



2020 Virtual Town Hall

Presented by ACA Government Affairs and Public Policy Department

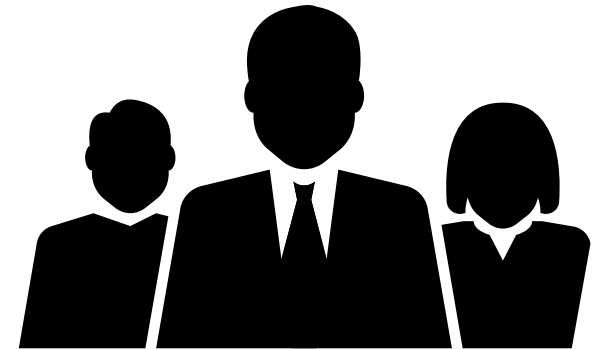
ACA's Government Affairs and Public Policy Team is here to Advocate and Educate on Behalf of Counselors Nationwide.



Federal Lobbying



State Lobbying



Grassroots Engagement

Panelists



Richard Yep



Brian D. Banks



Guila Todd



Matthew Fullen



Duane K. L. France



Dominique Marsalek



Dania Y. Lofton



Janelle Cox



Chun-Shin Taylor

Moderator



Brian D. Banks

Director, *Government Affairs and Public Policy*
American Counseling Association

Agenda

Introduction:

Richard Yep, *CAE, FASAE, CEO*
American Counseling Association

Guest Speaker:

Rep. Mike Thompson, US Congressman (D-5-CA)

Federal Updates:

Guila Todd, American Counseling Association

Medicare Research:

Matthew Fullen, *PhD., MDiv, LPCC*
Virginia Tech

Counselors and Vets:

Duane K. L. France, *MA, MBA, LPC*
Family Care Center

State Updates:

Dominique N. Marsalek, American Counseling Association

Grassroots Updates:

Dania Y. Lofton, Esq., MPA, American Counseling Association

Janelle Cox, EdD., LPCC, Bowie State University

Chun-Shin Taylor, PhD., LCPC, NCC, ACS, Mending Hearts Academy

Question and Answers

Closing

Moderator:

Brian D. Banks, *Director, Government Affairs and Public Policy*, American Counseling Association

Welcome



Richard Yep

CAE, FASAE, CEO
American Counseling Association

Guest Speaker



Rep. Mike Thompson | US Congressman
(D-5-CA)

Federal Legislation



Guila Todd

Government Affairs Manager
Government Affairs and Public Policy, ACA



Matthew Fullen

PhD., MDiv, LPCC (OH)
Assistant Professor of Counselor
Education, Virginia Tech



Duane K. L. France

MA, MBA, LPC
Director of Veteran Services,
Family Care Center

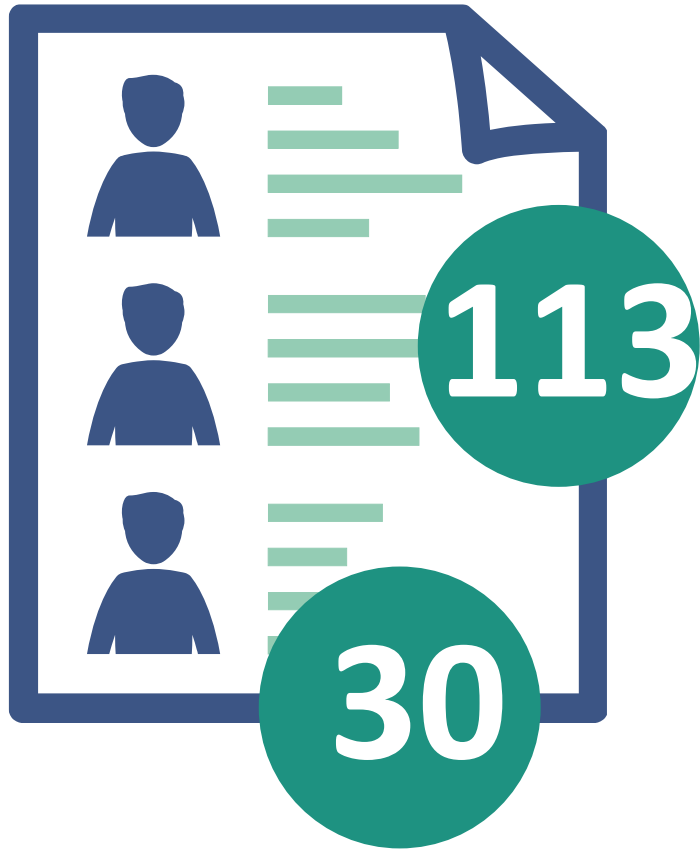
Federal Update



Guila Todd

Government Affairs Manager
Government Affairs and Public Policy, ACA

The Mental Health Access Improvement Act of 2019 – S.286 | HR.945



A Year of Federal Policy Success

More Congressional members taking action on mental health

There are currently 113 co-sponsors in the House and 30 co-sponsors in the Senate

The Mental Health Access Improvement Act of 2019 – S.286 | HR.945



A Year of Federal Policy Success

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) fully engaged

Counseling profession now included in the federal Expansion of Practitioner Education Grant

Term “counselor” includes LPCs or LMHCs on SAMHSA’s Find Treatment

The Mental Health Access Improvement Act of 2019 – S.286 | HR.945



A Year of Federal Policy Success

Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS):

SUPPORT Act

Certified Opioid Treatment Programs (OTP) may bill Medicare for treatment provided by an LPC/LPMHC

Medicare reimbursement is released directly to the OTP where services were rendered for the LPC/LPMHC.

