

A graphic of the American flag, showing the stars and stripes, positioned in the top left corner of the slide. The flag is partially visible, with the stars field on the left and the stripes extending towards the center.

American Counseling Association

2020 Post-Election Analysis

President-Elect Joe Biden (D) vs. President Donald Trump (R)

The results of the Presidential election will have a tremendous effect on the behavioral health community, specifically licensed professional counselors. The President's stance on mental health will determine the urgency and the pace in which legislation is signed into law. Below is each candidate's stance as well as some of their health care priorities.

President Trump on Mental Health:



"At a time when many Americans are experiencing increased stress, anxiety, and personal loss, we must also ensure that our country can meet the mental health needs of those struggling in this crisis."

- President Trump signed an Executive Order to address the negative impact of prolonged shutdowns on mental and behavioral health and increase suicide prevention efforts.
- The President is establishing a cabinet-level working group to assess the mental health needs of the most vulnerable, including the elderly, minorities, children, veterans, and people with disabilities.
- The President signed legislation which allocated approximately \$425 million in emergency funds to address mental and substance use disorders.

President-Elect Biden on Mental Health:















"As a society, we need to work together to eliminate the stigma felt by those who are suffering and struggling with their mental health. We must ensure that everyone has access to affordable quality health care and that mental health services are covered."











- "As President, I will ensure enforcement of mental health parity laws and expand funding for mental health services."
- "I will accelerate the deployment of telehealth for mental health and specialty care for rural communities."
- "I will make an unprecedented investment in school mental health professionals in order to double the number of psychologists, guidance counselors, nurses, social workers, and other health professionals employed in our schools."







✓ **Winner**








Key Senate Races




- Many of the 35 seats up for grabs this year were uncompetitive; so control of the Senate depended on a handful of hard-fought races.
- Currently, Senate Republicans hold a three-seat majority and control the Senate. That may change with the results of key Senate races.
- If Democrats take control of the U.S. Senate, it could lead to laws that shake up key sectors such as health care, finance, and energy.
- Republicans currently hold 53 seats in the Senate, so Democrats need to gain four seats to take control of the chamber — or just three if Biden wins the presidential election, because a Democratic vice president, Kamala Harris, would cast tie-breaking votes.
- So which Senate races were worth tracking? We took a look at key Senate races which had the most impact on who controls the Senate moving into the 117th Congress.

STATE	INCUMBENT CANDIDATE		OTHER CANDIDATE(S)	
Arizona	Martha McSally (R) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Co-sponsored S.286, The Mental Health Access Improvement Act. ■ Co-sponsored legislation to make 9-8-8 the suicide prevention hotline number. 	Mark Kelly (D)   Winner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ “Bring awareness to the issue of mental health, reduce its stigma, and recommit ourselves to ensuring access to care for those who need it.”
Colorado	Cory Gardner (R) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ “I’m pleased to see this important funding (\$2 Million Grant to Support Mental Health Needs in Colorado) delivered to Colorado. We must keep fighting to provide mental health support to Coloradans in need.” 	John Hickenlooper (D)   Winner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ John Hickenlooper helped create the Colorado State Innovation Model to help integrate physical and mental health and substance use services into primary care settings. ■ The governor also started a housing program initiative to provide wrap-around services like mental health care and job training to reduce incarceration, hospitalization, and homelessness for many of Colorado’s most vulnerable citizens.
Maine	Susan Collins (R)   Winner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Co-sponsored S.286, The Mental Health Access Improvement Act. 	Sara Gideon (D) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ “As Speaker, I worked to improve services for Maine veterans—including access to mental health care, education, and homelessness prevention.”
Alabama	Doug Jones (D) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Co-sponsored S.286, The Mental Health Access Improvement Act. 	Tommy Tuberville (R)   Winner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ “I believe it’s time for us to create a strategy. It’s time to offer an effective solution for our veterans, our first responders, our neighbors who desperately need the resources that the federal government has failed to provide for them. Transferring funding for mental health care back to the states will give us the power and means to help our fellow Alabamians in need.”

