



27th Annual Advocacy in Action Conference Recap

Putting Addiction and the Needs of Addiction-Focused Professionals on the Agenda

BY JESSICA GLEASON, NAADAC COMMUNICATION ASSOCIATE

Addiction-focused professionals from around the country descended on Washington, D.C. to join NAADAC, the Association for Addiction Professionals, for its 27th Annual Advocacy in Action Conference from March 2–4, 2014. Attendees received up-to-date information from top federal officials and industry experts on the critical issues that impact the addiction-focused profession, and then met with national lawmakers to share their rare insight and knowledge base regarding the true day-to-day issues created by recent healthcare reforms, and a shrinking and under-supported workforce.

“This year marks NAADAC’s 40th year of working to advance the interests of addiction-focused professionals and organizations and our 27th Annual Advocacy Conference. Our advocacy conference provides a vehicle for addiction-focused professionals from across many different disciplines to advocate on a national level with a strong, united voice,” said Gerry Schmidt, NAADAC Public Policy Chair. “We addressed funding for services and research, workforce development, improved technology for the treatment of all addictions, the implementation of parity and healthcare reform, and government initiatives to support the profession and ensure access to services.”

“With the onset of the Affordable Care Act and related healthcare reform initiatives, over 25 million people are newly eligible for substance use and mental disorders services. Now more than ever, we need to address the dramatic need for workforce development in the medical specialty of addiction prevention, intervention, treatment and recovery support with a strong unified push for funding for services, minority fellowships,

and tuition reimbursement for those wanting to pursue a career in addiction treatment,” said Cynthia Moreno Tuohy, NAADAC Executive Director.

“Addiction is one of America’s most serious public health challenges. With less than 10 percent of those needing addiction services receiving them, this health disparity is costing America over \$600 billion a year and so much more in family and community losses! Attention to this health epidemic is crucial for the health of this generation and generations to come. We need Congress to clearly understand not just the need for continued funding, but the severity of addiction as a major healthcare issue,” said Robert Richards, NAADAC President. “Almost one-in-four deaths in the United States can be attributed to alcohol, tobacco, or other drug use. Our work to prevent substance use disorders, treat the disease, and support recovery hastens people back to work, reunites families, and creates safer communities. Our work helps people get their lives back.”

Presentations from this year’s conference, as well as pictures and advocacy materials, are available at www.naadac.org/advocacyconference. Hope you will join us next year!



Jessica Gleason is the Communications Associate for NAADAC, the Association for Addiction Professionals. She is the Managing Editor for *Advances in Addiction & Recovery* and compiles NAADAC’s two ePublications, the bi-weekly *Addiction & Recovery eNews* and weekly *Professional eUpdate*. She is also responsible for the NAADAC website’s content, social media, and communications. Gleason holds a Juris Doctorate

from Northeastern University School of Law in Boston, MA and a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Political Science from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

Parity, continued from page 7

Expansion Plans under the ACA) even though the rule states the statute applies to these entities. As stated, the January 2013 CMS State Health Official Letter will continue to govern implementation of Medicaid managed care parity. The final rule states more guidance on this will be forthcoming. The PIC will be requesting this additional Medicaid guidance be issued within 180 days.

Under the final rule, regulations under the ACA and FAQs issued by the Department of Labor, plans and issuers must provide the claimant, free of charge, during the appeals process with any new additional evidence considered relied upon or generated by the plan or issuers in connection with a claim.¹

The final rules give clear direction for plan parity requirements. It will be vital that the clients/patients you are planning to serve understand the provisions in their health benefit coverage, what the limits are for medical/surgical benefits and that the substance use disorder/mental health benefits are on par. If they are not, the State In-

urance Commissioner or the Department of Health and Human Services are the departments with primary responsibility to enforce.

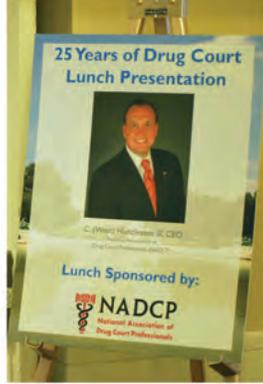
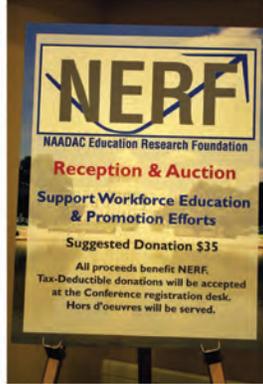
As more information becomes available, visit www.naadac.org/advocacy for updates.



Cynthia Moreno Tuohy, NCAC II, CCDC III, SAP, is the Executive Director of NAADAC, the Association for Addiction Professionals. She previously served as the Executive Director of Danya Institute and the Central East Addiction Technology Transfer Center and as Program Director for Volunteers of America Western Washington. In addition, she has over 20 years of experience serving as the administrator of multi-county, publicly funded alcohol/drug prevention/intervention/treatment centers with services ranging from prenatal care to the serving the elderly.

REFERENCES

¹For more resources, please refer to: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ Study: Consistency of Large Employer and Group Health Plan Benefits with Requirements of the Paul Wellstone and Pete Domenici Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008, available at www.dol.gov/ebsa/pdf/hhswellstonedomenicimhpaealargeemployerandghpbconsistency.pdf



NAADAC Executive Board and the National Certification Commission for Addiction Professionals (NCC AP)

Texas delegation in Senator Ted Cruz's office

Members of Texas Association of Addiction Professionals (TAAP) Jamie Schmitt, President of Waco Chapter, and Teresa Sawyer

U.S. Capitol Building in March's snowstorm

Opening Reception Briefing with Michael Boticelli, Deputy Director, White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP)

Bob Richards, NAADAC President
NAADAC Education & Research Foundation (NERF) Reception and Auction

Lunch sponsored by National Association of Drug Court Professionals (NADCP)

Gerry Schmidt, NAADAC Public Policy Chair, speaking about the Recovery to Practice (RTP) Initiative

2014 NAADAC Emerging Young Leaders of the Year Award recipient – Young People in Recovery

2014 Senator Harold E. Hughes Advocate of the Year Award recipient – Sherri Layton, NAADAC Mid-South Regional Vice President

Screening of "The Anonymous People" and Panel Discussion