The Mental Health Access Improvement Act of 2019 – S.286 | HR.945



A Year of Federal Policy Success

CARES Act

Provide telebehavioral health services to Medicare beneficiaries during the COVID-19 health emergency.

Remote telebehavioral health services

The Mental Health Access Improvement Act of 2019 – S.286 | HR.945



A Year of Federal Policy Success

U.S. Department of Education (Title IV-Part A):

Increased funding for school counseling programs

The Title IV Part A block grant was funded at \$1.17 billion for FY 19

The Mental Health Access Improvement Act of 2019 – S.286 | HR.945



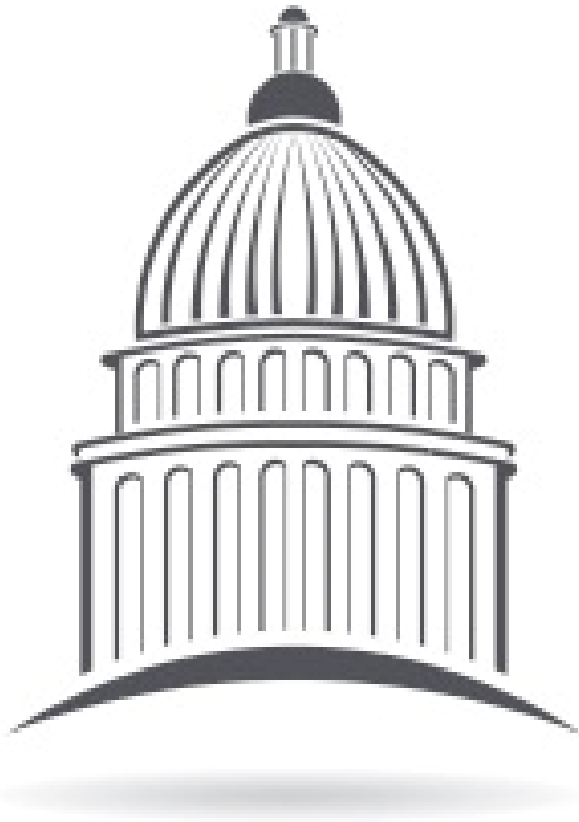
A Year of Federal Policy Success

U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs Office of Mental Health Services:

Building relationships and collaboration
with VA officials

Published articles in *Counseling Today*

The Mental Health Access Improvement Act of 2019 – S.286 | HR.945



A Year of Federal Policy Success

ACA Hosted a Congressional Briefing on Medicare Reimbursement:

Senator John Barrasso (R-WY) – primary bill sponsor for S.286

20+ Congressional staffers from the House of Representatives
and the Senate

100 ACA members meet with their congressional members

The Mental Health Access Improvement Act of 2019 – S.286 | HR.945

Where are we now?

Advocacy Campaigns:

Requested our members to contact both the House Ways and Means Committee and Senate Finance Committee to urge passage of this legislation.

Requested stories from ACA membership about the effect that COVID-19 has had on them and their clients.

Virtual meetings are being set with members of the House Ways and Means Committee and the Energy and Commerce Committee to push for attaching bill language to a moving legislative vehicle.

ACA is also part of the Medicare Access Coalition, whose work includes advocacy for the full inclusion of LPMHC's as Medicare providers.