STATE	INCUMBENT CANDIDATE		OTHER CANDIDATE(S)	
North Carolina* *still pending	Thom Tillis (R) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tillis has been outspoken on the need to destigmatize mental health issues and ensure we treat mental health with the same vigor and empathy we treat physical health. 	Cal Cunningham (D) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Our mental health care system needs more funding to provide a higher quality of care and services."
Iowa	Joni Ernst (R)   Winner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joni Ernst is among a group of bipartisan U.S. Senators who have introduced legislation to provide more federal money for mental health services to rural residents. 	Theresa Greenfield (D) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "When we talk about making health care more affordable, we must include mental health care, too. In the Senate, I'll work with anyone to protect and expand access to mental health resources so all Iowans can get the care they need."
Montana	Steve Daines (R)   Winner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2016, Senator Daines announced the School Safety and Mental Health Services Improvement Act, which would have improved school security by using federal funds for measures such as school counselors, alarm systems and training to respond to crisis. 	Steve Bullock (D) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "We must expand mental health coverage and address racial and economic disparities in access to that care. But we must also tackle the stigma around mental health that leads to inadequate services and treatment."
Georgia (1)* *Run Off	David Perdue (R) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Senator Perdue voted for the Clay Hunt Suicide Prevention for American Veterans Act. The bill requires the Pentagon and Department of Veterans Affairs to make information on suicide prevention more available to veterans and offer financial incentives to mental health professionals who agree to work for the VA and help the veteran community. 	Jon Ossoff (D) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "In the compassionate society we're building together, we will recognize that Americans suffering from addiction or mental illness need health care, not prosecution."

STATE	INCUMBENT CANDIDATE		OTHER CANDIDATE(S)	
Georgia (2)* *Run Off	Kelly Loeffler (R) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Senator Loeffler championed both the <i>VA Mission Telehealth Clarification Act</i>, which will help expand the number of health care workers and professionals who can treat veterans via telehealth; and the <i>Veterans Posttraumatic Growth Act</i>, which requires the VA to conduct a pilot program to study the benefits of nonprofit post-traumatic growth programs in an effort to help expand treatment options for veterans who seek innovative therapies to combat PTSD and other mental health issues. 	Doug Collins (R) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Mental health is just as essential as physical health in order for our law enforcement officers to remain effective in keeping our communities safe, yet first responders often face serious trauma resulting from their line of work. As the son of a Georgia State Trooper, I understand firsthand the challenges facing our officers, and I am committed to ensuring they have access to the resources needed to address their health and well-being."
Georgia (2) *Run Off			Raphael Warnock (D) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Protecting our mental health during this time is just as important as our physical. Take care of yourself, your loved ones, and your community."
South Carolina	Lindsey Graham (R)  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Winner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Graham announced he will push a bipartisan "Red Flag" bill to give law enforcement the tools to work with mental health professionals who can detect the signs of violent individuals. 	Jaime Harrison (D) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Harrison hosted a town hall addressing South Carolinians' mental, physical, and spiritual health during the coronavirus outbreak. He was joined by health experts and faith leaders.
Kansas	N/A, incumbent retiring (R)		Roger Marshall (R)  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Winner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "The Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network connects farmers, ranchers, and those in agriculture-related fields to stress-assistance programs. The network can help those in need by offering resources like helplines, community outreach and education, support groups, and other services that can help improve mental health. An initial \$2 million for the program was awarded to groups throughout the country to begin implementation of the network but more funding is needed to ensure all communities are served."




STATE	INCUMBENT CANDIDATE		OTHER CANDIDATE(S)	
Kansas			Barbara Bollier (D) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Fixing the VA also means increased access to treatment for those suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder and additional resources to support the growing ranks of women who serve.”
Alaska	Dan Sullivan (R)  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Winner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-sponsored S.286, The Mental Health Access Improvement Act. 	Al Gross (D) 	Health Platform: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen primary and preventative care; Increase federal payments for rural health providers; Simplify and improve medical record keeping; Support telemedicine; and Increase health care access and oppose any Supreme Court decision that weakens or threatens the Affordable Care Act.
Michigan	Gary Peters (D)  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Winner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-sponsored S.286, The Mental Health Access Improvement Act. 	John James (R) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “There needs to be more funding for mental health and changes on pain management. The current system has led to an over-prescription of opioids.”
Texas	John Cornyn (R)  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Winner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “As we continue to discuss what future coronavirus legislation could look like, we cannot ignore the mental health impact. Nationwide, we rely on the community mental health centers and community behavioral health organizations to support those battling mental health and substance abuse disorders. 	MJ Hegar (D) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “With record-high suicide rates and deployments than can strain family relationships, it’s critical we provide adequate mental health care to address the unique struggles of those who serve.”





