



# Better Social Policies for a Better America

AGENDA AND PROGRESS

A summary of research and  
engagement to inform federal policy



**Grand Challenges**  
for Social Work

## **THE 12 GRAND CHALLENGES**

Build Financial Capability for All  
Ensure Healthy Development for All Youth  
Promote Smart Decarceration  
End Homelessness  
Advance Long and Productive Lives  
Create Social Responses to a Changing Environment  
Achieve Equal Opportunity and Justice  
Close the Health Gap  
Stop Family Violence  
Eradicate Social Isolation  
Reduce Extreme Economic Inequality  
Harness Technology for Social Good

### **Better Social Policies for a Better America: Agenda and Progress**

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Grand Challenges for Social Work

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**COVER: PHOTO COURTESY OF THE ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL.**

# Better Social Policies for a Better America:

## AGENDA AND PROGRESS

The Grand Challenges for Social Work was launched by the American Academy of Social Work & Social Welfare as a groundbreaking initiative to champion social progress powered by science. For more than a century, social workers have been transforming our society. Social work interventions doubled the number of babies who survived in the early twentieth century, helped millions out of poverty from the Great Depression to today, and assisted people with mental illness through deinstitutionalization, aftercare, treatment, and advocacy.<sup>1</sup>

Today we face large-scale and interrelated challenges, including economic inequality, mass incarceration, racism, xenophobia, increasing environmental disasters, widespread substance abuse, older adults living in isolation, and more. The 12 Grand Challenges for Social Work define a far-reaching social agenda that promotes

- ❖ individual and family well-being,
- ❖ a stronger social fabric, and
- ❖ a just society that fights exclusion and marginalization, creates a sense of belonging, promotes trust, and offers pathways for social and economic progress.<sup>2</sup>

We need social workers' unique blend of scientific knowledge and caring practice, as well as interdisciplinary teams of experts collaborating on policy and practice innovations. Together, we can achieve grand accomplishments.

Several criteria were used in identifying these challenges, including evidence of the potential for meaningful and measurable change within 10 years. These changes require systemic policy reform.

With leadership by an executive committee comprised of members from universities and national organizations, core research and policy action take place within the network of each Grand

Challenge. These networks are multidisciplinary collaborations involving researchers, practitioners, educators, and policy experts.

This document highlights policy recommendations set forth by each of the 12 Grand Challenges networks, and summarizes the research and policy activities of those networks' efforts to inform federal policy and achieve social progress over the next several years.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> M. Sherraden et al., *Grand Accomplishments in Social Work*, Grand Challenges for Social Work Working Paper 2 (Baltimore: American Academy of Social Work & Social Welfare, 2014), <http://grandchallengesforsocialwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/FINAL-Grand-Accomplishments-sb-12-9-13-Final.pdf>; E.S. Uehara, *Identifying and Tackling Grand Challenges for Social Work*, Grand Challenges for Social Work Working Paper 3 (Baltimore: American Academy of Social Work & Social Welfare, 2014), <http://grandchallengesforsocialwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/SmallwCoverHistory-of-Social-Work-GC-IslandWood-2012-EDITEDFINALFINAL-5-27-2014.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> R. Fong, J.E. Lubben, and R.P. Barth, *Grand Challenges for Social Work and Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018).



## **BUILD FINANCIAL CAPABILITY FOR ALL**

Inequalities in income and wealth, accompanied by lack of access to safe and affordable financial products and services, have led to increasing financial vulnerability in socioeconomically disadvantaged families. Millions of families, especially racial and ethnic minority families, face difficult financial decisions and are excluded from publicly supported opportunities to accumulate assets such as savings for education, home purchase, and retirement. To get by, they turn to expensive and often risky financial products.

All families require access to beneficial financial products and policies, financial education and guidance, and consumer financial protections. Improving their financial capability and growing their assets will generate well-being, security, and avenues for social development. We propose to engage social work and allied professionals in building financial capability and assets to improve financial well-being for all.

### **Policy Recommendations**

- ❖ Start lifelong asset building with universal and progressive Child Development Accounts (CDAs).
- ❖ Maintain a strong Consumer Financial Protection Bureau to help ensure the transparency, safety, fairness, and affordability of financial products and services.
- ❖ Prepare social workers and human service practitioners to build financial capability and assets for all through access to affordable higher education.
- ❖ Create a web-based financial capability gateway that, as a platform, synthesizes all of an individual's financial records into one location to facilitate financial management, financial literacy/guidance, and engagement with formal financial institutions.<sup>1</sup>

- ❖ Increase access to safe and affordable credit, and opportunities to build credit.<sup>2</sup>
- ❖ Help households build emergency savings.<sup>3</sup>
- ❖ Expand access to banking and financial services.<sup>4</sup>
- ❖ Encourage tax-time saving.
- ❖ Evaluate the extent to which asset limits, as part of eligibility criteria for major health and social assistance programs, affect program participation and financial well-being.<sup>5</sup>

**Research on Universal and Progressive Child Development Accounts.** The SEED for Oklahoma Kids (SEED OK) statewide experiment is the nation’s first randomized, controlled trial of universal and progressive Child Development Accounts, with assignment of an Oklahoma 529 College Savings Plan account at birth. SEED OK research aims to assess CDA feasibility while investigating short- and long-term impacts on savings for children, parents’ expectations and behaviors, and children’s developmental outcomes. The research is being conducted by the Center for Social Development at Washington University in St. Louis.

Key findings indicate the importance of universal automatic enrollment and document impact on both financial and nonfinancial outcomes.<sup>6</sup> Most notably, CDAs

- ❖ substantially increase asset building for postsecondary education,
- ❖ improve the social development of young children, and
- ❖ improve mental health, parenting practices, and educational expectations of mothers. (Positive effects are usually greater for low-income and disadvantaged families.)<sup>7</sup>

**Statewide Implementation of CDAs.** The following state policies were informed by the SEED OK research:<sup>8</sup>

- ❖ Pennsylvania recently launched a statewide policy to provide 529 college savings accounts for all newborns with a \$100 scholarship grant. The Keystone Scholars policy started in 2019 and is for any child who is a Pennsylvania resident at birth or adopted by a Pennsylvania family. Governor Tom Wolf signed the legislation into law June 22, 2018.<sup>9</sup>
- ❖ Four other states have implemented statewide CDAs using the 529 college savings plan: Connecticut (Baby Scholars), Maine

(Harold Alfond College Challenge), Nevada (College Kick Start), and Rhode Island (CollegeBound Baby).

- ❖ State legislation is pending in Nebraska, informed by testimony from SEED OK Project Director Margaret Clancy, and talks are in progress with legislators in Michigan.

**Research on Tax Time Savings.** Research findings on refunds at tax time (Refund to Savings initiative at Washington University in St. Louis) support policies that encourage tax-time saving, including emergency funds and savings bonuses.<sup>10</sup> The following are key findings:

- ❖ Encouraging refund saving at tax time has a latent effect on opening savings accounts.<sup>11</sup>
- ❖ The offer of modest savings bonuses generates strong interest in saving.<sup>12</sup>
- ❖ Home mortgage delinquency rates among low- and moderate-income tax filers who gained private health insurance under the Affordable Care Act were lower than the rates among those who did not. This finding supports efforts to expand health insurance coverage.<sup>13</sup>

## Network Co-Leads

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> J. Huang et al., *Policy Recommendations for Meeting the Grand Challenge to Build Financial Capability and Assets for All*, Grand Challenges for Social Work Policy Brief 11 (Cleveland: American Academy of Social Work & Social Welfare, September 2016), <https://doi.org/10.7936/K7057FG8>.

<sup>2</sup> J. Birkenmaier, M.R. Despard, and T. Friedline, *Policy Recommendations for Financial Capability and Asset Building by Increasing Access to Safe, Affordable Credit*, Grand Challenges for Social Work Policy Brief 11-2 (Cleveland: American Academy of Social Work & Social Welfare, 2018), <http://grandchallengesforsocialwork.org/grand-challenges-initiative/12-challenges/build-financial-capability-for-all/>.

