



March 12, 2020

Dear AGESW members,

The Coronavirus pandemic is putting a spotlight on the older population that many of us are spending our careers focusing on. Whether in research, teaching, or programming in our community, the older adults we know, including our family members and friends and possibly ourselves, face an [increased risk](#) at this time.

I wanted to reach out to members to inform you about what national social work organizations are highlighting. Both the [NASW](#) and [CSWE](#) offer information about supporting clients—particularly older adults—as well as practice settings, self-care, and educational considerations for students. The [CDC](#), [WHO](#), and state websites will also be important resources in the days to come.

Now, more than ever, we can work towards making sure older adults are viewed and discussed with dignity. There is a need to go beyond the counting of cases to acknowledging the lives of everyone affected by the coronavirus. There may be urgent opportunities for advocacy for timely and accurate information flows to older adults and their caregivers.

Policy and practice matters are at the heart of social work. **Promoting equitable and expanded access** to testing, **advocating** for paid sick leave for those who are self-isolating and/or sick and caregivers, and **standing against marginalization** because of age, gender, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, and citizenship are all social justice concerns related to this pandemic.

I leave you with this from the preamble of the NASW Code of Ethics:

“Fundamental to social work is attention to the environmental forces that create, contribute to, and address problems in living.”

Tam E. Perry
President
AGESW