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Medicare Research

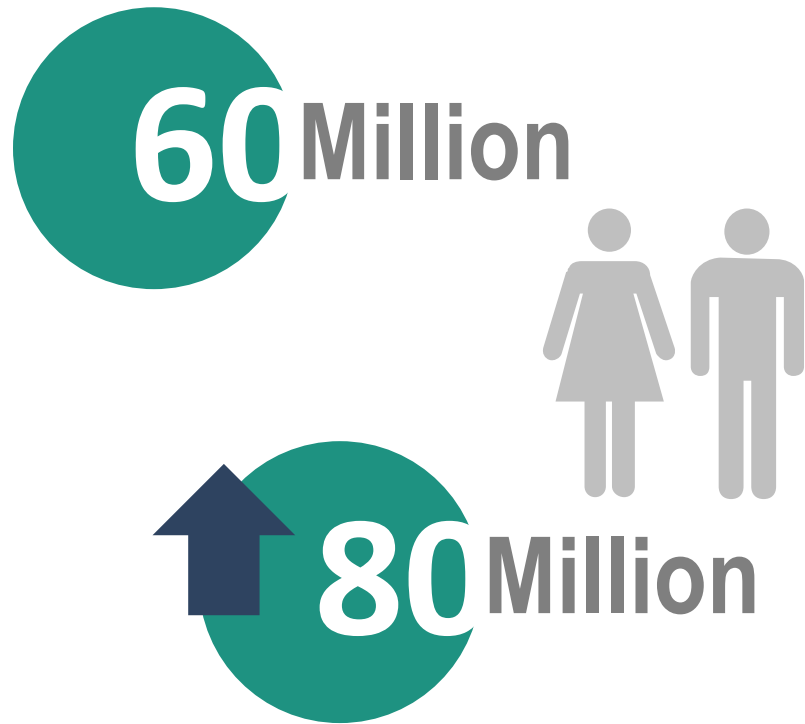


Matt Fullen

PhD., MDiv, LPCC (OH)
Assistant Professor of Counselor Education, Virginia Tech

Medicare Reimbursement for Counselors

Advocacy Updates & Policy Implications



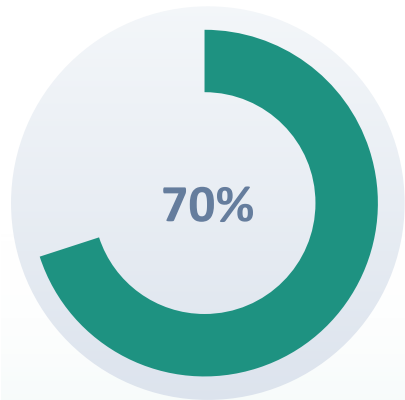
Medicare is the primary insurance provider for approximately **60 million** Americans*, and the number of beneficiaries is expected to surpass **80 million** by 2030**

*Kaiser Family Foundation, 2019

** Medicare Payment Advisory Commission, 2015

Medicare Reimbursement for Counselors

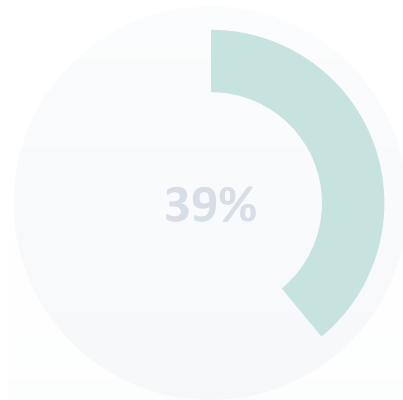
Advocacy Updates & Policy Implications



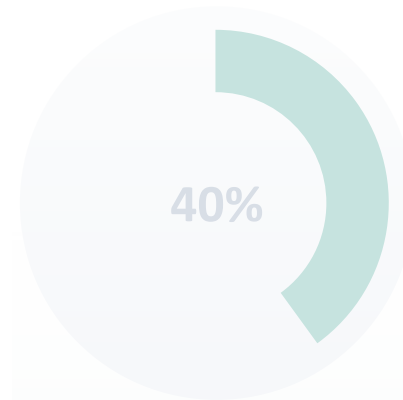
70% of practicing counselors had been impacted by the Medicare mental health coverage gap



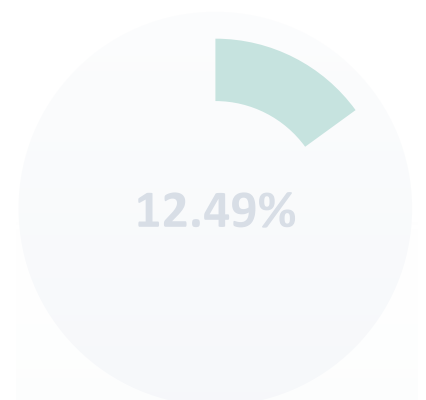
50% had turned away new business



39% had referred an existing client who became Medicare-eligible



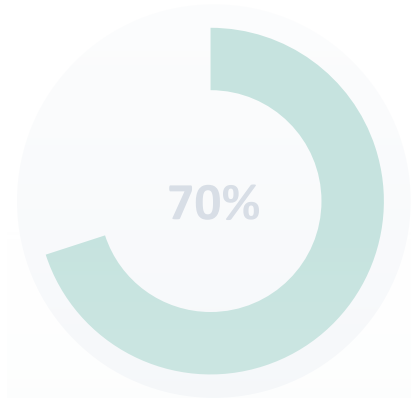
40% had changed their fee to continue providing services



12.49% of providers in Psychology Today's database took Medicare.

