



## Delegate Assembly Approves Revisions to the *NASW Code of Ethics*

On Friday, August 4, 2017, the Delegate Assembly of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) approved the most substantive revision to the *NASW Code of Ethics* since 1996. After careful and charged deliberation, the Delegate Assembly voted to accept proposed revisions to the *Code* that focused largely on the use of technology and the implications for ethical practice.

The *NASW Code of Ethics* continues to be the most accepted standard for social work ethical practice worldwide. With emergent technological advances over the last two decades, the profession could not ignore the necessity for more clarity around the complex implications of new forms of communication and relationship building through technology. As such, in September 2015 an *NASW Code of Ethics* Review Task Force was appointed by the NASW president and approved by the NASW Board of Directors.

### **A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO TASK FORCE CHAIR:**

» Allan Barsky, JD, MSW, PhD, National Ethics Committee (past chair)

### **Task Force Members:**

- » David Barry, PhD, National Ethics Committee (past chair)
- » Luis Machuca, MSW
- » Frederic Reamer, PhD
- » Kim Strom-Gottfried, PhD
- » Bo Walker, MSW, LCSW, National Ethics Committee
- » Dawn Hobby, MSW, LICSW, director, NASW Office of Ethics and Professional Review

### **NASW Staff Contributors:**

- » Andrea Murray, MSW, LICSW, senior ethics associate
- » Anne B. Camper, JD, MBA, NASW general counsel
- » Carolyn Polowy, JD, former NASW general counsel

The Task Force was charged with examining the current *Code of Ethics* through the lens of specific ethical considerations when using various forms of technology. In September 2015, they embarked on a year-long process that involved studying emerging standards in other professions and examining relevant professional literature, such as the Association of Social Work Boards' (2015) *Model Regulatory Standards for Technology and Social Work Practice*. In addition, Task Force members considered the technology practice standards that were concurrently being developed by a national task force commissioned by NASW, Council on Social Work Education, Clinical Social Work Association, and Association of Social Work Boards. A year later the proposed amendments were presented to the NASW membership for review, and many member comments were incorporated prior to finalization.

The approved *Code of Ethics* revisions reflect a collaborative and inclusive effort that drew from a diverse cross-section of the profession. The August 4 approval by the Delegate Assembly marks significant progress in the profession's ability to respond to our ever-changing practice environment.

The new version of the *NASW Code of Ethics* comes into effect January 1, 2018. In the meantime, training and technical assistance opportunities will be made available through the Office of Ethics and Professional Review and the NASW website.

Our sincere appreciation again to the task force, NASW staff, and committed members across the globe who contributed to this momentous accomplishment.