

Public Policy Report
Maine Counseling Association
Executive Board Meeting 3/2/2018

Items of note:

1. On February 27, Sen. Susan Collins signed on as a co-sponsor of S 1879, the Seniors Mental Health Improvement Act of 2017. She has joined Senator King, and Reps. Pingree and Poliquin (who signed on as co-sponsors of the House version of the medicare fix legislation HR 3032 the Mental Health Access Improvement Act of 2017) in formally supporting this legislative priority of the American Counseling Association and its member branches. With this, Maine becomes the first state to have its entire congressional delegation in favor of revising medicare billing rules to permit Licensed Professional Counselors to have the same access to medicare reimbursement as social workers for clinical services. The Task Force is considering next moves to mobilize our allies in other organizations to support this change going forward and attempt to insure that it is incorporated as part of any forthcoming legislative reforms.
2. Review of Chapter 115 has now been assigned a Legislative Document (LD) number and title, LD 1852, Resolve Regarding Legislative Review of Portions of Chapter 115: the Credentialing of Education Personnel, a late-filed Major Substantive Rule of the Department of Education. The next hearing on this may be as soon as March 7 in the Education and Cultural Affairs committee.
3. The Committee on Labor, Commerce, Research, and Economic Development held a public hearing on February 14, and a work session on February 27 regarding LD 912, An Act to Clarify the Scope of Practice of Certain Licensed Professionals Regarding Conversion Therapy. 53 items of testimony were given at the public comment session, including from the NASW, AMA, and Maine Branch of the American Psychological Association. Our parent organization, ACA, mobilized a "voter voice" campaign to reach directly to members of the Maine legislature urging them (as did the above mentioned organizations in their testimony) to support LD 912 as an improvement to legal protection for minors, especially LGBTQ youth, who might be subjected to so-called "conversion therapy." The item was tabled at the February 27 work session of the committee, and no report has yet been issued.
4. Updates on these items and other legislative concerns will be provided in the Public Policy report to be submitted at our upcoming Annual Conference.

Respectfully submitted,
Stan Pelletier, M.Ed., LCPC, NCC
Public Policy Chair