Medicare Reimbursement for Counselors

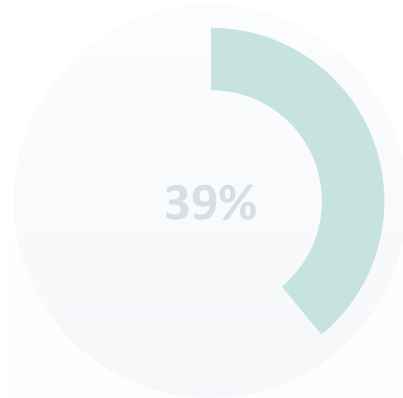
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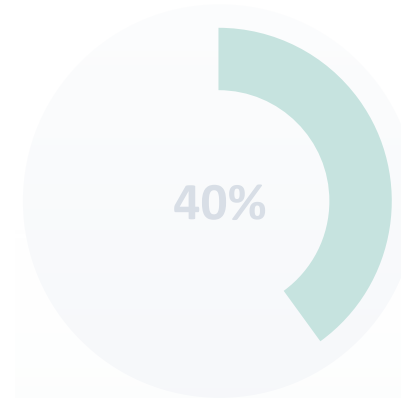
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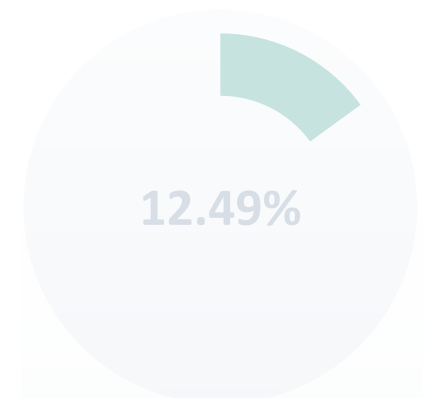
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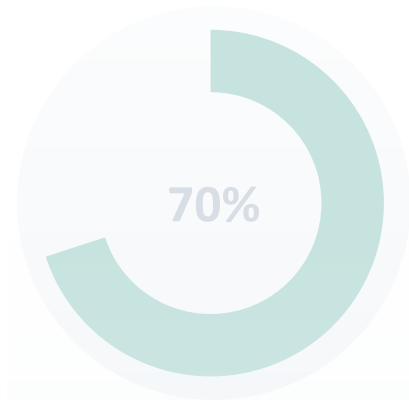
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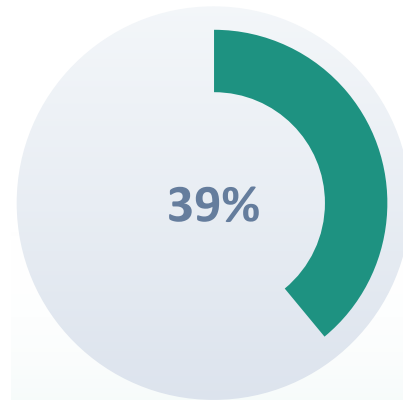
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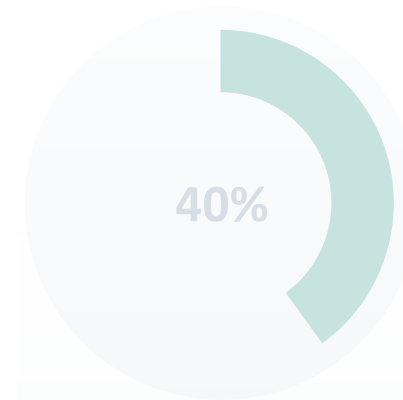
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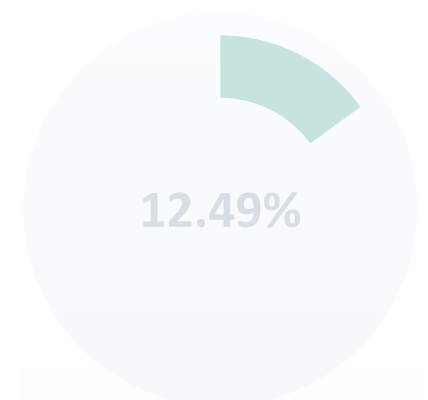
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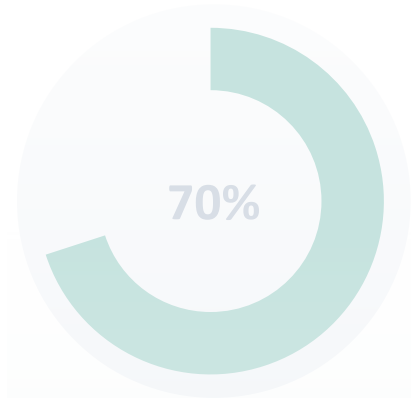
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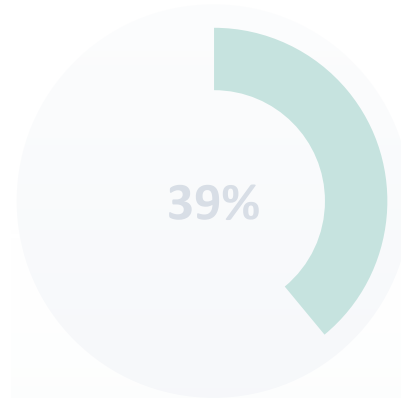
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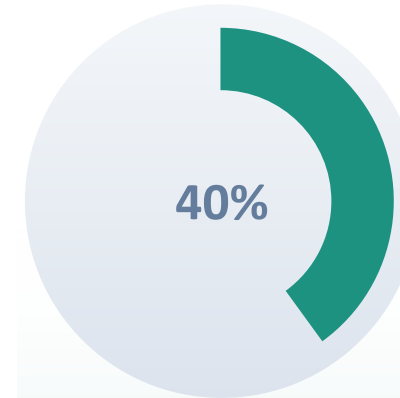
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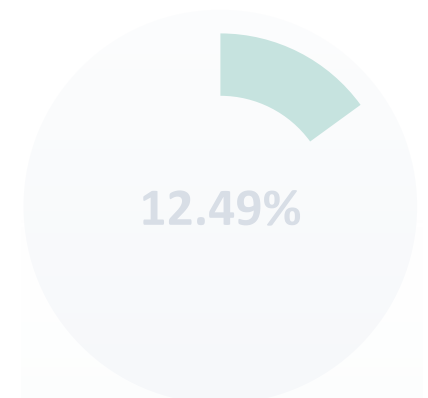
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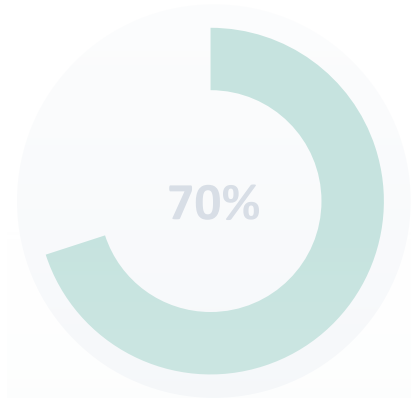
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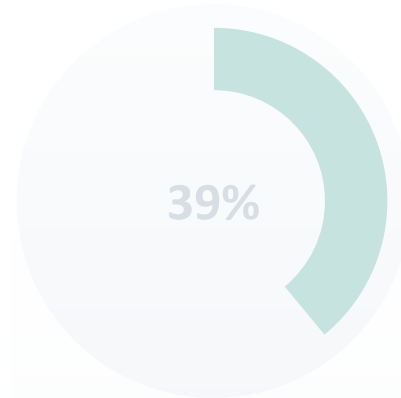
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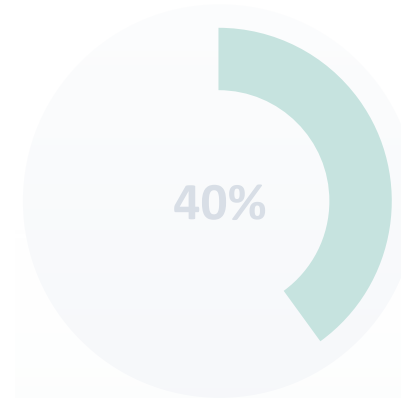
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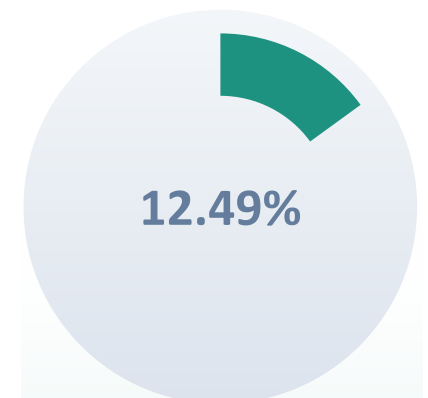
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Advocacy Updates & Policy Implications



