



# Capitol News!

by the  
National Association of State Head Injury Administrators

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## Dear Member,

Welcome to *Capitol News!* This issue provides an update on federal agency fiscal year 2019 appropriation bills and legislation impacting individuals with brain injury and their families. During this month, the National Association of State Head Injury Administrators (NASHIA) was a co-sponsor of the June 13 Capitol Hill Briefing on Full Funding of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). NASHIA members and staff also attended the 4th Federal Interagency Conference on TBI during the same week, which afforded Board Members and staff to meet with various federal agencies to promote TBI State programs and needs, as well as with Congressional staff. Further information regarding NASHIA's public policy work is available on the NASHIA website under [Key Issues](#) and [Priorities](#).

## This Week in Congress

Both the U.S. House of Representatives and U.S. Senate are in session this week. The House Appropriations Committee has postponed the mark up of the fiscal year 2019 Labor-HHS-ED spending bill. The Senate Appropriations Subcommittee is to mark up the spending bill for Labor-HHS-ED today. The House is expected to take up the defense spending bill this week, which the Senate passed last week.



## Budget and Appropriations

### House Committee Passes Budget Resolution

The House Budget Committee has passed a 2019 Budget Resolution, which sets spending and income levels providing a blueprint for spending and revenue provisions, such as taxes, to pertinent House Committees. The proposed budget resolution calls for cuts to entitlement programs, such as Medicaid, Medicare, Social Security, Unemployment, etc., and instructs the 11 House Appropriations Committees to come up with at least \$302 billion in savings over 10 years. The Senate Budget Committee is working on its own budget plan. The spending cuts are needed, in part, to pay for revenue lost as the result of the tax and jobs bill passed last year.

### House Appropriations Committee Releases Draft Report

On June 15, the House Labor-HHS-Ed subcommittee met to mark up the FY 2019 Labor-HHS-Ed appropriations bill, which includes funding for TBI Act programs administered by the Administration for Community Living (ACL) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), as well as funding for brain injury research carried out by the National Institutes of Health (NIH). The Committee has released the [draft report](#), which includes the recommendation of \$11,321,000 for the ACL Traumatic Brain Injury Program. This is the same as the current year, which is \$2 million above the fiscal year 2019 President's budget request and the fiscal year 2017 appropriations. Overall, the CDC's Injury Center is level-funded. As in the final FY 2018 final omnibus appropriations bill, the National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS) is funded at \$23.5 million and the Subcommittee recommends a \$2 million increase for the Injury Control Research Centers (ICRCs), from \$9 million to \$11 million. The President's budget did not recommend funding for the ICRCs.

### Senate Defeats the Rescissions Package

Last week, the Senate defeated the Administration's proposal to cut \$15 billion from the current appropriations that federal agencies received as the result of the omnibus bill passed in March. The Administration proposed cuts to the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), housing programs and other programs that were determined to have unspent funds available to legitimize the cuts. The House passed the rescissions bill June 6. The Senate faced a June 22 deadline in order to pass with a simple majority.

## Other Legislation

### **House Passes Farm Bill**

The Senate is expected to vote on the Farm Bill this week after the House passed H.R. 2, the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018 (Farm Bill) last Thurs. The bill cuts funding for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and imposes stricter work requirements. S. 3042, the Senate version, passed the Senate Agriculture on June 13. Unlike the House version, the Senate bill protects SNAP benefit levels and eligibility for low-income people.

### **NASHIA Signs on to ABLE Act Support Letter**

NASHIA has signed on to a [June 22 letter](#), along with 159 other organizations, supporting the ABLE Age Adjustment Act, S. 817/H.R. 1874, which would raise the age of onset of a disability for eligibility from the current age of 26 to age 46. The letter was sent to all co-sponsors of the bill in both the House and Senate and leadership in both bodies.

## Administration

### **CMS May Allow States to Drop NEMT Benefit**

The Administration's fiscal year 2019 budget request revealed that the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS) wants to use regulatory authority to allow States to drop the Medicaid Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT) benefit, which has been a benefit since the program's inception in 1966. Although NEMT services are not included in the statutory list of mandatory Medicaid benefits, they are required by a long-standing federal regulation. This benefit facilitates access to care for low income beneficiaries who otherwise may not have a reliable affordable means of getting to health care appointments and also assists people with disabilities who have frequent appointments with limited public transit options and long travel times to health care providers, such as those in rural areas. NEMT expenses eligible for federal Medicaid matching funds include a broad range of services, such as taxicabs, public transit buses and subways, and van programs. The potential new rules under which NEMT becomes optional would allow States to drop the benefit for the persons with disabilities, older adults, and children entitled to the early and periodic screening, diagnostic, and treatment.

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*The National Association of State Head Injury Administrators assists State government  
in promoting partnerships and building systems to meet the needs  
of individuals with brain injuries and their families.*

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