<sup>3</sup> M.R. Despard, T. Friedline, and J. Birkenmaier, *Policy Recommendations for Helping U.S. Households Build Emergency Savings*, Grand Challenges for Social Work Policy

Brief 11-3 (Cleveland: American Academy of Social Work & Social Welfare, 2018), <http://grandchallengesforsocialwork.org/grand-challenges-initiative/12-challenges/build-financial-capability-for-all/>.

<sup>4</sup> T. Friedline, M.R. Despard, and J. Birkenmaier, *Policy Recommendations for Expanding Access to Banking and Financial Services*, Grand Challenges for Social Work Policy Brief 11-4 (Cleveland: American Academy of Social Work & Social Welfare, 2018), <http://grandchallengesforsocialwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/PB11-4.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup> L. Hamilton et al., “Guarding Public Coffers or Trapping the Poor? The Role of Public Assistance Asset Limits in Program Efficacy and Family Economic Well-Being” (Unpublished manuscript, 2019).

<sup>6</sup> S.G. Beverly, M.M. Clancy, and M. Sherraden, *Universal Accounts at Birth: Results from SEED for Oklahoma Kids*, CSD Research Summary 16-07 (St. Louis: Washington University, Center for Social Development, 2016), <https://doi.org/10.7936/K7QC0305>.

<sup>7</sup> J. Huang et al., “Impacts of Child Development Accounts on Parenting Practices: Evidence from a Randomised Statewide Experiment,” *Asia Pacific Journal of Social Work and Development* (2019), <https://doi.org/10.1080/02185385.2019.1575270>; J. Huang, Y. Kim, and M. Sherraden, “Material Hardship and Children’s Social-Emotional Development: Testing Mitigating Effects of Child Development Accounts in a Randomized Experiment,” *Child: Care, Health and Development* 43, no. 1 (2017): 89–96, <https://doi.org/10.1111/cch.12385>; J. Huang et al., “Unmarried Mothers and Children’s Social-Emotional Development: The Role of Child Development Accounts,” *Journal of Child and Family Studies* 26, no. 1 (2017): 234–47, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-016-0551-1>; Y. Kim et al., “Child Development Accounts, Parental Savings, and Parental Educational Expectations: A Path Model,” *Children and Youth Services Review* 79 (2017): 20–28, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2017.05.021>.

<sup>8</sup> M. Sherraden, M.M. Clancy, and S.G. Beverly, *Taking Child Development Accounts to Scale: Ten Key Policy Design Elements*, CSD Policy Brief 18-08 (St. Louis: Washington University, Center for Social Development, 2018), <https://doi.org/10.7936/K71C1WF9>.

<sup>9</sup> Fiscal Code – Omnibus Amendments, Act of Jun. 22, 2018, Pub. L. 281, No. 42, <https://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/legis/li/uconsCheck.cfm?yr=2018&sessInd=0&act=42>.

<sup>10</sup> S.P. Roll et al., *Refund to Savings 2015–2016: Field Experiments to Promote Tax-Time Saving in Low- and Moderate-Income Households*, CSD Research Report 18-28 (St. Louis: Washington University, Center for Social Development, 2018), <https://doi.org/10.7936/K72J6BD5>.

<sup>11</sup> M.R. Despard et al., “Effects of a Randomized Tax-Time Savings Intervention on Savings Account Ownership among Low- and Moderate-Income Households,” *Journal of Financial Counseling and Planning* 29, no. 2 (2018): 219–33, <http://doi.org/10.1891/1052-3073.29.2.219>.

<sup>12</sup> M.R. Despard et al., “Effects of an Online Tax-Time Savings Intervention and Refund Deferral Choices among Earned Income Tax Credit Recipients” (Unpublished manuscript under revision with *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 2019).

<sup>13</sup> E.A. Gallagher et al., *Home Delinquency Rates Are Lower among ACA Marketplace Households: Evidence from a Natural Experiment*, CSD Research Brief 17-01 (St. Louis: Washington University, Center for Social Development, January 2017), <https://doi.org/10.7936/K72B8XJP>.



## ENSURE HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT FOR ALL YOUTH

Behavioral health problems in childhood and adolescence take a heavy toll over a lifetime, with significant impacts on rates of economic independence, morbidity, and mortality. A large body of scientific evidence over 30 years shows that behavioral health problems can be prevented.

Within a decade, we can reduce the incidence and prevalence of behavioral health problems in the population of young people from birth to age 24 by 20% from current levels, and reduce racial and socioeconomic disparities in behavioral health problems by 20% through the widespread implementation of tested and effective preventive interventions.

### Policy Recommendations

- ❖ Ensure that 10% of all public funds spent on young people support effective prevention programs.
- ❖ Increase local and state capacity to support the high quality implementation of effective preventive interventions.
- ❖ Develop community-level systems to monitor risk, protection, and behavioral-health outcomes.
- ❖ Reduce the duration of untreated mental illness in young people.
- ❖ Train and enable a workforce for effective prevention practice.
- ❖ Provide tested, effective, family-focused, preventive interventions without cost to patients or families through primary health-care providers.<sup>1</sup> Network leaders identify specific policy actions to build congressional support for the implementation and testing of family-focused preventive interventions:
  - ❖ Encourage the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to explore payment mechanisms for effective family-focused preventive interventions.

- ✧ Direct the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration to study parenting programs and include them in future pediatric preventive-care recommendations.
- ✧ Fund a pilot initiative for tests of parenting programs in primary care and ensure that findings from such evaluations are published and communicated to officials with the Health Resources and Services Administration and the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force.<sup>2</sup>

**Congressional Briefing: Revitalizing Communities across America: Philanthropic and Federal Investments.**

On May 29, 2018, three national foundation leaders (the presidents of the William T. Grant Foundation and the Annie E. Casey Foundation, and the senior vice president of the Laura and John Arnold Foundation) addressed government agencies about initiatives they fund to revitalize economic, academic, and social life in communities across America. The goal was to further align efforts and stimulate innovative, collaborative solutions across the federal government, philanthropic organizations, and community agencies.<sup>3</sup>

**Congressional Briefing: School Violence, Safety, and Well-Being: A Comprehensive Approach.**

On March 22, 2018, one day before the student-led March for Our Lives rally in Washington, DC, the National Prevention Science Coalition convened a congressional briefing on school violence. Experts and practitioners addressed the common goals of achieving student safety and well-being. Experts also discussed solutions ranging from early prevention efforts to reforms in laws and policies surrounding guns. Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School student Lauren Hogg gave a firsthand account of the mass shooting that killed 17 people. Julie Pollack, stepmother of Meadow Pollack, who was one of the students murdered that day, conveyed what that has meant to her as a mother and as an emergency physician.<sup>4</sup>

**Congressional Briefing: Supporting Healthy Parenting through Primary Care.**

A number of evidence-based parenting programs have proven effective in preventing children's behavioral disorders, from anxiety and depression to drug use and violence. However, despite their effectiveness, several barriers keep families and children from participating in or receiving these interventions. There is an opportunity to integrate family-focused preventive interventions into primary care settings. This briefing, given on April 19, 2016, brought together researchers and evaluators, practitioners, policymakers,

and parents to discuss the effectiveness of family-focused prevention interventions, as well as personal accounts of how these interventions have had positive effects on families.<sup>5</sup>

**School Safety and Gun Violence.** The Council on Social Work Education has drafted a statement outlining its position on school safety and gun violence prevention. The council's president, who is a member of the Grand Challenges Executive Committee, met and shared this principles document with members of Congress. It includes calls for expanded access to mental and behavioral health supports at schools, coordination of services with community organizations, increases in the number of mental health professionals in schools and communities, and legislative solutions that address firearm-related injuries and deaths.<sup>6</sup>