Interviews with Medicare recipients reveal that:

It's difficult to find providers who are eligible to take Medicare

Medicare recipients place a premium on therapeutic relationship

Recipients wonder, why they are forced to start over

Medicare Reimbursement for Counselors

Advocacy Updates & Policy Implications



Advocacy Conclusions:

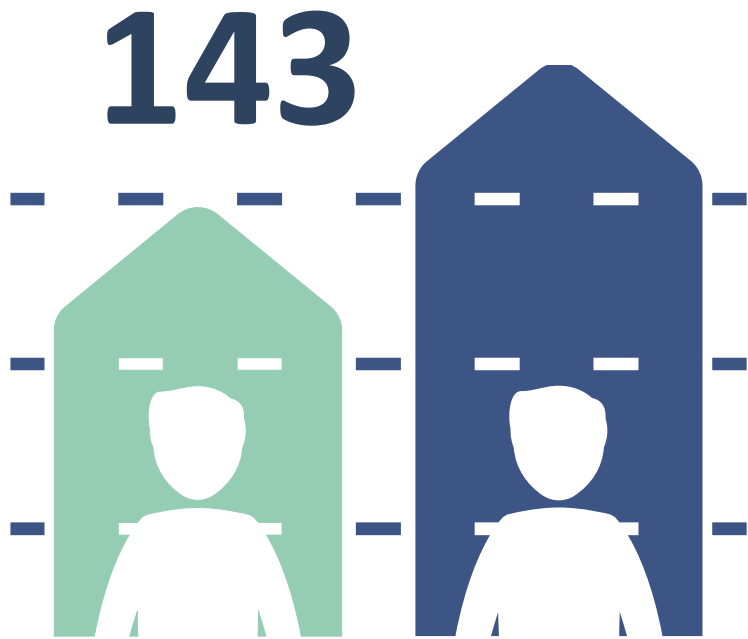
The impact of current Medicare policy on clients & the counseling profession is more pervasive than we realized

