Another Successful AACAP Legislative Conference!

On April 8-9, AACAP held its third Legislative Conference in the last 12 months. Nearly 250 AACAP members and family advocates from 36 states came to Washington, DC, to advocate for medical student debt loan relief for child and adolescent psychiatrist training fellows and more mental health resources for our nation’s schools (grades K-12).

Thanks to great advocacy work by AACAP members and families, over a dozen new House and Senate co-sponsors have been added in the last week to two critical bills: “Ensuring Children’s Access to Specialty Care Act” and the “Mental Health in Schools Act.” Grassroots advocacy works, and your voices are generating more support daily! Attendees, please follow up with each Hill office you visited to say, “thank you for listening” and “please support and co-sponsor these bills.”

AACAP also awarded its prestigious "Friends of Children’s Mental Health” award to three wonderful Congressional champions of children’s mental health: Reps. Grace Napolitano (D-CA), John Katko (R-NY), and Don Beyer Jr. (D-VA). Please click here to watch a short video message from Rep. Grace Napolitano.

AACAP Members from Maryland meeting with Senator Ben Cardin (D-MD)

Special thanks to the entire AACAP Advocacy Committee, co-chaired by Drs. Debra E. Koss and Karen Pierce. They and our other wonderful Advocacy Committee members, including podium instructional time by Sandra Fritsch, MD, Laura Willing, MD, and Robert Holloway, MD, made for a highly educational, action-packed, and enlightening 2018 Legislative Conference.

Focus on State Legislative Sessions

At the time of writing, 29 state legislative sessions and Washington, DC’s city council have not yet adjourned, which means many state legislatures are very active, creating numerous opportunities for AACAP member involvement.

While there is no shortage of policy issues worth mentioning, here is a recap of a few recent legislative activities:
The Ohio House Health Committee last week heard proponent testimony for a bill expanding prescriptive privileges to certain psychologists, and opponent testimony has not been scheduled;

Numerous states, the latest including Washington and Maryland, approved laws banning conversion therapy for minors;

At least seven states have bills that would make medical marijuana legally available to those with an autism spectrum disorder diagnosis;

Medicaid expansion which would cover 400,000 residents in Virginia now rests on the shoulders of the Virginia Senate, which has previously rejected Medicaid expansion efforts;

Washington Governor Jay Inslee (D) signed two noteworthy bills into law. The first, increases the jurisdiction of juvenile court to age 25 from 16 or 17 to better align with what is known about brain development. And second, the state will establish a work group studying access issues for children’s mental health services;

Should you have questions about what is happening in your state, if you are hearing about legislation moving and wish to know how to get involved, or hoping to testify, please reach out! Further, current AACAP members are welcome to join the Advocacy Liaison Network, which hosts monthly advocacy calls allowing members to learn legislative and advocacy strategies. While it is our hope this advocacy activity is well coordinated through your AACAP regional organization, please also email Emily Rohlffs (erohlffs@aacap.org) to join the Network.

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**AACAP Expresses Concern About Short-Term Limited-Duration Health Plan Proposed Rule**

Earlier this week, AACAP submitted written comments to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) on a proposed rule that would amend the definition of short-term limited duration insurance plans. AACAP wrote a strong response urging the agency to leave intact the ten Essential Health Benefits (EHBs) found in Affordable Care Act plans, which include treatment for mental health and substance use disorders, because the proposed rule stated that EHBs would likely not be included in such plans. Of additional concern is that the proposed rule only discusses benefits that would likely not be covered in the proposed short-term limited-duration health insurance plans, yet provided no detail about what would be covered. These health plans, without significant modification, would potentially dismantle meaningful health insurance coverage for large numbers of Americans, including children.

The letter in its entirety is available on AACAP’s website.

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**New Legislation to Provide $100 Billion to fight Opioid Addiction**

Senator Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) and Representative Elijah Cummings (D-MD) have introduced the Comprehensive Addiction Resources Emergency Act (CARA). If enacted, this
legislation would provide $100 billion over ten years to help defeat the nation’s opioid crisis. For more information on the bill and to see how much estimated funding your state would receive under this legislation [click here].

Questions, Comments or Concerns?

The AACAP Government Affairs Department is here to help!

Email us at [govaffairs@aacap.org](mailto:govaffairs@aacap.org) or call us at 202-966-7300.

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