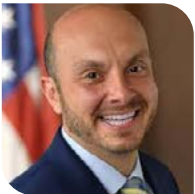



STATE	INCUMBENT CANDIDATE		OTHER CANDIDATE(S)	
Kentucky	Mitch McConnell (R)   Winner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "I'm proud to stand up for Kentuckians in the U.S. Senate, whether it's concerning mental health, children's issues, veterans issues, or anything else — and I have done so consistently throughout my time in Washington. I'm happy to stack my record up against anyone's when it comes to promoting Kentucky and Kentucky interests." 	Amy McGrath (D) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Lawmakers need to start being honest about investments that will be needed to tackle this drug crisis in areas of research, prevention, treatment, and recovery."













KEY HOUSE RACES



- Democrats took control of the House of Representatives in the 2018 midterm election and are widely expected to remain in control of the House after this November's election.
- Half of the key House races on our list, most likely to flip partisan control are GOP-held seats.
- Many share similarities with the kinds of demographically changing and increasingly suburban districts where Republicans saw slippage in 2018.
- Six of the 10 districts on this list are open seats, where the incumbent is not running for reelection and half of those are in Texas, which the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee has called "ground zero".
- However, in districts where the incumbent is a known brand, like in the case of Representative John Katko (R-NY-24), an original co-sponsor of H.R.945, the Mental Health Access Improvement Act of 2019, it may be an easy win.





Here are few key races that we looked out for:

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT			
Georgia-07: Open seat	Carolyn Bourdeaux (D)   Winner	Rich McCormick (R) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This district, just outside of Atlanta, was home to the closest House race in the country in 2018. It's representative of the well-educated and suburban areas that have soured on Trump and are moving in Democrats' direction. That should help Democrat Carolyn Bourdeaux, a public policy professor running against Republican Rich McCormick, a Marine veteran and emergency room doctor. With Georgia being a battleground state, this will likely be a hard fought race.

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT			
Iowa-02: Open seat* *still pending	Sen. Mariannette Miller-Meeks (R) 	Rita Hart (D) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Of the three competitive Iowa seats, this one might be the toughest for Democrats to hold.■ Republican state Sen. Mariannette Miller-Meeks, an ophthalmologist and Army veteran, is well-known here.■ Rita Hart, former state Senator and the 2018 lieutenant governor nominee, still needs to introduce herself to more voters in the district.
New Mexico-02	Rep. Xochitl Torres Small (D): Incumbent 	Yvette Herrell  ✔ Winner	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The fight between Democratic Rep. Xochitl Torres Small and Yvette Herrell is the only 2018 rematch on this list.■ Torres Small won by less than 2 points in 2018 in a district Trump carried by 10 points.■ Trump still has support here, and Republicans argue that Herrell, who won a competitive primary earlier this year, is a stronger candidate
New York-02: Open seat	Andrew Garbarino (R)  ✔ Winner	Jackie Gordon (D) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Democrat Jackie Gordon, a former councilwoman and veteran of the Army Reserves, is running against Republican state Assemblyman Andrew Garbarino.■ Republicans think a law-and-order message and efforts to tie all Democrats to “defund the police” will resonate here.
Oklahoma-05	Rep Kendra Horn (D) Incumbent  <i>Co-sponsored S.286, The Mental Health Access Improvement Act.</i>	Sen. Stephanie Bice (R)  ✔ Winner	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Democratic Rep. Kendra Horn’s victory in 2018 catapulted her to the top of most vulnerable lists heading into 2020.■ She is facing Republican state Sen. Stephanie Bice, who created a more moderate image in the primary, talking about teachers and education in a way that could appeal to suburban women – a key demographic in this district.

