



NACBH

National Association *for* Children's Behavioral Health

NEWS

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PUBLIC POLICY UPDATE

117th Congress Convenes



The 117th Congress was officially sworn in on Sunday, January 3, minus a handful of members. The House of Representatives held a moment of silence for Luke Letlow (R-LA), who was elected to his first term in Congress before dying from COVID-19 complications on December 29. A special election will be held to fill his seat. Rep. Marianne Miller-Meeks (R-IA) was seated

provisionally while her six-vote victory margin is contested, and New York's 22nd Congressional district will remain vacant temporarily during a judicial review of ballot signature matching. Raphael Warnock and Jon Ossoff, Georgia's two new Democratic Senators-elect, will be sworn in when the results of the January 5 run-off election are certified.

After the inauguration on January 20, Vice President Kamala Harris, as President of the Senate, will cast tie-breaking votes in the 50 Democratic – 50 Republican chamber. The likely first tie-breaking vote will make Senator Chuck Schumer (D-NY) the Senate Majority Leader, with Senator Mitch McConnell (R-KY) stepping down to the minority after six years as Majority Leader. This will be the first time in more than a decade that Democrats control both the House and Senate, albeit by the slimmest of margins and all eyes already on 2022.

The House convened on Monday, passing a rules package for the new session on a party-line vote of 217-206. [Continue reading](#)

FY 2021 Appropriations and COVID-19 Relief



Late in the evening of December 21, Congress sent a 5,593-page funding bill to the President for his signature, including both omnibus appropriations for the remainder of FY 2021 and a long- and hard-fought fourth COVID-19 relief package.

We'll hit the highlights of the \$900 billion pandemic relief package today, and tackle the omnibus appropriations in the next edition of the NACBH News. Please email [Pat Johnston](#), Director of Public Policy, to point her to areas of particular interest for you. Anticipate some clean up! A clean PDF of the full public law has not yet been posted, so we are juggling multiple reports.

The COVID-19 package delivers the first major infusion of new aid in nine months, since the \$2 trillion CARES Act in March. When forwarding the House-passed \$900 billion pandemic aid bill to the Senate, Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) said that it is only a first step in providing relief that the incoming Biden administration will increase. With the results of Georgia's Senate run-off election now declared, that may actually come to pass. [Keep Reading](#)

Defense: Congress Overrides President's NDAA Veto

As threatened, the President vetoed the FY 2021 National Defense Authorization Act on December 23. The House overrode the veto with a vote of 322-87 on December 28, and the Senate, 81-13, on January 1. The Senate vote was briefly held up by an unsuccessful effort to secure \$2,000 pandemic relief checks for Americans.

The annual defense policy law provides well over \$700 billion for an increase in troop pay and a number of military health and welfare programs that [NACBH advocated for](#), among hundreds of provisions for weapons programs, military construction and other national security programs. Unrelated to military programs, it also includes the [Seeding Rural Resilience Act](#), a new initiative to curb the growing rates of suicides in rural America, particularly among farmers and ranchers. Unlike other must-pass measures, the annual NDAA is not generally used to move non-germane provisions.

EEOC: Employers May Require Workers to Get COVID-19 Vaccine



On December 16, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission updated its COVID-19 technical assistance publication, [What You Should Know About COVID-19 and the ADA, the Rehabilitation Act, and Other EEO Laws](#). Q&A categories include screening and exams, confidentiality, hiring and onboarding, reasonable accommodation, pandemic-related harassment, furloughs and layoffs, return to work, age, caregivers/family responsibilities, and pregnancy. A new section includes guidance on vaccinations, making clear that employers may require employees to receive them and offering specific guidance for employers who plan to do so.

NEWS YOU CAN USE

SAMHSA Funding Availability and Resources

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration (SAMHSA) has added funding availability announcements to the FY 2021 [grant page](#). NACBH members in communities that have recently faced civil unrest may wish to review Resiliency in Communities After Stress and Trauma and talk with your local municipality partners about applying. Project AWARE (Advancing Wellness and Resiliency in Education) State Education Agency grants may also be of interest to members providing or planning to provide services through public schools. Eligibility is limited to state education agencies and tribal organizations, but this is a recurring grant that you may want to begin talking with public partners about for the future.

General grant information and reference materials for SAMHSA applicants and grantees is available [here](#). To subscribe for notices of future grant opportunities and resources, scroll down to the bottom of the page.

OJJDP Funding Availability and Resources

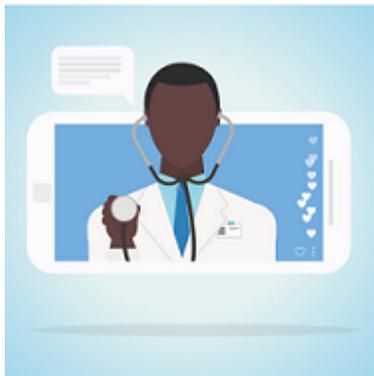


The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) has added grant announcements to the [open funding page](#), many for longstanding programs with new funding rounds annually. NACBH members are encouraged to review the announcements for their relevance to your service array and planning. Examples include serving incarcerated parents and their children, youth offender reentry programs, children's advocacy centers, reducing risk for girls who come in contact with the juvenile justice system, and effective interventions for adolescent sex offenders and children with sexual behavior problems.

General grant information and reference materials for applicants and grantees is available [here](#).

Webinar: Telehealth & Medicaid: What's Next? A Roadmap for Telehealth Beyond the Pandemic

Friday, February 5, 2:00 p.m. Eastern



The COVID-19 pandemic has prompted an unprecedented number of telehealth policy changes within state Medicaid agencies. States are weighing their policy options for extending telehealth coverage after the public health emergency expires. The Center for Connected Health Policy will host this expert panel discussion with high-level administrators and policy staff from the Medicaid and CHIP Payment and Access Commission (MACPAC), the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System, the Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing, and the Oregon Health Authority. Register [here](#).

NGA Report: The Future of State Telehealth Policy

The National Governors Association (NGA) released a report highlighting policy issues that states should consider when deciding which pandemic telehealth flexibilities to make permanent. [The Future of State Telehealth Policy](#) outlines key considerations for state policymakers related to:

- Licensure, scope of practice, and supervision
- Telehealth coverage including services, providers, and modalities
- Payment policies and incentives to move towards value-based payment
- Policies that narrow the digital divide to increase accessibility for those who may have difficulty engaging in services via telehealth such as rural and low-income communities, people with disabilities, people with limited English proficiency and people with mental illness
- Interoperability of telehealth platforms with other health information technology
- Privacy protections for consumers
- Stakeholder engagement
- Federal telehealth policies

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