Frame problem as lack of access to needed services rather than as professional equity issue

Emphasize that Medicare is only remaining insurer that excludes LPCs

The Mental Health Access Improvement Act of 2019 – S.286 | HR.945

Advocacy Updates & Policy Implications



Medicare advocacy victories:

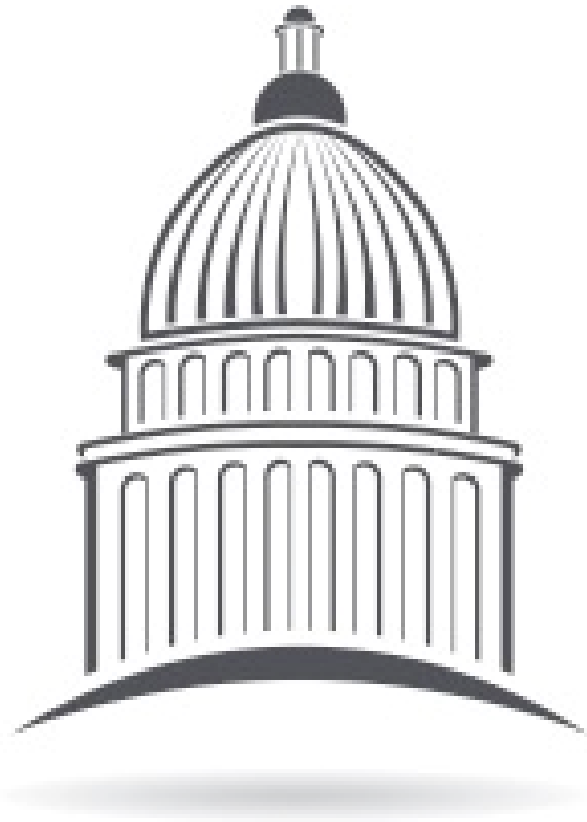
Current bills reach new heights

Advocacy resulting in CMS changes

References in national media

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Advocacy Updates & Policy Implications



Next Steps: COVID-19 stimulus package advocacy

Removing the Medicare mental health coverage gap is essential

Modernizing Medicare so that it is consistent with other insurance programs

Bills align federal policy with the realities of the behavioral health marketplace, resulting in care that is more cost-effective, efficient, and timely

Federal Legislation



Duane K. L. France

MA, MBA, LPC

Director of Veteran Services, Family Care Center

VA Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention



LPMHC training programs

Office of Academic Affiliations (OAA) currently funds eight LPMHC training programs

Commander John Scott Hannon Mental Health Care Improvement act of 2019

Mental Health Education Expansion Initiative, Phase VII 2020–2021

State Legislation

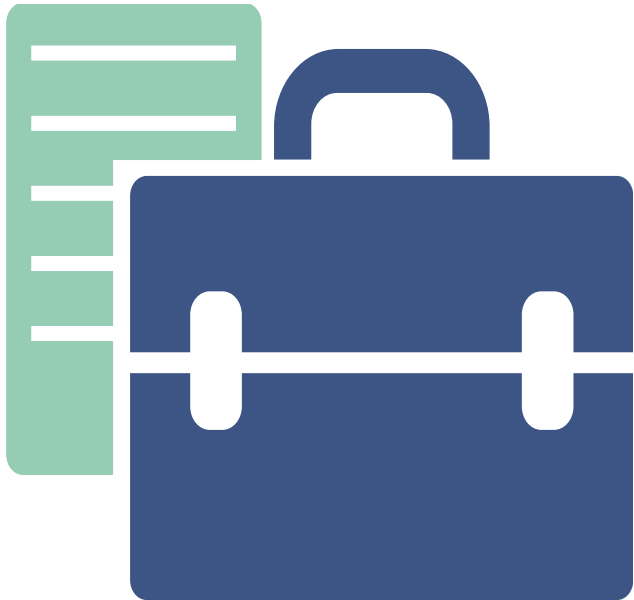


Dominique Marsalek

Government Affairs Specialist, ACA
Government Affairs and Public Policy

State Legislation

Counseling and Covid-19



Resource Package

Telebehavioral Health for States

Template Letter to State Governors

COVID-19 State Resources

State Support

Governor's Office/Executive Orders

Governor's Cabinet/Executive Administration

Licensure Boards

State Legislation

A State-Based Policy Framework:



Bring states into greater alignment

Issue the guidance necessary to provide critical mental health services

Work with our national ACA network and allies to advance key priorities and policy:

- Interstate compact for licensure

- Conversion therapy bans

- Ensuring ethical and educational standards meet current best practices

State Legislation

Where are we now?

Interstate Compact for Licensure

Finishing a bill draft for stakeholder feedback this month

Living contract between partner states regarding licensure portability

Approximately a two year timeframe before implementation

Bill draft estimated to be ready by late fall of this year

Conversion Therapy Bans

Registered a rising tide of anti-LGBTQ legislation this session at the state level

Virginia became the 20th state to ban this unethical practice

We will continue to monitor into and throughout 2021

Ensuring ethical and educational standards

Greater alignment through outreach

Monitoring of regulatory board activity

Promoting regulatory board representation in key states

Providing members with resources to advocate.

