

2009 NASW Minnesota Chapter Legislative Positions

The National Association of Social Work (NASW) is the world's largest organization of professional social workers. NASW-MN is committed to working within the legislative arena to promote policies and legislation that support professional regulation of social work practice, enhance the lives of people we serve, and promote equal opportunities to all Minnesota residents. The primary mission of the social work profession is to enhance human well-being and help meet the basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty. The profession does not condone, facilitate, or collaborate with discrimination of any form, including ethnicity, national origin, color, gender, sexual orientation, age, marital status, political affiliation, religion, or mental, physical or developmental disability. NASW-MN promotes awareness, education and political advocacy within a range of concerns including health care, mental health, civil rights, child welfare, tax policy and economic security, to enhance the social functioning of individuals, families and communities. During the 2009 legislative session, NASW-MN will:

- Track legislation
- Advocate for social policy reform or policy maintenance
- Work with identified coalition partners
- Meet with key legislative leaders
- Organize Social Work Day at the Capitol
- Communicate with NASW-MN members via 'action alerts' and technical assistance

Economic Security - Legislative Priority for 2009

NASW-MN advocates for a social support system that creates opportunities for Minnesota families to move out of poverty and achieve economic self-sufficiency. A comprehensive economic security system for our community members promotes work and includes a network of supports that enable access to employment, safe and affordable housing, sufficient and nutritious food; quality child care and other basic needs that support Minnesota families' physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development.

NASW-MN supports:

- a living wage
- affordable quality child care options for all working families
- expanding options for job training and education
- assistance for people struggling to avoid foreclosure on their home or eviction
- affordable health care

We support the recommendations of the Legislative Commission to End Poverty and will work with them and other partners to preserve our safety net and minimize cuts to social service programs for Minnesota's 2009 legislative session.

Health Care

NASW-MN believes health care and dental coverage should be universal, affordable, accessible and comprehensive. NASW-MN supports policies that move toward universal coverage, including prescription drug coverage and the expansion of public health and preventative services. NASW-MN supports the adoption of the Minnesota Health Care Act, which replaces the current insurance/HMO payment model with a single payer system.

Mental Health

NASW-MN will work to promote full parity within the health care system for mental health, behavioral health and substance abuse prevention and treatment. NASW-MN believes that all mental health professionals need to be fairly compensated to ensure that public clients have access to appropriate mental health services, including services provided by licensed social workers. NASW-MN supports children's mental health collaborations. NASW-MN supports increasing state responsibility in the funding of mental health services.

Civil Rights

NASW-MN supports civil rights for all people. NASW-MN opposes public policies that discriminate against people by ethnicity, national origin, color, gender, sexual orientation, age, marital status, political affiliation, religion, or mental, physical or developmental disability and continues to oppose, any constitutional amendments that would ban gay marriage. In addition, NASW-MN supports an equitable social welfare policy that does not discriminate against status as a citizen, refugee or documented/un-documented immigrant.

Child Welfare

NASW-MN believes that every child deserves to grow up in a safe and nurturing environment. We support a strong child welfare system that invests in early childhood education as well as effective child abuse and neglect prevention and intervention programs. NASW-MN urges state governments to address the impact of the extensive federal cuts in funding in child welfare services. NASW-MN also supports public policy that would lead to ending racial disparities within the child welfare system. NASW-MN supports more state-level fiscal responsibility in addressing child welfare, including the reduction of client case-loads. NASW-MN also advocates for increased funding for MN crisis nurseries through a specific budget line item.

Tax and Fiscal Policy

NASW-MN believes that there must be sufficient revenue to pay for basic human services; and that inflation should be a factor in determining the state's economic forecast of both revenue and expense calculations. When current revenue streams do not provide for those services, then revenue should be raised to meet the state's responsibility. We will support tax credits and other tax policies that support low income families. NASW-MN also believes that tax policy should be based on a progressive system.

Professional Regulation

NASW-MN supports legal regulation of social work practice that is effective in protecting the public and respects the financial and practice realities of social workers in Minnesota. We therefore believe that licensing should be kept as low as possible without impairing the mission of the Board of Social Work. We also support the elimination of the County-City-State exemption from the social work licensing law. NASW-MN also supports equitable reimbursement for mental health professionals and elimination of third party payer practices that do not improve access to necessary care.