

# THE YOUTH ADVOCATE

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF THERAPEUTIC SCHOOLS AND PROGRAMS  
GOVERNMENT RELATIONS BULLETIN



DECEMBER 2011

## TAKING THE LEAD

*Guest Editorial By Patrick Logan (Chairman, NATSAP  
Government Relations Committee)*

It was days before Christmas, and perhaps you're nestled, all snug in the vision that Rep. George Miller lost the Chairman's position years ago, Republican "small government" cheers ring through the House of Representatives, ergo HR 911 is finally silenced! It was, until Sen. Tom Harkin introduced a nearly identical bill into this year's Congress. As we continually get reminded, the "Stop Child Abuse in Residential Treatment" banner remains a cause with very strong passions on all sides, and historically sparse and inflammatory data.

So, what does NATSAP's Government Relations Committee do? As before, we work to humanize and orient the pitched discussions that take place around treatment and safety of children, while concurrently protecting NATSAP members' ability to do what we do best.

The Government Relations Committee continues:

- To invite our federal representatives to visit kids "in the field" (in treatment programs back "home")
- To bring relevant and successful clients (parents and students) to DC to confront the hyperbole and prejudice about necessary, psychological treatment of adolescents and
- To remain vigilant about and engaged redressing ill-considered constraints on our members (for example, Utah's recent teletherapy regulations and significant proposed modifications to NCLB).

In addition to these primary missions, the GRC has recently begun addressing a project that Representative Miller accurately highlighted: there is no national treatment database available to analyze how states regulate our field. From his webpage:

"Tens of thousands of U.S. teenagers attend private and public residential programs – including therapeutic boarding schools, wilderness camps, boot camps, and



## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Taking The Lead.....Page 1 and 2

### LEGISLATION ALERT

S. 2020 – Keeping All Students Safe Act.....Page 2

### NATSAP Joins The Coalition

For Whole Health.....Page 2 and 3

Internet Branding and Security Issues.....Page 3

Grant Opportunities.....Page 3 and 4

behavior modification facilities – that are intended to help them with behavioral, emotional, mental health, or substance abuse problems. *Depending on the state in which the program operates, some of these programs are subject to State law or regulation, while others are not. As a result of this loose patchwork of state oversight, children at some the programs have been subject to abuse and neglect with little to no accountability.*"

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

Instead of accepting the status quo, NATSAP's Government Relations Committee will finish compiling all 50 states' present regulations on RTCs and wilderness therapy soon (before February, 2012). To do so, we are contacting each state's legislative switchboard, and then drill down to find the department who oversees private-pay RTC and wilderness therapy programs. (Discovering the correct office sometimes takes many days and attempts.) Upon completion of the clearinghouse, we will share the

information with everyone who can benefit from it, greatly enhancing NATSAP credibility and authority in DC, as well as inside the field of adolescent therapy.

**Please** contact Claiborne Guy (claiborne@natsap.org) or Patrick Logan (patrick@snwp.com), if you can volunteer to help.

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## LEGISLATIVE ALERT

### S. 2020 – KEEPING ALL STUDENTS SAFE ACT

On December 16th, 2011, Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA), Chairman of the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee (HELP), introduced **S. 2020, the Keeping All Students Safe Act**, which was then referred to the Senate HELP Committee. The legislation would impose federal benchmarks for states to enforce minimum safety standards on the use of restraint and seclusion in schools and programs (those receiving federal funding in any form from Department of Education or Interior), as well as interventions by untrained and undertrained school personnel. S. 2020 is the Senate counterpart to the House version of the same name, **H.R. 1381**, introduced by Rep. George Miller (D-CA) back in April, 2011 (not to be confused with the “Miller Bill”), which has yet to be scheduled for hearings in front of the House Education and the Workforce Committee. S. 2020 is identical to legislation the previous Congress passed in the House, but allowed to expire in the Senate. It is the same legislation, just with a different title.

Previously it was rumored that S. 2020 was to be added to the reauthorization/rewrite of the **Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)**, formerly known as the “No Child Left Behind Act”, but due to delays and uncertainty of its passage in the next year, Chairman Harkin decided to take a different route. S. 2020 is less inflammatory than legislation introduced in past Congresses attempting to regulate the industry, but it will impact NATSAP programs and needs to be monitored. The Government Relations Committee is currently reviewing the legislation and coming to a consensus on NATSAP's position regarding it. **For more information on H.R. 1381 or to comment on the legislation, please contact the NATSAP main office.**

Press Release: <http://help.senate.gov/newsroom/press/release/?id=872072ab-8049-4df7-b224-ac7001f77665&groups=Chair>

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## NATSAP JOINS THE COALITION FOR WHOLE HEALTH

NATSAP is excited to announce that the association has officially joined the **Coalition for Whole Health (CWH)**, a coalition of national and state organizations advocating improved coverage for and access to mental health and substance use disorder prevention, treatment,

rehabilitation, and recovery services. The CWH's goal is to protect Mental Health coverage for all in the implementation of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) better known as “Obamacare”.

(Continued on page 3)

(Continued from page 2)

The enactment of the ACA substantially expands health insurance coverage for Americans, largely through state health insurance Exchanges for individuals and small businesses, and through an expansion of Medicaid for low-income individuals and families. ACA requires the plans in the Exchanges, as well as Medicaid expansion plans, to cover a set of “essential health benefits” that include “mental health and substance use disorder [MH/SUD] services, including behavioral health treatment.” By including MH/SUD as essential services, Congress recognized that substance use disorders and mental

illnesses are treatable health conditions, as accepted by the American Medical Association, all other public health and medical standards, and decades of scientific research.

NATSAP continues to identify and establish relationships with like-minded organizations, national and local, operating in the same space, to better serve its members and the people they help. **For more information on the CWH or NATSAP’s continued relationship building efforts, please contact the NATSAP main office.**

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## INTERNET BRANDING AND SECURITY ISSUES

On Dec. 6, the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), the nonprofit organization that controls the Internet’s top-level domain names such as .com, .biz and .gov, officially turned on the .xxx domain in hopes that adult entertainment companies would use it to more easily identify their websites. Florida-based ICM registry owns the .xxx top-level domain and in turn sells domain names with that extension to registrars like GoDaddy.com, which then sells them to customers. Colleges and universities along with companies with well-known trademarks have recently been buying up related domains with the .xxx extension to protect their image. **NATSAP advises its members to investigate this issue and decide if it is in their best interests to follow these**

**others’ lead to protect their good names.**

In other news, the “survivor” group HEAL (<http://www.heal-online.org/>) is currently being sued by Provo Canyon School for illegally obtaining information and contacting and harassing current students’ families. HEAL has evolved from an internet posting site to a more proactive and aggressive one in this instance. Preliminary investigations hint towards this being a data breach where HEAL or an accomplice may have hacked into a system to illegally obtain the information. The authorities are heavily involved, but **NATSAP strongly advises all programs to tighten their internet security and possibly change all passwords.**

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## GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

NATSAP has begun to research and identify potential federal, state, and foundation grant opportunities as an additional member benefit. Grant opportunities are regularly offered for non-profit and for-profit groups alike, such as the **2012 Youth Garden Grants** we notified members about by email back in September (<http://www.kidsgardening.org/grants/2012-youth-garden-grants-1>). NATSAP will continue to identify grant opportunities

and asks that you contact us with any questions or opportunities that you know off. **NATSAP can assist member programs determine eligibility for funding and grants, and work with Congress to secure support. Please contact the NATSAP main office for more information.**

(Continued on page 4)

*(Continued from page 3)*

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