**Research on Scaling up Tested and Effective Family-Focused Interventions in Pediatric and Health Care Settings.** “A Pragmatic Trial of Parent-focused Prevention in Pediatric Primary Care: Implementation and Adolescent Health Outcomes in Three Health Systems,” a research project that is part of the National Center for Complimentary and Integrative Medicine’s pragmatic clinical trial collaborator, tests the feasibility and effectiveness of implementing Guiding Good Choices, a universal, evidence-based, anticipatory guidance curriculum for parents of early adolescents. The pragmatic trial is conducted in three large, integrated health care systems in California, Colorado, and Michigan. The systems serve socioeconomically diverse families. Richard F. Catalano is the project’s principal investigator.<sup>7</sup>

**Programs and Evaluations on Increasing Community and State Infrastructure for Delivering Effective Preventive Interventions for Behavioral Health Problems in Children and Youth.** Network members have contributed to three engagements:

- ❖ Communities that Care is a proven prevention system that guides communities to assess risk and protective factors for behavioral health problems and to select tested and effective prevention programs to reduce these problems.<sup>8</sup> This system is being implemented and evaluated in 58 Colorado cities and towns.
- ❖ Life Skills Training,<sup>9</sup> a prevention program proven to reduce alcohol and other drug use, violence, and other behavioral health problems, is being implemented in all public middle schools in the state of Utah.

- ❖ A statewide plan for the primary prevention of substance abuse has been created with the support from the Colorado Office of Behavioral Health.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> J.D. Hawkins et al., *Policy Recommendations for Meeting the Grand Challenge to Ensure Healthy Development for All Youth*, Grand Challenges for Social Work Policy Brief 1, (Cleveland: American Academy of Social Work & Social Welfare, 2016), <https://doi.org/10.7936/K7NS0TDC>.

<sup>2</sup> J.M. Jenson and J.D. Hawkins, *Provide Family-Focused Preventive Interventions to Children and Families through Primary Health Care*, Policy Action 1.1 (Cleveland: American Academy of Social Work & Social Welfare, March 2017), <http://grandchallengesforsocialwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/PAS.1.1.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> “Revitalizing Communities across America: Philanthropic and Federal Investments,” National Prevention Science Coalition, May 29, 2018, <https://www.npscoalition.org/congressional-briefings>.

<sup>4</sup> “School Violence, Safety, and Well-Being: A Comprehensive Approach,” National Prevention Science Coalition, March 22, 2018, <https://www.npscoalition.org/congressional-briefings>.

<sup>5</sup> “Congressional Briefing: Supporting Healthy Parenting through Primary Care, on April 19, 2016,” Grand Challenges for Social Work, March 23, 2016, <http://grandchallengesforsocialwork.org/fellow-news/congressional-briefing-supporting-healthy-parenting-through-primary-care/>.

<sup>6</sup> Council on Social Work Education, “Role of Social Work Education in School Safety and Gun Violence Prevention,” July 25, 2018, [https://www.cswe.org/Advocacy-Policy/SWEdu\\_SchoolSafety\\_GunViolence\\_2018.aspx](https://www.cswe.org/Advocacy-Policy/SWEdu_SchoolSafety_GunViolence_2018.aspx).

<sup>7</sup> “A Pragmatic Trial of Parent-Focused Prevention in Pediatric Primary Care: Implementation and Adolescent Health Outcomes in Three Health Systems,” University of Washington School of Social Work, accessed March 7, 2019, <https://socialwork.uw.edu/research-project/pragmatic-trial-parent-focused-prevention-pediatric-primary-care-implementation-and>.

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.communitiesthatcare.net/>.

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.lifeskillstraining.com/>.



## PROMOTE SMART DECARCERATION

The United States is the world leader in incarceration, which has led to staggering economic, social, and human costs for our society. The most vulnerable groups have been substantially overincarcerated in this crisis: people of color, people living in poverty, and people with behavioral health disorders. With smart decarceration, we can reduce the prison and jail population by one million people in the next decade. This would entail a proactive, cross-sector, and evidence-driven approach that addressed existing racial and economic disparities and promoted a philosophical shift in how we think about incarceration and public safety.

### Policy Recommendations

- ❖ Use incarceration primarily for incapacitation of the most dangerous.
- ❖ Make reduction of disparities a key outcome in decarceration efforts.
- ❖ Remove civic and legal exclusions for people with criminal charges and convictions.
- ❖ Reallocate resources to community-based supports.<sup>1</sup>

**The FIRST STEP Act.** Signed into law on December 21, 2018, the act reforms the federal criminal justice system by facilitating reductions in prison time through implementation of evidence-based recidivism reduction programs.<sup>2</sup> Leadership of the Promote Smart Decarceration network contributed to several associated policy discussions.

**Federal Prison Reform Summit.** Carrie Pettus-Davis, co-lead of the Network to Promote Smart Decarceration, helped to organize and participated in the summit held on May 18, 2018. The summit was part of a bipartisan effort to enact a prison reform bill.

**Legislative Briefing.** Matt Epperson, co-lead of the Network to Promote Smart Decarceration, organized a Capitol Hill briefing on sentencing reform. Held on June 28, 2018, the event addressed elements in the Sentencing Reform and Corrections Act and the First Step Act.

**Tools and Tactics: Promising Solutions to Advance the Era of Smart Decarceration.** Senator Dick Durbin spoke at the Smart Decarceration Initiatives' second national conference, which was organized by Matt Epperson and Carrie Pettus-Davis and held at the University of Chicago on November 2, 2017.

## Network Co-Leads

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> M. Epperson and C. Pettus-Davis, *Policy Recommendations for Meeting the Grand Challenge to Promote Smart Decarceration*, Grand Challenges for Social Work Policy Brief 9, (Cleveland: American Academy of Social Work & Social Welfare, September, 2016), <https://doi.org/10.7936/K7DJ5F50>.

<sup>2</sup> First Step Act of 2018, Pub. L. No. 115-391 (2018).



## END HOMELESSNESS

Homelessness and housing instability is a substantial problem that afflicts a diverse group of subpopulations in the United States. During the course of a year, nearly 1.5 million Americans experience homelessness for at least one night. Despite decades of efforts to stem the tide, the scope and persistence of homelessness in the United States has severe and lasting effects on the health and well-being of those affected.

With a focused yet reimagined approach to the issue—an approach that combines evidence, resources, innovative thinking, and political will—we can reduce the scope of homelessness in the United States as well as the risk factors, such as housing and income instability, that contribute to the issue.

### Policy Recommendations

- ❖ Expand access to housing subsidies, including Housing Choice Vouchers.
- ❖ Ensure that evidence-based psychosocial interventions accompany housing assistance for those in need.
- ❖ Develop and evaluate housing-led interventions for specific populations.<sup>1</sup>

### State Legislation: Ending Youth Homelessness Act of 2018.

Members of the Grand Challenges Network to End Homelessness contributed to efforts to pass the Ending Youth Homelessness Act of 2018 in the state of Maryland.<sup>2</sup> The act, a possible model for other states, creates a grant program in the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development to fund housing and supportive services for unaccompanied homeless youth and youth at risk of homelessness. The act also provides for youth inclusion and leadership in grant making activities, as well as performance standards and outcome measures designed to address the

overrepresentation of racial minority and LGBTQ youth among youth experiencing homelessness in Maryland. The legislation was introduced by Delegate Mary Washington and Senator William Smith. Delegate Washington is a member of the Regional University of Maryland, School of Social Work, Hub to End Homelessness Council. The policy was informed by the Homelessness Council, the Homeless Persons Representation Project, the Grand Challenges Network to End Homelessness, and community partners, including the Youth Empowered Society Drop-In Center and its youth leaders.<sup>3</sup>

**Policy Statement on Affordable Housing.** On June 13, 2018, a group of leaders from the Network to End Homelessness issued “HUD’s Making Affordable Housing Work Act: Dangerous Policy in a Time of Crisis,” a statement opposing the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s Making Affordable Housing Work Act.<sup>4</sup> The authors wrote: “Current proposed legislation would have a devastating effect on millions of Americans who receive federal housing assistance through rental subsidies and public housing.”