State Legislation

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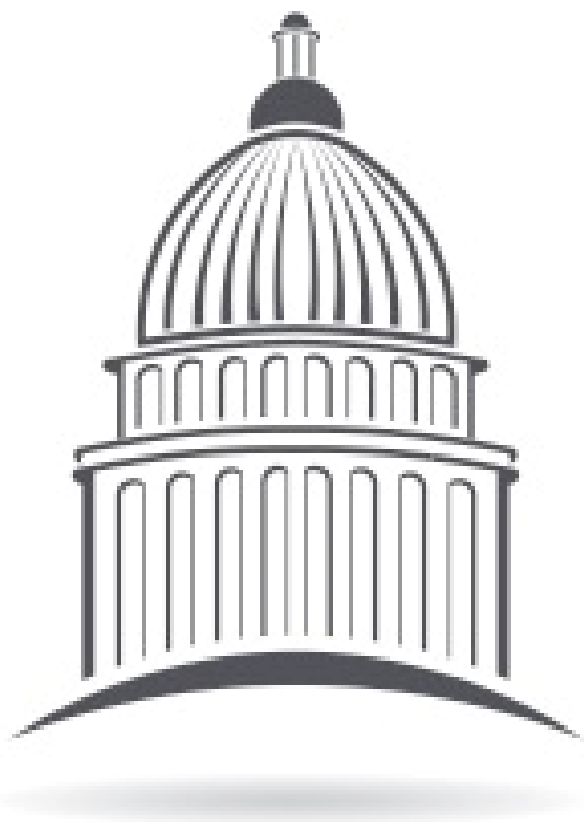
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Providing members with resources to advocate

State Legislation

Key Policy Monitoring



Expanding Insurance Coverage

Local Funding and Appropriations

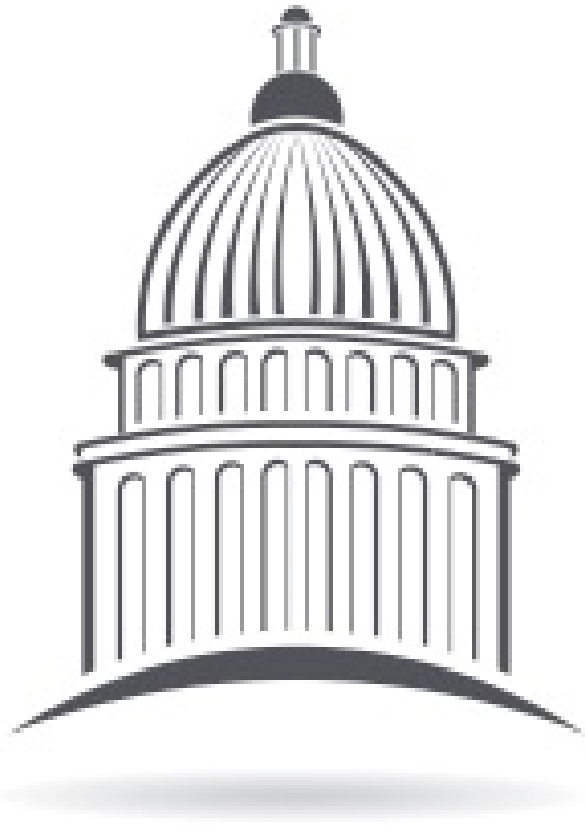
Local Supports for Community Based Mental Health Programs

Student Loan Repayment Programs

Implementation of The Support Act and Support of Drug Use Disorder Treatment Programs

State Legislation

Encourage states to:



Stay Engaged

Beyond organizations – Building out partnerships, coalitions, and community

Lead

Contact your state Governor for open board positions on mental health, regulatory matters, education, and professional permitting and licensure issues

Run for Local Office

PTA, school board, neighborhood/community positions, private professional board membership in outward serving organizations like Rotary International etc. Run for your ACA Board!

Grassroots



Dania Y. Lofton

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Government Affairs Specialist
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Janelle Cox

EdD., LPCC

Assistant Professor of Counselor
Education, Bowie State



Chun-Shin Taylor

PhD., LCPC, NCC, ACS

Counselor, Consultant, Creative Writer

Grassroots



Dania Y. Lofton

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ACA Government Affairs and Public Policy