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT	
South Carolina-01	<div> <div> <div>Rep. Joe Cunningham (D): Incumbent</div>  </div> <div> <div>Nancy Mace (R)</div>  <div>  Winner </div> </div> </div> <div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Republicans see state Representative Nancy Mace, the first woman to graduate from the Citadel, as a strong candidate for the GOP. ■ In 2018, Cunningham used his opposition to drilling, an important issue in this coastal district, to land a victory and he has followed through on that promise, with the House passing his bill to ban offshore drilling last fall. </div>
Texas-22: Open seat	<div> <div> <div>Sri Preston (D)</div>  </div> <div> <div>Troy Nehls (R)</div>  <div>  Winner </div> </div> </div> <div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ This Houston area-district underscores how diversifying suburban districts may be moving away from Republicans. ■ Republican Troy Nehls, an Army veteran and county sheriff, has a profile in the district and is running on a law-and-order message. </div>
Texas-23: Open seat	<div> <div> <div>Gina Ortiz Jones (D)</div>  </div> <div> <div>Tony Gonzales (R)</div>  <div>  Winner </div> </div> </div> <div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Jones is trying to flip this district. A former Air Force intelligence officer, Jones has had the race to herself for most of the summer, while the GOP contest wasn't decided until late August. ■ Trump's pick, former Navy cryptologist Tony Gonzales, emerged as the nominee after his runoff opponent dropped his recount effort. ■ This expansive border district has been an elusive target for Democrats. Gonzales has a strong profile and should benefit from presidential turnout in an increasingly competitive state. </div>
Texas-24: Open seat	<div> <div> <div>Candace Valenzuela (D)</div>  </div> <div> <div>Beth Van Duyne (R)</div>  <div>  Winner </div> </div> </div> <div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ This race which takes place in the Dallas suburbs is an opportunity for Democrats, whose candidate, Candace Valenzuela, would be the first Afro-Latina in Congress. ■ Former Mayor Beth Van Duyne is one of the record number of Republican women who have won nominations this year, and her profile may help win over some of the suburban women that Republicans have been losing. </div>

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT			
Utah-04* *still pending	Burgess Owens (R) 	Rep. Ben McAdams (D): Incumbent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Burgess Owen, a former NFL player and Fox News commentator who won a four-way primary, is giving Democratic freshman Rep. Ben McAdams a competitive race. ■ Owens isn't distancing himself much from the President, embracing his rhetoric about fighting socialism. ■ Utah has been less friendly to Trump than other red states, and the 4th District has a history of electing moderate Democrats.

2020 Gubernatorial Races				
American Samoa	Lemanu Palepoi Mauga (Nonpartisan)  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Winner Lt. Governor Mauga is proposing a broad spectrum of policy proposals that invest in culturally appropriate education and career readiness, including, stronger career pathways for K-12 students as well as, salary increases and appropriations for counselors and administrators in educational settings and counselor recruitment.	Nuanuaolefeagaiga Saoluaga T. Nua (Nonpartisan)  Nua's policy proposals center around a clean and energy independent American Samoa. Nua proposes promoting renewable energy sources such as solar, wind, hydro-electric, ocean and biomass. Nua's campaign platform does not specifically outline any plans regarding health care or mental health.	I'aulualo Fa'afetai Talia (Nonpartisan)  L'aulualo and Tapa'au are running their campaign around their healthcare policy which includes addressing substance use disorders (SUDs) through evidence based community care and building up the entire health care workforce, including appropriations for student loan forgiveness and an independent regulatory board.	Gaoteote Palaie Tofau (Nonpartisan)  Senator Tofau's policy proposals focus on building up the health care workforce, building a drug rehabilitation and treatment center, updating Medicaid implementation, provide greater health care resources to correctional center, and investments in telehealth.

2020 Gubernatorial Races

Delaware

Gov. John Carney (D)
Incumbent



☑ Winner

- Governor Carney helped introduce the *Beau Biden Gun Violence Prevention Act* to help directly confront the issue of mental health and gun access. The *Beau Biden Act* passed unanimously and was signed into law.

Julianne Murray (R)



- Murray plans is to declare opioid abuse a Public Health Emergency:
- Statewide Task Force on Opioid Drug Abuse
- Modify Prescriber Practices
- Community Health Education Initiatives
- Crack Down on the Spread of Illegal opioids in the state.

Indiana

Gov. Eric Holcomb (R)
Incumbent



☑ Winner

- Governor Holcomb has established *BeWellIndiana.org*, provides free mental health resources that have been vetted by experts.

Dr. Woody Myers (D)



- Dr. Myers is focusing on the health care disparities made apparent by COVID-19. Dr. Myers plans to increase access and affordability through investments in telehealth infrastructure, providing incentives to address provider shortages particularly in rural areas.

Missouri

Gov. Mike Parson (R)
Incumbent



☑ Winner

- Governor Mike Parson is running for re-election prioritizing stronger communities through investments in public safety and health care to offset the damage of COVID-19.

Auditor Nicole Galloway (D)



- As Governor, Auditor Galloway pledges to create an Office Of Health Policy. The Office of Health Policy will allow reimbursement for in-home care, including acute care; to expand community programs combatting the opioid crisis; and to expand Medicaid coverage to include clinics in every county, telehealth reimbursement support, and expanding access to mental health care.

