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The White House Administration's Policy Agenda During the First 100 Days – Part IV of IV

The Biden-Harris administration has wrapped up its first 100 days in office. The American Counseling Association (ACA) continues to keep its commitment to members by updating you on the current administration's policy decisions that are important to the counseling profession.

The administration has made a commitment to: 1) containing the COVID-19 pandemic, 2) leading a clean energy revolution to address the effects of climate change, 3) dismantling systemic racism, 4) improving the nation's economy, 5) reexamining immigration policy, 5) improving diplomatic relationships, and 6) **expanding access to high-quality, affordable health care.**

History was made with the administration's diverse political appointments including the appointment of Gen. Lloyd Austin as the first Black Secretary of Defense, Xavier Becerra as the first Latino to lead the Health and Human Services Department, Deb Haaland as the first Native American Secretary of the Interior, and Pete Buttigieg as the first openly LGBTQ person to serve in a President's Cabinet. Fifty-eight percent of the President's appointees are women, 32% are naturalized citizens or children of immigrants, and 4% are veterans.

Now, looking at the fourth and final quarter of the first 100 days, what else has happened that matters to counselors? For mental health counselors who accept Medicaid, the President signed into law [H.R. 1868](#), which removes the federal government's ability to reduce the Medicaid (and Medicare) budget. On April 27th, the President also issued an Executive Order on [Increasing Minimum Wage for Federal Contractors](#), taking a first step toward increasing the minimum wage nationwide. The President also signed an Executive Order on [Worker Organizing and Empowerment](#). The order creates an advisory task force for reviewing processes such as union formation, collective bargaining, and amicable settling of disputes between employees and employers.

In addition to these most recent actions, the Biden-Harris administration continues to focus on protecting worker paychecks and increasing employment opportunities for all Americans during the pandemic. The American Counseling Association is currently working with the administration's Government Accountability Office to assist in the review of licensed professional mental health counselors who work within the U.S. Department of Veteran's Affairs, and we continue to focus on communicating with the U.S. Department of Education, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and the U.S. Department of Defense as we work to protect, promote, and advance the counseling profession.

Last but certainly not least, the administration capped its first 100 days with a [proclamation on National Mental Health Awareness Month](#) underscoring its commitment to ensuring that people living with mental health conditions are treated with compassion, respect and understanding; acknowledging the current disparities in access to affordable, quality, and evidence-based mental health care; and outlining substantial funding for mental health care services.

Looking forward, we know there is a long road ahead. We will continue to work with our members and government officials to provide our expertise on issues that affect the counseling community such as creating safer and healthier schools for our children through greater mental health care

access for students and addressing our country's overall mental health care provider shortage. ACA will always be available to assist the current administration whenever called upon.

With the first 100 days behind us, what do we still want to know and where do we go from here?

You and your colleagues are an integral part of this process. We encourage all members of the counseling community to [**share your thoughts, questions and expertise with the Biden-Harris administration.**](#)

In addition, please [**sign up**](#) for ACA alerts and be sure to take action on all of our initiatives in support of the counseling profession.

If you have any questions for the ACA Government Affairs and Public Policy Team, please reach out to us at [**advocacy@counseling.org**](mailto:advocacy@counseling.org) or call us at 1-800-347-6647.