The Legacy of a NAADAC President

By Cynthia Moreno Tuohy, BSW, NCAC II, CDC III, SAP, NAADAC Executive Director

Every two years in the fall, NAADAC welcomes a new NAADAC President. It has been the procedure of NAADAC for over 40 years. Two years as a NAADAC President may sound like a short term, but it is a six-year commitment that includes two years as President-Elect, two years as President and two years as Immediate Past President. Gerry Schmidt, our current Immediate Past President, stepped into this new role of Immediate Past President after the Annual Conference in October.

It has been my immense pleasure to work with Gerry in his role as President. I have been fortunate to work along-side of Gerry in one capacity or other for the past thirty years. Gerry was one of our early Legislative Chairs, picking up the mantel of advocacy and working to capture the attention of local, state and federal policy makers. His passion and enthusiasm for this work grew along with his clearness of purpose. Gerry's experience in administrating a multi-disciplinary treatment system that incorporates mental health and addiction has given NAADAC a breath of new air and insight as we moved from sequential care of addiction and mental health to an integrated model of addiction, mental health, and primary care. His experiences at Valley Health Systems has been invaluable in understanding the dynamics of integrated care from a clinical, administrative, political and billing perspective. His passion and commitment naturally led him to the role of President-Elect due to his eagerness to change from the silo systems of care to an more integrated model. Gerry also brought forth his education and experience in addiction and co-occurring disorders in the trainings that he has performed for NAADAC acorss the country and internationally. He has trained and lead groups internationally for NAADAC and brought the "good news" that treatment works and recovery is possible!

Being President of NAADAC is both an honor and an obligation of a commitment of time, expertise, and energy. Gerry has met that challenge and left for NAADAC and the current President of NAADAC, Diane Sevening, a lasting legacy on which to build. NAADAC cannot continue to exist and provide support to addiction professionals without financial growth and stability. During Gerry's term, the financial health of NAADAC has strengthened. Gerry worked hard to increase our bottom line without sacrificing quality and quantity of NAADAC programs and initiatives, and his commitment paid off.

Under Gerry's leadership, NAADAC has expanded its advocacy efforts by entering into a consulting contract with Polsinelli, a government relations firm in Washington, DC that is rated number one in health care issues. Through this partnership, we have increased our government relations voice and presence on Capital Hill, including participating in meetings with key legislators and providing writing testimony to Congress. NAADAC has assisted in adding addiction-specific workforce language in several bills and provided input regarding the content of the recently passed SUPPORT for Patients and Communities Act (P.L. 115-271). We are excited to celebrate the passing of this bill in particular, which contains key provisions that (1) incentivize individuals to pursue substance use disorder treatment professions by offering student loan relief; (2) protect against the erosion of privacy rights of individuals with substance use disorders; and (3) remove the IMD exclusion for all substance use disorder treatment and allow Medicaid payment for eligible individuals for up to 30 days annually. We will continue to work to support addiction clients, counselors, and treatment facilities. NAADAC also held its 2018 Advocacy in Action Conference and Hill Day on November 12-13, 2018, which welcomed addiction professionals from across the county and led to over a dozen meetings with Members of Congress or their staff. We are looking forward to the 2019 Advocacy in Action Conference and Hill Day on April 11-12, 2019!

Thank you, Gerry, for the work that you do and the tireless hours that you work and then donate back to us! Without your support, we could not have achieved all the amazing growth over the past two years! I am also appreciative of the work of the NAADAC team and the dedicated work they so generously give to support our vision and mission. Thank you for the opportunity to serve you!

Together, we are making a difference! Cyn

Cynthia Moreno Tuohy, BSW, NCAC II, CDC III, SAP, is the Executive Director of NAADAC, the Association for Addiction Professionals, and has worked as an addiction professional for over 35 years. She has been a trainer in Domestic Violence/Anger Management and Conflict Resolution for over 25 years as well as an international, national and state trainer in a variety of topics. Moreno Tuohy is also a curriculum writer in addiction screening and evaluation, counseling methods, conflict resolution, co-occurring disorders, and medicated assisted treatment and recovery, and has written articles published in national and other trade magazines. She holds a Bachelor's Degree in Social Work and is certified both nationally and in Washington State.