**Expert Witness Testimony.** Benjamin Henwood, co-lead of the Grand Challenges Network to End Homelessness, was a key expert witness in *Glover v. Laguna Beach*, the American Civil Liberties Union of California’s class-action case, which resulted in a settlement with accommodations for homeless people with physical and mental disabilities.<sup>5</sup> This agreement sets precedent for other cities to follow in complying with the federal Americans with Disabilities Act and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

**Expert Witness Testimony.** On September 25, 2018, Deborah Padgett, co-lead of the Grand Challenges Network to End Homelessness, served as an expert witness before the U.S. District Court of the Southern District of Florida. In those proceedings, the American Civil Liberties Union of Florida challenged the city of Miami’s failure to enforce the Pottinger Agreement, which limited the Miami Police Department’s ability to criminalize homeless individuals.<sup>6</sup>

**Research on Homeless Count.** Benjamin Henwood was a lead researcher in the Los Angeles County Homeless Count, the results of which directed \$110 million in U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development funds to Los Angeles County in 2018. Los Angeles uses the homeless count to assess need and reports the results from that assessment in its application for federal funds.<sup>7</sup>

**Research on Homeless Services.** Findings from a street survey of homeless New Yorkers identified bureaucracy as a major barrier in the “street-to-home” journey. Deborah Padgett was principal investigator in a collaboration between New York University’s Silver School of Social Work and the nonprofit agency Human-NYC.<sup>8</sup>

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> D.K. Padgett, B.F. Henwood, and D.P. Culhane, *Policy Recommendations for Meeting the Grand Challenge to End Homelessness*, Grand Challenges for Social Work Policy Brief 6 (Cleveland: American Academy of Social Work & Social Welfare, September 2016), <https://doi.org/10.7936/K7J67GFJ>.

<sup>2</sup> 2018 Md. Laws 3855.

<sup>3</sup> Homeless Persons Representation Project, “Ending Youth Homelessness Act of 2018,” accessed March 7, 2019, [http://hprplaw.org/end\\_homelessness/campaigns\\_and\\_policy\\_priorities/ending\\_youth\\_homelessness\\_act\\_of\\_2018](http://hprplaw.org/end_homelessness/campaigns_and_policy_priorities/ending_youth_homelessness_act_of_2018).

<sup>4</sup> E. Bowen et al., “HUD’s Making Affordable Housing Work Act: Dangerous Policy in a Time of Crisis,” Grand Challenge to End Homelessness, May 9, 2018, <https://www.gc2eh.org/blog/hud-s-making-affordable-housing-work-act-dangerous-policy-in-a-time-of-crisis>; for the text of the proposal, see U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, “Administration Legislative Proposal Bill Text,” April 25, 2018, <https://www.hud.gov/sites/dfiles/Main/documents/RentReformLegislativeText.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup> *Glover v. City of Laguna Beach*, No. No. 8:15-cv-01332-AG-DFM (C.D. Cal. Nov. 5, 2018) (order granting motion for final approval of class action settlement), [https://www.aclusocal.org/sites/default/files/aclu\\_socal\\_glover\\_20181106\\_final\\_order\\_approving\\_settlement.pdf](https://www.aclusocal.org/sites/default/files/aclu_socal_glover_20181106_final_order_approving_settlement.pdf); American Civil Liberties Union of California, “Accord Settles Long Standing Lawsuit over Homelessness Facilities and Programs,” Press release, June 6, 2018, <https://www.aclusocal.org/en/press-releases/aclu-and-paul-hastings-law-firm-reach-historic-pact-homelessness-city-laguna-beach>.

<sup>6</sup> *Pottinger v. Miami*, No. 88-2406-CIV-MORENO (S.D. Fla. 2018) (motion to enforce Pottinger Consent Decree and hold the city in contempt), [https://www.aclufl.org/sites/default/files/pottinger\\_enforcement\\_motion.pdf](https://www.aclufl.org/sites/default/files/pottinger_enforcement_motion.pdf).

<sup>7</sup> R. Mackovich, “Homeless Count Drops 3 Percent in L.A. County since 2016,” USC News, June 1, 2018, <https://news.usc.edu/144010/homeless-count-drops-for-first-time-in-four-years/>; “LA Awarded More Than \$109 Million for HUD Continuum of

Care Programs," CHIRP/LA, January 16, 2018, <http://www.chirpla.org/news/la-awarded-more-109-million-hud-continuum-care-programs>.

<sup>8</sup> Human-NYC, *Street Homelessness in New York City: Policy Review and Recommendations* (New York: Human-NYC, 2019), [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1PTnWt0aSdr-kuHEmySi\\_lzXtjTiI5LiQ/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1PTnWt0aSdr-kuHEmySi_lzXtjTiI5LiQ/view).



## ADVANCE LONG AND PRODUCTIVE LIVES

Population aging has created new challenges and opportunities for individuals and society. These challenges include outdated and age-segregated social institutions, as well as growing economic insecurity and health inequity; they undermine the ability for older adults to lead productive and meaningful lives.

We will create opportunities for individuals over their lifetime to acquire new knowledge and skills and to utilize talents and resources in a variety of paid and unpaid roles that maximize health, foster economic security, provide purpose in life, and enrich families and communities.

### Policy Recommendations

- ❖ Create flexible and transitional employment arrangements through tax incentives and workplace policies.
- ❖ Provide financial support to caregivers through the expansion of paid family and medical leave and legislative efforts such as the Family and Medical Insurance Leave Act and Social Security Caregiver Credit Act.
- ❖ Expand the Corporation for National and Community Service's support for engaging older adults.<sup>1</sup>
- ❖ Protect workers from age discrimination.

**Policy Action: Expansion of Paid Family and Medical Leave.** In March 2017, Ernest Gonzales and Nancy Morrow-Howell, two of the co-leads in the Network to Advance Long and Productive Lives, issued a Policy Action statement detailing the benefits of expanding policy in this area.<sup>2</sup> Over 100 experts in aging and work signed a November 2017 letter urging Congress to address the nation's caregiving crisis and support paid family and medical leave.<sup>3</sup> Less than a week later, *The Hill* published "Considering a National

Paid Leave Policy,” an essay on the proposal, by network Co-leads Jacquelyn B. James and Jennifer C. Greenfield.<sup>4</sup>

**Policy Action: Strengthening Social Security 2100 Act.** While much has been made of long-term threats to the solvency of the Old Age, Survivors, Disability Insurance program, proposed changes in social policy can correct the noted problem. The Social Security 2100 Act proposes to end the practice of capping the wages subject to FICA (or Federal Insurance Contributions Act) taxes for those who earn over \$400,000 a year, to raise minimum benefits by 2%, and to increase slightly (by about 50¢ weekly) the FICA taxes paid by employers and workers.<sup>5</sup> Jeane Anastas and Ernest Gonzales discuss the Act in a forthcoming Policy Action statement.<sup>6</sup> Actuaries project that the measure would insure the solvency of the trust fund past 2090. Increases in the minimum benefit will be most helpful to women and people of color, who are disadvantaged in the current system. Only with a stable and adequate income base can people *choose* to work or retire and to engage in the necessary caregiving and other activities through which older people contribute so much to society. The Expand Social Security Caucus in the House and the Congressional Social Work Caucus can be strong allies in this work.

