply flawed.

As you may be aware, in 2019 Connecticut implemented changes to its tax code that fully exempts certain types of retirement income for persons with incomes under limits based on federal adjusted gross income (AGI). Specifically, if an individual tax filer has a federal AGI under \$75,000 and a couple filing jointly has a federal AGI under \$100,000, Social Security income and pension income are fully exempted. In addition, starting in 2023 exemptions for IRA withdrawals will be phased in over a period of four years, but the exemption will only apply to the same thresholds stated above (\$75,000/\$100,000). Unfortunately, if an individual goes over this income limit by even \$1.00, the exemptions are almost entirely eliminated.

How does this translate for income tax owed? Here are three examples using Connecticut income tax tables and the 2021 version of TurboTax.

- A married couple's income goes from \$99,999 to \$100,000 and their Connecticut state tax due rises from \$57.00 to \$2,844, a 4,899% increase.
- Two single retired people with identical retirement incomes of \$65,500 would each pay \$0 in CT state income tax, but if they are married their state income tax filing jointly would rise to \$3,800.
- A single retired person with a prior income of \$65,500 who has a COLA and has to take an RMD in 2021 might see their taxes go from \$0 to \$2,216 for exceeding the \$75,000 threshold by \$1.

These are just three hypothetical scenarios, but there are thousands of retired persons in Connecticut for whom these situations are not hypothetical. And, as retirees receive COLAs in their Social Security and retirement income this year, and in subsequent years, the number

of people affected by the income cliff and the marriage penalty built into the current tax legislation will only increase.

In general, Connecticut's tax tables use a graduated tax structure on personal income. This is similar to the federal income tax system where higher tax rates are applied on the margin, i.e., on the first and every dollar over each threshold while maintaining lower rates for income ranges below that. However, in the case of exempting certain types of retirement income, there is nothing gradual about what happens when your income rises in Connecticut. One dollar over and you have lost the exemption. Instead of owing incrementally more on rising income, the retiree owes thousands of dollars more in taxes. Pretty harsh.

The intent of the changes in the tax code was to give a break to retirees, and to try to keep retirees (and the money they spend in Connecticut) from leaving the state for tax reasons. While the law may have accomplished this for many retirees, its current provisions punish many others with comfortable, but not excessive incomes, earned through years of hard work. Given this, it is understandable why Connecticut residents in this situation would seriously contemplate relocating to a more tax friendly state.

I believe in paying my fair share, but the current tax policy for retiree income is not structured in a way that feels logical or fair. This year for the first time, there is broad bi-partisan support in the legislature to eliminate the income cliff and the marriage penalty. Proposed Bill 5052 has been introduced with the support of 59 legislators. It is one of AARP's legislative priorities and is supported by NASW. It is important that we let our legislators and the Governor know that we support this bill and to advocate for its passage.

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Reminders: On Our Website

Seeking Online Education for LCSW Renewal?

Visit the NASW/CT website www.naswct.org and click on the CE INSTITUTE. Here you will find a wide range of online classes and webinars all with continuing education credits. Remember CT LCSW renew allows up to 10 hours of home study including online education. Live webinars count the same as in-person programs.

No matter what practice field you are seeking education on you will find it at the NASW CE INSTITUTE @ <http://naswwa.inreachce.com/>

Seeking LCSW Supervision?

If you are a LMSW seeking supervision for LCSW eligibility check out the **NASW/CT Supervisors Registry**. Here you will find supervisors that have met the criteria of NASW/CT to offer supervision. Under state law any LCSW can offer clinical LCSW supervision. NASW/CT has a higher standard that we apply to the LCSWs on the **Supervisor's Registry**. Go to <http://naswct.org/supervisors-registry/> to see the full list of available supervisors.

Are you an LCSW seeking to offer supervision? Consider being on the **Supervisors Registry**. For details on qualifications, cost and an online application go to <http://naswct.org/add-new-supervisor-listing/>

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Rocky Hill, CT 06067

(860) 257-8066
Fax: (860) 257-8074

naswct.naswct@socialworkers.org
www.naswct.org

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NASW Assurance Services 855-385-2160

LCSW Exam Application—Department of Health 800-509-7603

Ethical Questions 860-257-8066 x202
Stephen Wanczyk-Karp, NASW/CT Executive Director skarp.naswct@socialworkers.org

Committee Participation
NASW/CT Chapter Staff 860-257-8066

Licensing Questions
NASW/CT Chapter Staff 860-257-8066

Continuing Education Information/Conference Questions 860-371-8183
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