

# Advocacy for Addiction Professionals & Their Clients: 2019 in Review

By Tim Casey, Policy Advisor, Polsinelli

It was a busy 2019 in Washington, D.C. for NAADAC. Our efforts yielded important progress and generated a flurry of activity on Capitol Hill around key issues impacting you and your clients. Despite a tense atmosphere in our nation's capital, we managed to raise the profession's profile among lawmakers and make significant progress on critical policy priorities, including the following:

## Congressional Resolution Recognizing Addiction Professionals (H.Res.419)

NAADAC worked closely with the co-chairs of the Congressional Addiction, Treatment and Recovery Caucus to introduce language in the House of Representatives acknowledging the critical contributions of Addiction Professionals in the delivery of quality, evidence-based SUD treatment and recovery services. Representatives Dave Joyce (R-OH) and Tim Ryan (D-OH) introduced H.Res.419 in the spring, along with original cosponsors Representatives Bill Johnson (R-OH), Paul Tonko (D-NY), James Sensenbrenner (R-WI), and Ann Kuster (D-NH). NAADAC is grateful to our Congressional champions for raising awareness about the role of addiction professionals and honoring your vital contributions.

*NAADAC has been busy building cosponsors for the resolution, but we need your continued help! Be sure to contact your Representative and urge him or her to cosponsor and support H.Res.419.*

## The Addiction Treatment Access Act (S. 2412)

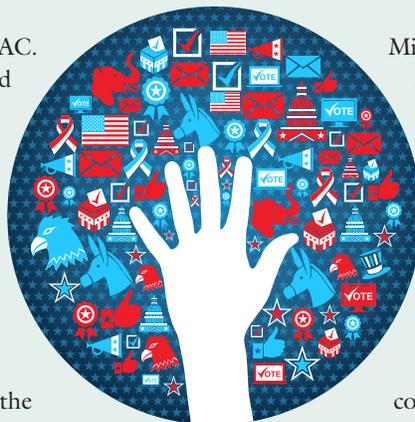
NAADAC helped identify and address a critical gap in Medicare coverage for treatment and recovery services. Working closely with Senators Tester (D-MT), Sullivan (R-AK), Shaheen (D-NH), and Murkowski (R-AK), NAADAC helped shape legislation that would provide coverage of addiction counselor services under Medicare Part B.

NAADAC was pleased to support introduction of the Addiction Treatment Access Act (S. 2412) and commends these Senators for their leadership on this critical SUD treatment issue. Recognizing the education, training, and competencies of addiction counselors under Medicare Part B represents a critical point of access to services for so many in need.

NAADAC continues to build support among Senators for the legislation and is working to cement champions in the House for a companion measure. *Medicare beneficiaries in your community deserve access to the treatment and recovery services they need, and you deserve to be reimbursed for providing them. Contact your Members of Congress today, and urge them to support this important legislation.*

## Bolstering the Workforce

In 2019, we successfully advocated for funding for critical access and workforce programs including the National Health Service Corps, the



Minority Fellowship Program (MFP), the newly authorized Loan Repayment Program for the Substance Use Disorder Treatment Workforce, and a number of other important programs impacting you and your clients.

## Protecting Privacy

We also worked tirelessly to combat harmful policies, including ongoing efforts to align 42 CFR Part 2 with HIPAA standards in comprehensive SUD legislation, as this policy risks compromising confidentiality and could discourage those in need from seeking treatment.

## Raising NAADAC's Profile

We've crisscrossed Capitol Hill over the past year, including all together at NAADAC's annual Advocacy in Action Conference. We have dramatically expanded NAADAC's Congressional network and are increasingly fielding calls from lawmakers seeking feedback on proposals across a wide-range of topics, including reimbursement, SUD treatment and recovery services, housing, workforce and loan repayment, childhood trauma and foster care, and many other issues impacting addiction professionals.

NAADAC's Advocacy in Action conferences have provided great visibility for the profession on Capitol Hill and with the agencies. The conferences included a full day of training and guest speakers, followed by a slate of meetings with prominent lawmakers and staff on Capitol Hill. We also hosted two Congressional briefings, where we engaged in meaningful discussions with Congressional staff and stakeholders in the Capitol and House Cannon Building, respectively.

## Your Voice Counts

These are critical times for our profession and for our nation. Your elected officials can help support addiction professionals and the clients who count on you in communities across the country. Please stay tuned as we provide updates on these important developments, and be sure to share the feedback you receive from your elected officials with NAADAC.

With your support, we will build on these successes in 2020 and continue positively shaping federal policies impacting you and your clients.



*Tim Casey is a policy advisor at Polsinelli. He has a proven record of leadership in advancing the federal priorities of national associations, corporations, consumer organizations, and nonprofits. On Capitol Hill, Casey is a trusted resource to Members of Congress and their staff. Casey's experience in the House and Senate combined with his time as a senior lobbyist for prominent health care organizations offers clients sound policy advice, strategic political counsel, and a keen instinct for delivering on key priorities before Congress and the Administration.*