**Research Study: Findings Suggest That States Should Not Tie Medicaid Eligibility to Work.** While a growing body of research has documented the health benefits of working longer, a study authored by network members and published in the *Journals of Gerontology: Series B* revealed that work conditions experienced by many older workers can lead to worsening health and unemployment, exacerbating poverty and the risk of homelessness.<sup>7</sup> The study underscores the importance of the goodness-of-fit between individual capacity and job demands, suggesting that not all work in later life is associated with improved health. This study is important because it reinforces findings by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities that eligibility for Medicaid *should not* be tied to employment.<sup>8</sup>

**Research Study: Federal Legislation Needed to Protect Older Workers from Age Discrimination in the Workplace.** Ernest Gonzales and colleagues at New York University’s Silver School of Social Work completed a population-based investigation with data from the Health and Retirement Study. Published by the Center for Retirement Research at Boston College, the study revealed

that older workers experience a number of social and economic disadvantages in the workplace and neighborhoods, and across their lifetimes, that resulted in earlier retirement.<sup>9</sup> In another longitudinal population-based study published by the *Journals of Gerontology: Series B*, Lisa Marchiondo, Ernest Gonzales, and Larry Williams found that older workers' mental health was affected by age-based discrimination within the workplace.<sup>10</sup> The authors discussed federal legislation proposed with bipartisan support: Protecting Older Workers Against Discrimination Act (S. 443) and Fair Employment Protection Act (S. 2019).<sup>11</sup> These actions can help older adults work longer and protect their mental health.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> N. Morrow-Howell, E. Gonzales, and C. Matz-Costa, *Policy Recommendations for Meeting the Grand Challenge to Advance Long and Productive Lives*, Grand Challenges for Social Work Policy Brief 4 (Cleveland: American Academy of Social Work & Social Welfare, September 2016), <https://doi.org/10.7936/K7Q23ZR1>.

<sup>2</sup> E. Gonzales, N. Morrow-Howell, and H. Ho, *Expand Paid Family and Medical Leave*, Policy Action 4.1 (Cleveland: American Academy of Social Work & Social Welfare, March 2017), <http://grandchallengesforsocialwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/PAS.4.1.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> J.B. James et al. to members of Congress, November 1, 2017, [https://www.bc.edu/content/dam/files/research\\_sites/agingandwork/pdf/documents/Caregiving\\_letter\\_10\\_30\\_2017.pdf](https://www.bc.edu/content/dam/files/research_sites/agingandwork/pdf/documents/Caregiving_letter_10_30_2017.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> J.B. James and J.C. Greenfield, "Considering a National Paid Leave Policy," *The Hill*, November 7, 2017, <https://thehill.com/blogs/congress-blog/labor/359043-considering-a-national-paid-leave-policy>.

<sup>5</sup> H.R. 1902, 115th Cong. (2018), <https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/1902>; reintroduced in H.R. 860, 116th Cong. (2019), <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/860>. Companion legislation was

introduced in the Senate during the 115th Congress (S. 2671) and has been reintroduced in the 116th Congress (S. 269, <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/senate-bill/269>).

<sup>6</sup> J. Anastas and E. Gonzales, *Strengthen Social Security 2100 Act*, Policy Action 4.1 (Cleveland: American Academy of Social Work & Social Welfare, forthcoming).

<sup>7</sup> K. Carolan et al., "Institutional and Individual Factors Affecting Health and Employment for Low-Income Women with Chronic Health Conditions," *Journals of Gerontology: Series B* (December 19, 2018): gby149, <https://doi.org/10.1093/geronb/gby149>.

<sup>8</sup> H. Katch, J. Wagner, and A. Aron-Dine, *Taking Medicaid coverage away from People not Meeting Work Requirements Will Reduce Low-Income Families' Access to Care and Worsen Health Outcomes* (Washington, DC: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, August 13, 2013), <https://www.cbpp.org/research/health/taking-medicaid-coverage-away-from-people-not-meeting-work-requirements-will-reduce>.

<sup>9</sup> E. Gonzales, Y.J. Lee, W.V. Padula, and L.S. Jung, "Exploring the Consequences of Discrimination and Health for Retirement by Race and Ethnicity: Results from the Health and Retirement Study," CRR Working Paper 2018-6, Center for Retirement Research at Boston College, Chestnut Hill, MA, July 2018, <http://hdl.handle.net/2345/bc-ir:108136>.

<sup>10</sup> L.A. Marchiondo, E. Gonzales, L.J. Williams, "Trajectories of Perceived Workplace Age Discrimination and Long-Term Associations with Mental, Self-Rated, and Occupational Health," *Journals of Gerontology: Series B* (July 12, 2017), gbx095, <https://doi.org/10.1093/geronb/gbx095>.

<sup>11</sup> The Protecting Older Workers Against Discrimination Act was introduced in both houses during the 115th Congress (S. 443, H.R. 2650 (2017)) and reintroduced in the 116th (S. 485, H.R. 1230 (2019)). The Fair Employment Protection Act was introduced in the 115th Congress (S. 2019, H.R. 4152 (2017)) but, as of this writing, has not been reintroduced in the 116th.



## CREATE SOCIAL RESPONSES TO A CHANGING ENVIRONMENT

Unprecedented environmental changes threaten human health and well-being in communities worldwide. Urbanization and population growth are on the rise, and extreme weather events are increasing in frequency and severity. Escalating environmental threats are a social justice issue: social, economic, and environmental inequities are deeply intertwined. People in poverty, children, older adults, members of racial or ethnic minority groups, and people with a history of mental health problems are especially vulnerable to the harmful impacts of environmental change.

We aim to catalyze social responses that strengthen individual and community capacities for anticipating and adapting to environmental changes, particularly for vulnerable groups, and reduce inequities in exposure to environmental risks and access to needed resources.

### Policy Recommendations

- ❖ Adopt and implement evidence-based approaches to disaster risk reduction.
- ❖ Strengthen equity-oriented urban resilience policies and proactively engage marginalized communities in adaptation planning.
- ❖ Develop policies targeting environmentally induced migration and population displacement.<sup>1</sup> Specific policy proposals recommend amending the Stafford Act to charge the Federal Emergency Management Agency with the responsibility for guiding and facilitating planned relocations in the United States, and allocating funding for this purpose.<sup>2</sup>

**Book on the Impact of Climate Change on Vulnerable Communities.** *People and Climate Change*, forthcoming in May 2019, focuses on the social dimensions of climate change. It closely examines

people's lived experience of climate change as well as climate-related injustice and inequity, considering why some groups are more vulnerable than others and what can be done about it. The contributors offer proposals to improve community inclusion in policy change and to transform key social and political institutions.

**Position Paper on the Green New Deal.** Grand Challenges network members Smitha Rao and Samantha Teixeira are authoring a position paper that analyzes the Green New Deal resolution with an environmental and racial-justice lens. The paper will include discussion of social work's potential role in advancing federal policies.

**Research Study on Smart Stormwater.** Lisa Reyes Mason is leading a study funded by the National Science Foundation on social and technical barriers to adoption of smart stormwater technology in three cities: South Bend, Indiana, Ann Arbor, Michigan, and Knoxville, Tennessee. Smart stormwater technology addresses the problem of flooding and flash flooding through real-time use of sensor controls and valves to direct or hold water in a city's stormwater system. The multicity/multistate nature of study lends itself to broader policy implications. Such technology has the potential to improve public safety and limit property damage during extreme weather events.

**Research Study on Extreme Weather Conditions.** This study examines physical and mental health impacts experienced by low- and moderate-income residents of Knoxville, Tennessee, during summer heat waves and extreme winter weather. Its findings informed the city sustainability officer's hazard mitigation plan and have been used to advocate for community engagement in local resilience planning.<sup>3</sup>

**Research Study on Safety during Tornadoes.** Funded by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, this study examines safety during nighttime tornadoes. The study draws upon data from a random sample of Tennesseans. It was conducted in partnership with three National Weather Service offices, media outlets, and emergency management partners. The findings can inform national communication strategies, and the authors offer practical recommendations on how to improve the chances that people will receive a warning at night if one is issued.<sup>4</sup>

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> S.P. Kemp et al., *Policy Recommendations for Meeting the Grand Challenge to Create Social Responses to a Changing Environment*, Grand Challenges for Social Work Policy Brief 7 (Cleveland: American Academy of Social Work & Social Welfare, September 2016), <https://doi.org/10.7936/K7GQ6X8V>.