Grassroots

Messages sent

17,431

Advocates Recruited

4,029

Stories Collected

1,780

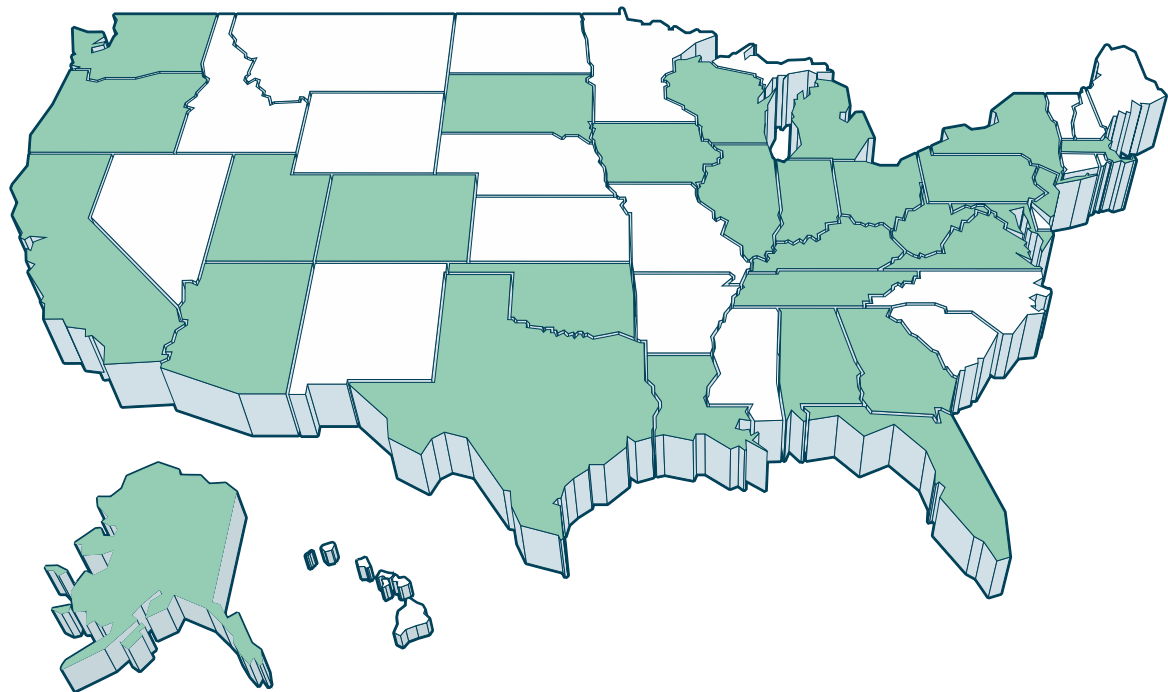
Campaigns

Federal Legislation Impacting Counselor Reimbursement
HR 5092, The Counseling for Career Choice Act of 2019

Most Active States

Texas, Illinois, Pennsylvania, Louisiana

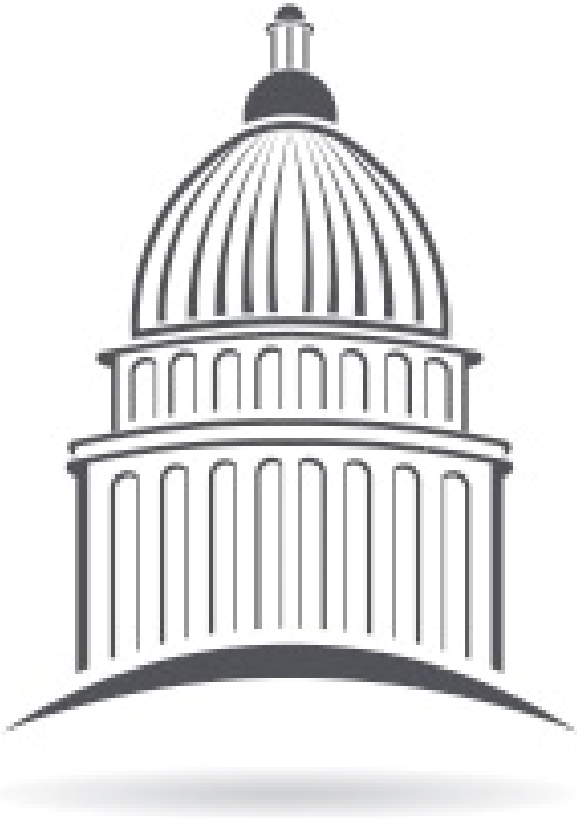
ACA Branch and Divisions



Grassroots Accomplishments

Worked closely with 28 states on state policy and regulatory priorities

New Initiatives



Monthly “Advocacy Power Hour”

Story Collection Campaign

Updated Advocacy Toolkit

Federal Lobbying Testimony



Janelle Cox

EdD., LPCC

Assistant Professor of Counselor Education, Bowie State

State Lobbying Testimony



Chun-Shin Taylor

PhD., LCPC, NCC, ACS
Counselor, Consultant, Creative Writer

Call to Action

Grassroots Challenge

3 Tasks:

Sign-up to receive alerts at:

counseling.org/government-affairs/actioncenter

Share your story with us at:

counseling.org/government-affairs/actioncenter

Complete and submit the virtual town hall feedback survey

We Need You!

YOU
are the key!

YOU are the most valuable tool that we have.

YOU are the issue experts.

YOU are the constituent.

Legislators want and need to hear from YOU.

Are You a Member?



**ACA
Publications**



**Continuing
Education**



**Political
Advocacy**



**Ethics
Consultations**



**Career
Advancement**



Take Action!

counseling.org/government-affairs/actioncenter

Visit our website

counseling.org/government-affairs/public-policy

Contact Information



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