2020 Gubernatorial Races

Montana

Lt. Governor Mike Cooney (D)



- Lt. Governor Cooney proposes focusing on public health policy in order to increase access to behavioral and rural health care.

Congressman Greg Gianforte (R)



✓ **Winner**

- Congressman Gianforte has consistently stressed the need to ensure quality health care for veterans who may be suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Congressman Gianforte aims to do this through increased resources for the VA system, improved access to community care, and the expansion of telemedicine.

New Hampshire

Gov. Chris Sununu (R): Incumbent



✓ **Winner**

- In 2019, the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) released the "10-Year Mental Health Plan." The Plan will provide access to the full continuum of care, including community education and engagement; prevention and early intervention services; outpatient, inpatient and crisis supports and services; child-focused strategies; the integration of mental health and primary health care; and intensified efforts to address suicide prevention

State Senator Dan Feltes (D)



- Sen. Feltes led the charge for affordable health care, paid family and medical leave insurance, clean energy, and common-sense gun safety. Sen. Feltes proposes to protect Medicaid expansion, continue combating the opioid crisis, aid senior citizens in enhancing access to healthcare, and further implement the first-ever comprehensive children's system of mental health care in New Hampshire, including a statewide mobile crisis and intervention team for children.

North Carolina

Gov. Roy Cooper (D): Incumbent



✓ **Winner**

- Governor Cooper signed into law Senate Bill 476 – School Based Mental Health. Governor Cooper also oversaw the creation of the *North Carolina Task Force for Racial Equity in Criminal Justice* to address racial inequities in North Carolina's criminal justice system.

Lt. Gov. Dan Forest (R)



- Lt. Governor Forest proposes greater healthcare access by incentivizing doctors to practice in rural communities. Additionally, Lt. Governor Forest has promised to work with the General Assembly and the State Treasurer to ensure price transparency for prescription drugs and vital health services.

2020 Gubernatorial Races

North Dakota

**Gov. Doug Burgum (R):
Incumbent**



✓ **Winner**

- Governor Burgum received support for a Presidential Disaster Declaration Request to focus on the health and welfare of those in North Dakota during the COVID-19 pandemic, including behavioral health.

Dr. Shelley Lenz (D)



- Dr. Lenz proposed working with the state legislature to increase access to holistic preventative health care including nutrition, mental health, dentistry, vision, physical rehabilitation, senior and geriatric care, especially for rural communities.

2020 Gubernatorial Races

Puerto Rico

Pedro Pierluisi (PNP) (D)



✓ **Winner**

Pierluisi is a candidate from the incumbent "New Progressive Party" (PNP) that seeks statehood. Pierluisi is predominately focused on economic recovery from COVID-19 and recent natural disasters in Puerto Rico focusing on critical areas for investment including health care, education, infrastructure, and workforce support.

Carlos Delgado Altieri (PPD)



Mayor Delgado is a member of the governing body of the "Popular Democratic Party" (PPD). In 2017, Mayor Delgado's policy proposals focused primarily on economic development, social inequality, and public security. His campaign platform does not specifically outline any plans regarding health care or mental health.

Senator Juan Dalmau (PIP)



Dalmau proposes a new relationship between Puerto Rico and the United States as a non-colonial territory. Dalmau's campaign platform does not specifically outline any plans regarding health care or mental health.

Alexandra Lúgaro



Among Lúgaro's policy proposals are an increase in the minimum wage, violence prevention in schools, eliminating wage inequality, and workforce development.

2020 Gubernatorial Races

Utah

**Lt. Governor
Spencer Cox (R)**



☑ **Winner**

- To combat the rising suicide rate, Governor Herbert established the Teen Suicide Prevention Task Force in January 2018. The task force has successfully advocated for 11 enacted bills expanding mental health and suicide prevention resources and programs throughout Utah.

Chris Peterson (D)



- Peterson aims to make healthcare more accessible and affordable by streamlining the healthcare system. Peterson has also expressed an interest in bolstering mental health resources in order to curb rising cases of mental illness and suicide.

Vermont

**Gov. Phil Scott (R):
Incumbent**



☑ **Winner**

- In 2017, Governor Scott signed into law an Act that established the Mental Health Crisis Response Commission. The Commission was created to review and improve law enforcement interactions with persons assumed to have a mental health crisis through exhibiting certain behaviors.