<sup>2</sup> J. Sears, S.P. Kemp, and L.A. Palinkas, *Develop Policies Targeting Environmentally Induced Displacement in the United States*, Policy Action 7.1 (Cleveland: American Academy of Social Work & Social Welfare, March 2017), <http://grandchallengesforsocialwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/PAS.7.1.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> L.R. Mason et al., "Health Impacts of Extreme Weather Events: Exploring Protective Factors with a Capitals Framework," *Journal of Evidence-Based Social Work* 15, no. 5 (2018): 579–93, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/23761407.2018.1502115>.

<sup>4</sup> L.R. Mason et al., "Tornado Warnings at Night: Who Gets the Message?" *Weather, Climate, and Society* 10, no. 3 (2018): 561–68, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1175/WCAS-D-17-0114.1>.



## ACHIEVE EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND JUSTICE

Past and present prejudice, bias, and stigmatization limit access to quality education and health care, affordable housing, and employment for many Americans. This social marginalization has led the United States to ignore the valuable human capital that exists within these communities, and it has fostered deep inequality throughout society.

Addressing racial and social injustices, deconstructing stereotypes, dismantling inequality, and exposing unfair practices will lead to the full social, civic, economic, and political integration of these marginalized groups.

### Policy Recommendations

- ❖ Accelerate Latino immigrant integration and expand coverage under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.
- ❖ Enhance, expand, and strengthen federal antidiscrimination laws, including the Voting Rights Act.
- ❖ Facilitate development of local, state, and federal policies that promote equitable access to housing, health care, and education.
- ❖ Eliminate zero tolerance policies in schools and promote the use of evidence-informed practices and policies to address racial disproportionality in discipline.<sup>1</sup>

### Ensure Quality, Affordable, and Accessible Higher Education.

The Council on Social Work Education has drafted a statement outlining its position on the Higher Education Act Reauthorization. The council's president, who is a member of the Grand Challenges Executive Committee, met and shared this principles document with members of Congress. The council asserts that key principles in the reauthorization should include retaining

financial supports to ensure affordability for students. The Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program, Federal Work Study, Grad PLUS loans, and other postsecondary grant and loan programs are examples of such supports. The council also states that, given the aging of the population and the rise in substance use, social work programs should be included in the Graduate Assistance in Areas of National Need program.<sup>2</sup>

### **Increasing Success for African American Children and Youth.**

The School Success Project seeks to eliminate disproportionality in school suspension and expulsion, particular for minority school-age children and youth. As a watchdog group interested in successful academic outcomes for K–12 children and youth, the School Success Project seeks to create innovative methods for reducing social welfare problems in society. In drafting district, regional, and state reports, members of the School Success Project make use of evidence-based methods in suggesting to school systems how to eliminate disproportionality in school suspension and expulsion. The project's reports will inform the U.S. Department of Education's Rethink School Discipline campaign. The website for the School Success Project will launch in April 2019.<sup>3</sup>

**Book on Housing Policy.** *Facing Segregation: Housing Policy Solutions for a Stronger Society* provides historical context for patterns of segregation in the United States and offers solutions for local, state, and federal policies. Expansion of housing vouchers, mixed income development, use of the Community Reinvestment Act as a tool for integration, and equitable tax increment financing are among the detailed proposals.<sup>4</sup>

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## **Notes**

<sup>1</sup> R.G. McRoy et al., *Policy Recommendations for Meeting the Grand Challenge to Achieve Equal Opportunity and Justice*, Grand Challenges for Social Work Policy Brief

12 (Cleveland: American Academy of Social Work & Social Welfare, September 2016), <https://doi.org/10.7936/K7QZ29HM>.

<sup>2</sup> Council on Social Work Education, “Ensuring Quality and Accessibility: CSWE Principles for a Higher Education Act Reauthorization,” January 2018, <https://www.cswe.org/Advocacy-Policy/Policy-Agenda/Higher-Education-and-Accreditation/CSWE-HEA-Principles-Final-FEB-2018.aspx>.

<sup>3</sup> The project’s website may be accessed at <https://schoolsuccessproject.com/>.

<sup>4</sup> M.W. Metzger and H.S. Webber, eds., *Facing Segregation: Housing Policy Solutions for a Stronger Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018).



## CLOSE THE HEALTH GAP

Millions of Americans have inadequate access to health care. Health disparities and inequities in the United States are strongly correlated with the economic, social, and environmental factors that surround individuals, communities, and populations. Those social determinants are often based on decades of discrimination and social isolation. The current medical model focuses on individual behavioral care but does not take into account how the social, economic, and geographic environments can affect the health problems of a population or their treatment.

The Grand Challenges Network to Close the Health Gap proposes to develop a socially oriented model of health care that eliminates the root causes of health inequity, promotes upstream interventions, and encourages prevention through use of primary care. Such a model will eradicate the gap that exists for marginalized populations.

### **Policy Recommendations**

- ❖ Focus on settings-based research and policy initiatives and interventions to improve the conditions of daily life that facilitate change on the intermediate, community level.
- ❖ Advance community empowerment and advocacy for sustainable health solutions and prevention through representation in governance of the health-care delivery system and interventions that create sustainable community changes.
- ❖ Cultivate health innovation in primary care and community-based centers to help those with lifelong suffering or inter-generational disadvantage.
- ❖ Promote access to health care and insurance for all through opportunities with the Affordable Care Act as well as by educating communities on the benefits of Medicaid expansion.

- ❖ Foster development of an interpersonal health workforce equipped to deliver transdisciplinary social interventions and collaborative behavioral and physical health care.
- ❖ Develop a global health-policy agenda to reduce alcohol misuse, which is one of the leading causes of preventable death and disease.<sup>1</sup>

### **“Social Work: A Vital Workforce to Address the Opioid Crisis.”**

The Council on Social Work Education issued a statement outlining principles for addressing the opioid crisis. The council’s president, who is a member of the Grand Challenges Executive Committee, met and shared this principles document with members of Congress. Emphasizing the value that social workers contribute, the statement makes several recommendations: ensuring that those battling addiction receive comprehensive and interdisciplinary care, that care teams include social workers, that services are culturally relevant, and that individuals receive access to the full spectrum of needed care, from prevention to treatment to support services.<sup>2</sup>

**“Ensuring Access to Care and Protecting Underserved and Vulnerable Populations.”** In this statement, the Council on Social Work Education outlined principles for health care policy: protecting access to care for all populations, using variables that capture social determinants of health in assessing need and outcomes, ensuring mental-health and health parity in treatment and preventive services, and including social workers in the structure of practice, policy, and research related to professional care services.<sup>3</sup> The council’s president, who is a member of the Grand Challenges Executive Committee, met and shared this principles document with members of Congress.

**Congressional Briefing: When a Good Life Depends on Federal Policy.** Medicaid coverage for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DDs), like all Medicaid coverage, faces funding and policy challenges. The Home and Community Based Services programs are effective, but waiting lists are long, the pool of direct-support personnel has shrunk, housing options are limited, and funding for the programs is at risk. On March 6, 2018, the I/DD Committee of the National Association of County Behavioral Health and Developmental Disability Directors presented a briefing on the future of such programs.<sup>4</sup>

**Congressional Briefing: Addressing the Crisis in Older Adult**

**Mental Health.** On May 17, 2018, Representatives Grace Napolitano (D-CA) and John Katko (R-NY), co-chairs of the House Mental Health Caucus, hosted this briefing to inform the case for increasing behavioral health-care services for seniors. In associated commentary, Grand Challenges Executive Committee member Ronald Manderscheid wrote: “We can predict with great accuracy that by 2060, more than 20 million seniors will be in need of some form of behavioral health services. That number is equivalent to the *total* number of people receiving specialty behavioral healthcare services today.” Held during Mental Health Awareness Month, the event was sponsored by the National Association of County Behavioral Health and Developmental Disability Directors, the National Association for Rural Mental Health, the National Association of Counties, and the National Coalition on Mental Health and Aging.<sup>5</sup>

**Congressional Briefing: Is Treating Depression the Answer to Solving the Opioid Crisis?**

Cohosted on May 23, 2018, by the Congressional Mental Health Caucus, Takeda Pharmaceuticals, and the National Association of County Behavioral Health and Developmental Disability Directors, this event examined the role of mental illness care, specifically treatment of depression, in addressing the current opioid crisis.<sup>6</sup> Persons with depression are more than twice as likely as others to use and become dependent upon opioids.<sup>7</sup> Federal legislation will be an important component in providing an infrastructure for effectively treating co-occurrence of depression and opioid use/addiction.<sup>8</sup>

**Research Hub on Medicaid Policy.**

The recently established Policies for Action Research Hub enables an interdisciplinary team of researchers to conduct research on Medicaid work requirements, mortality changes under the Affordable Care Act, and differences between Medicaid and marketplace coverage. The hub will also conduct “rapid-turnaround analyses” to inform policy proposals that have the potential to impact access to care. Based at Harvard University’s T.H. Chan School of Public Health and funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the hub is a forum for collaboration among researchers at the Chan School, Columbia University, and the Brigham & Women’s Hospital.<sup>9</sup>

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> M.S. Spencer, K.L. Walters, and J.D. Clapp, *Policy Recommendations for Meeting the Grand Challenge to Close the Health Gap*, Grand Challenges for Social Work Policy Brief 2 (Cleveland: American Academy of Social Work & Social Welfare, September 2016), <https://doi.org/10.7936/K7P84BFP>.

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<sup>6</sup> J. Goesling et al., "Symptoms of Depression Are Associated with Opioid Use Regardless of Pain Severity and Physical Functioning among Treatment-Seeking Patients with Chronic Pain," *Journal of Pain* 16, no. 9 (2015): 844–51, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpain.2015.05.010>.

<sup>7</sup> J.A. Boscarino et al., "Risk Factors for Drug Dependence among Out-Patients on Opioid Therapy in a Large US Health-Care System," *Addiction* 105, no. 10 (2010): 1776–1782, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1360-0443.2010.03052.x>.

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<sup>9</sup> B. Sommers, H.L. Allen, and A.L. Goldman, "A New Medicaid Research Hub in a Time of Major Policy Change," *P4A Spark* (blog), February 12, 2019, <https://www.policiesforaction.org/blog/new-medicaid-research-hub-time-major-policy-change>.



## STOP FAMILY VIOLENCE

Family violence is a common American tragedy. Child maltreatment and intimate partner violence often occur together and predict other forms of violence, with women and girls disproportionately affected. Physical violence, emotional abuse, sexual violence, economic exploitation, and other forms of violence and abuse within the family carry harmful short- and long-term consequences, including physical injury and death.

By promoting healthy, violence-free relationships between partners and among families, we can bring about a 50% reduction in child maltreatment and gender-based violence within the next decade.

### Policy Recommendations

- ❖ Increase federal funding for prevention and intervention activities, including efforts to reduce the structural inequalities that perpetuate gender-based violence.
- ❖ Increase research funding for evidence-based interventions that strengthen and enhance safety in families victimized through abuse and violence.
- ❖ Link data systems to identify opportunities for preventive services.<sup>1</sup> Specific policy actions recommend that federal policy should encourage states to link and share data across systems, enabling states to protect newborns at risk of maltreatment and to target preventive services to their families. Sharing data across systems can also reduce violent or problematic behavior, adverse outcomes, and preventable death among older children and youth. Examples of options for promoting data linkages include increasing federal funding and support to states via the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Education, the Department of Justice, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act.<sup>2</sup>

### **Research on Human Trafficking: Evaluation of Innovate Colorado.**

Human trafficking is an emerging focus of child welfare research. The Department of Justice is funding an evaluation of a statewide initiative, Innovate Colorado, a collaboration between child welfare and law enforcement that aims to comprehensively address human trafficking in Colorado and provide services to victims and survivors. With an expressed focus on children and youth, the program is implemented by the Colorado Department of Human Services, Division of Child Welfare. The evaluation is led by the Social Work Research Center at Colorado State University.

**Research on Child Abuse and Neglect.** The Center for Innovation in Child Maltreatment Policy, Research and Training is a new research center established to tackle the widespread and complex problem of child abuse and neglect. A national learning collaborative, the center leverages the interdisciplinary expertise of multiple universities and organizations to synthesize knowledge and advance research innovations for prevention. In addition to conducting two large-scale research projects, the center engages a number of national, state, and local partners to translate evidence into practice, policy, and training. One of the two projects is DataSMART, a multistate effort to advance science related to the use of linked administrative data for screening for need and targeting of services. The other project, SURROUND, tests the feasibility and predictive utility of screening and services engagement approaches to offset child maltreatment risk among newborns. Funded by the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, the center is based at Washington University in St. Louis and operates in partnership with Saint Louis University.

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## **Notes**

<sup>1</sup> S.J. Kulkarni, R.P. Barth, and J.T. Messing, *Policy Recommendations for Meeting the Grand Challenge to Stop Family Violence*, Grand Challenges for Social Work Policy

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<sup>2</sup> R.P. Barth and M. Jonson-Reid, *Better Use Data to Protect Children and Support Families*, Policy Action 3.1 (Cleveland: American Academy of Social Work & Social Welfare, March 2017), <http://grandchallengesforsocialwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/PAS.3.1.pdf>.



## ERADICATE SOCIAL ISOLATION

Americans are more socially isolated now than ever before. Research finds that isolation can be a silent yet potent killer, and it affects diverse groups of Americans across the age spectrum. The high correlation between social isolation and health issues, such as morbidity and mortality, has led this hazard to become one of the priorities for social work research and intervention.

Through interdisciplinary collaboration and innovative interventions, we can reduce the risk of social isolation across all populations and strengthen social ties that are a vital source of emotional strength and health improvement. The “social” element of social work is the key for reducing the risk of social isolation and strengthening social ties among all populations.

### Policy Recommendations

- ❖ Increase access to high-quality child care that strengthens social connections.
- ❖ Build more age-friendly communities that strengthen social connections.
- ❖ Reform solitary confinement. This recommendation includes adopting a universal ban for juvenile offenders and limited use for adult prisoners. The U.S. Department of Justice set forth “guiding principles” for limiting use of solitary confinement for adult prisoners.<sup>1</sup>

### Research on Social Isolation and Loneliness among Older Adults.

An ad hoc committee under the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine will focus on how social isolation and loneliness impact health outcomes in adults aged 50 and older, particularly those who are members of low-income, underserved, or vulnerable populations. Research conducted through the AARP Foundation laid the foundation for this development.<sup>2</sup>

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> S. Brown et al., *Policy Recommendations for Meeting the Grand Challenge to Eradicate Social Isolation*, Grand Challenges for Social Work Policy Brief 5 (Cleveland: American Academy of Social Work & Social Welfare, September 2016), <https://doi.org/10.7936/K7C828T7>; U.S. Department of Justice, *Report and Recommendations concerning the Use of Restrictive Housing: Final Report* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice), <https://www.justice.gov/archives/dag/file/815551/download>.

<sup>2</sup> AARP Foundation, *Framework for Isolation in Adults over 50* (Washington, DC: AARP Foundation, 2012), [http://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/aarp\\_foundation/2012\\_PDFs/AARP-Foundation-Isolation-Framework-Report.pdf](http://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/aarp_foundation/2012_PDFs/AARP-Foundation-Isolation-Framework-Report.pdf).



## **REDUCE EXTREME ECONOMIC INEQUALITY**

Extreme economic inequality has become a common characteristic of American society. The top 1% owns nearly half of the total wealth in the United States, while one in five children lives in poverty. These divisions and disparities impede economic growth, increase social dysfunction, and foster political instability.