**Lt. Gov. David
Zuckerman (D)**



- Lt. Gov. Zuckerman has pledged to ensure Medicare and Medicaid remain fully funded. Lt. Gov. Zuckerman also pledges to support the Veterans Medical Center in White River Junction, to support efforts to combat substance use disorders (SUDs), and to support mental health efforts in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Washington

**Gov. Jay Inslee (D):
Incumbent**



☑ **Winner**

- Governor Jay Inslee proposes focusing on strengthening the state psychiatric hospitals and redesigning the community-based behavioral health care system; integrating physical and behavioral health services for Washington Apple Health (Medicaid) clients; and fighting the opioid public health crisis.

Loren Culp (R)



- Loren Culp has prioritized addressing the COVID-19 pandemic, supporting unions, reducing government regulation and taxes, conserving natural resources, and education. Culp's campaign platform does not specifically outline any plans regarding health care or mental health.

2020 Gubernatorial Races

West Virginia

**Gov. Jim Justice (R):
Incumbent**



✓ **Winner**

- Governor Justice has worked to promote a culture of health in rural West Virginia through the implementation of the “Creating a Culture of Health in Rural West Virginia” strategy report. Through implementation of this report, Governor Justice encourages investments; tracking; and creating programs to address substance use disorders (SUDs), addiction, and chronic mental health disorders.

**County
Commissioner
Ben Salango (D)**



- Commissioner Salango has pledged to fight the escalating cost of health care in order to make health care affordable and accessible. Salango pledges to prioritize telehealth technology in order to give rural communities better access to health care.

Medicare

- This election cycle, candidates on both sides of the aisle have been vocal about the need to expand health care coverage to more Americans.
- The conversations surrounding Medicare has included a restructuring of the 55-year-old program that provides health care to most Americans over age 65 and those with disabilities, and “Medicare for All.”
- This year H.R.945, the Mental Health Access Improvement Act, was voted out of committee and is set to be voted on by the full House, then onto the Senate. Since we are entering a lame duck session, the bill will likely need to be re-introduced after the election, which would allow new members of both the House and Senate to review the legislation and potentially become a bill co-sponsor.

Education Funding

- The House has passed legislation upwards of \$436 billion for state and local relief; some of which states would likely use for education. There are policy and funding disagreements amongst the White House, House Democrats, and Senate Republicans.
- If relief funding is approved before the election, many state education budget cuts could be prevented.
- If a relief package isn’t approved soon, some education systems will have to make budget cuts which could possibly effect the establishment and retention of school counseling programs.

The Supreme Court

- If Supreme Court justices reverse rulings that aid in administering behavioral health services to Americans in need, those rulings could adversely impact the counseling profession.
- President Trump has decided to nominate Judge Amy Coney Barrett, who has since been confirmed to the Supreme Court, to replace Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg.
- Adding Judge Barrett solidifies a 6-3 Conservative-Majority on the Supreme Court bench.
- Judge Barrett's conservative views on LGBTQ issues and the Affordable Care Act potentially places health care in jeopardy and could impact decisions and future rulings regarding mental health care in this country.
- On November 10, 2020, the Court is scheduled to hear oral arguments in the case of *California V. Texas* and *Texas V. California* regarding the constitutionality of the Affordable Care Act. The Court's decision could potentially disrupt the health care coverage of millions of Americans (during a pandemic), which would impact the counseling community.

117th Congress: Federal Post-Election Strategy

- The American Counseling Association (ACA) will continue its federal advocacy efforts within congressional offices as well as with other government entities regarding Medicare reimbursement for licensed professional counselors, additional funding for the establish and retention of school counseling programs, working with the veterans administration to provide more positons for professional counselors, and legislation to support college and career counselors.
- ACA has already started to prepare updated one pagers and white papers, which will be distributed within the first two weeks of the new legislative cycle to the offices of bill co-sponsors, as well as provide updated information to newly elected members of Congress.
- We will also re-introduce our Medicare legislation at the beginning of the New Year and communicate with lead sponsors in the House and Senate to collaborate on the bill.

Moving into the 117th Congress, ACA will also provide a 2021 strategy update – which will include updated information on our efforts surrounding the interstate compact as well as counseling and law enforcement. This is only a snapshot of how the 2020 elections may affect the counseling community. For a broader overview of post-election results, please review Arnold & Porter's Post-Election Election Analysis 2020."

<https://www.arnoldporter.com/en/perspectives/topics/election-2020>