Economic inequality permeates our society and has increased dramatically over recent decades. We need a new social contract to reverse this trend. Innovation can reduce the disparities by increasing the income of the poor, building income and wealth stability, and changing policies and mechanisms that concentrate wealth solely among the wealthy.

### **Policy Recommendations**

- ❖ Strengthen labor standards and reform employment policies for low-wage hourly jobs that often have unpredictable hours, income, and benefits. Expand policy initiatives for increased minimum wages, earned sick days, and paid family and medical leave, and establish new work-hour standards, including minimum advance-schedule notice, a pay premium for last-minute schedule changes, and elimination of on-call shifts.
- ❖ Expand active employment creation through public programs and support for business start-up and capitalization.
- ❖ Extend the Earned Income Tax Credit to noncustodial parents.
- ❖ Expand child care access to enable stable employment in the context of healthy child development.
- ❖ Create new, lifelong policies for inclusive and progressive wealth building. This recommendation incorporates the more specific policy recommendation advanced through the Grand Challenges Network to Build Financial Capability for All. That recommendation calls for starting lifelong asset building at birth with universal and progressive Child Development Accounts (CDAs).<sup>1</sup>

- ❖ Replace the Child Tax Credit with a monthly child allowance. This recommendation calls for the creation of a universal, monthly child allowance to replace the federal Child Tax Credit and child tax exemption.<sup>2</sup> The statement cites estimates by Irving Garfinkel and colleagues that a federal allowance of \$2,500 per child in 2013 would have cost approximately \$156 billion; a policy offering \$4,000 per child under age 6 and \$2,500 for older children would have cost about \$184.9 billion.<sup>3</sup>

### **Research on Universal and Progressive Child Development**

**Accounts.** The SEED for Oklahoma Kids (SEED OK) statewide experiment is nation's the first randomized, controlled trial of universal and progressive Child Development Accounts, with assignment of an Oklahoma 529 College Savings Plan account at birth. SEED OK research aims to assess CDA feasibility while investigating short- and long-term impacts on savings for children, parents' expectations and behaviors, and children's developmental outcomes. The SEED OK research is being conducted by the Center for Social Development at Washington University in St. Louis.

Key findings indicate the importance of universal automatic enrollment and document impact on both financial and nonfinancial outcomes.<sup>4</sup> Most notably, CDAs

- ❖ substantially increase asset building for postsecondary education,
- ❖ improve the social development of young children, and
- ❖ improve mental health, parenting practices, and educational expectations of mothers. (Positive effects are usually greater for low-income and disadvantaged families.)<sup>5</sup>

**Statewide Implementation of CDAs.** The following state policies were informed by the SEED OK research:<sup>6</sup>

- ❖ Pennsylvania recently launched a statewide policy to provide 529 college savings accounts for all newborns with a \$100 scholarship grant. The Keystone Scholars policy started in 2019 and is for any child who is a Pennsylvania resident at birth or adopted by a Pennsylvania family. Governor Tom Wolf signed the legislation into law June 22, 2018.<sup>7</sup>
- ❖ Four other states have implemented statewide CDAs using the 529 college savings plan: Connecticut (Baby Scholars), Maine (Harold Alfond College Challenge), Nevada (College Kick Start), and Rhode Island (CollegeBound Baby).

- ❖ State legislation is pending in Nebraska, informed by testimony from SEED OK Project Director Margaret Clancy, and talks are in progress with legislators in Michigan.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> W. Elliott III et al., *Policy Recommendations for Meeting the Grand Challenge to Reduce Extreme Economic Inequality*, Grand Challenges for Social Work Policy Brief 10 (Cleveland: American Academy of Social Work & Social Welfare, September 2016), <https://doi.org/10.7936/K7NZ874H>.

<sup>2</sup> H.L. Shaefer et al., *Convert the Child Tax Credit into a Universal Child Allowance*, Policy Action 10-1 (Cleveland: American Academy of Social Work & Social Welfare, March 2017), <http://grandchallengesforsocialwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/PAS.10.1-002.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> Garfinkel et al., *Doing More for Our Children: Modeling a Universal Child Allowance or More Generous Child Tax Credit*, Report (Century Foundation, 2016), <https://tcf.org/content/report/doing-more-for-our-children/>.

<sup>4</sup> S.G. Beverly, M.M. Clancy, and M. Sherraden, *Universal Accounts at Birth: Results from SEED for Oklahoma Kids*, CSD Research Summary 16-07 (St. Louis: Washington University, Center for Social Development, March 2016), <https://doi.org/10.7936/K7QC030S>.

<sup>5</sup> J. Huang et al., "Impacts of Child Development Accounts on Parenting Practices: Evidence from a Randomised Statewide Experiment," *Asia Pacific Journal of Social Work and Development* (2019), <https://doi.org/10.1080/02185385.2019.1575270>; Y. Kim et al., "Child Development Accounts, Parental Savings, and Parental Educational Expectations: A Path Model," *Children and Youth Services Review* 79 (2017): 20–28, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2017.05.021>; J. Huang et al., "Unmarried Mothers and Children's Social-Emotional Development: The Role of Child Development Accounts," *Journal of Child and Family Studies* 26, no. 1 (2017): 234–47, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-016-0551-1>; J. Huang, Y. Kim, and M. Sherraden, "Material Hardship and Children's Social-Emotional Development: Testing Mitigating Effects of Child Development Accounts in a Randomized Experiment," *Child: Care, Health and Development* 43, no. 1 (2017): 89–96, <https://doi.org/10.1111/cch.12385>.

<sup>6</sup> M. Sherraden, M.M. Clancy, and S. G. Beverly, *Taking Child Development Accounts to Scale: Ten Key Policy Design Elements*, CSD Policy Brief 18-08 (St. Louis:

Washington University, Center for Social Development, 2018), <https://doi.org/10.7936/K71C1WF9>.

<sup>7</sup> Fiscal Code – Omnibus Amendments, Act of Jun. 22, 2018, P.L. 281, No. 42, <https://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/legis/li/uconsCheck.cfm?yr=2018&sessInd=0&act=42>



## HARNESS TECHNOLOGY FOR SOCIAL GOOD

The social work sector has a long tradition of addressing the most vexing social problems and collecting rich data to serve marginalized and vulnerable people. Emerging technologies offer opportunities to accomplish this work in new ways. In a high-tech future, the social work profession needs to move away from low-tech solutions, create tech-responsive policies, leverage analytic techniques developed for big data, and engage in technology-mediated practice.

Information and communication technology can be deployed to improve the efficacy of social programs, accelerate the pace of social discovery, and transform the social work profession to respond in ways that ensure technology is ethically used to reduce the inequalities that exist today.

### Policy Recommendations

- ❖ Expand Internet connectivity for underserved households.
- ❖ Unlock government data to drive solutions to social problems.
- ❖ Open the possibility of social work practice across state lines.<sup>1</sup>

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### Notes

<sup>1</sup> S.C. Berzin et al., *Policy Recommendations for Meeting the Grand Challenge to Harness Technology for Social Good*, Grand Challenges for Social Work Policy Brief 8 (Cleveland: American Academy of Social Work & Social Welfare, September 2016), <https://doi.org/10.7936/K7930SPJ>.

# Better Social Policies for a Better America

## AGENDA AND PROGRESS

**The Grand Challenges for Social Work** is a groundbreaking initiative to champion social progress powered by science.

### THE 12 GRAND CHALLENGES

- Build Financial Capability for All
- Ensure Healthy Development for All Youth
- Promote Smart Decarceration
- End Homelessness
- Advance Long and Productive Lives
- Create Social Responses to a Changing Environment
- Achieve Equal Opportunity and Justice
- Close the Health Gap
- Stop Family Violence
- Eradicate Social Isolation
- Reduce Extreme Economic Inequality
- Harness Technology for Social Good



**Grand Challenges**  
for Social Work