



Capitol News!

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National Association of State Head Injury Administrators

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Dear NASHIA Member,

Welcome to this edition of *Capitol News!*, published by the National Association of State Head Injury Administrators (NASHIA). Since the successful Congressional Brain Injury Awareness Day held last month, Rebecca Wolfkiel, NASHIA Governmental Relations, in concert with Amy Colberg, Director of Government Affairs, Brain Injury Association of America (BIAA), have been advocating for passage of Senator Tom Udall's (D-NM) Youth Sports Concussion Act and new funding (\$5M) for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's proposed National Concussion Surveillance System. Click [here](#) to see the organizational sign on letter to Appropriators in support of funding for the CDC surveillance project.

Earlier this month, NASHIA submitted testimony to both the [House](#) and [Senate](#) Appropriators calling for increased funding for the TBI Act programs and the TBI Model Systems. Read further for information on bills currently before Congress. For further information on NASHIA's public priorities, visit the NASHIA [webpage](#).

This Week in Congress

Congress was in session this week. The House worked on oversight issues relating to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). Although the House missed its April 15 target date for passing a FY 2017 budget resolution, House and Senate Appropriations Committees continue to hold hearings on appropriations bills for various agencies.



Bills Passed

President Signs Older Americans Act

On Tuesday, President Obama signed the Older Americans Act Reauthorization Act (OAA) of 2016, S. 192, into law, reauthorizing programs impacting older Americans and Americans with disabilities through the end of 2018. Introduced by Senator Lamar Alexander (R-TN), the bill also defines "elder justice" and "aging and disability resource center." Among the provisions, the OAA supports social and nutrition services, family caregiver supports and respite care, promotes falls prevention among older adults and extends State Long-Term Care Ombudsman's responsibility to any resident of a long-term care facility regardless of age. The legislation also directs the Administration to develop, when feasible, a consumer-friendly tool to assist older individuals and their families in choosing home and community-based long-term care services, with a particular focus on ways for consumers to assess how providers protect the health, safety, welfare, and rights of older individuals.

Budget and FY 2017 Appropriations

House Appropriations Chairman Aims to Complete Spending Bills by End of June

House Appropriations Chairman Hal Rogers (R-KY) has expressed his intent to move all twelve appropriations bills across the House floor by the end of June. However, House rules prevent their consideration until May 15, unless a budget agreement passed by the House and Senate stipulates an earlier date.

Senate Adopts Spending Allotments for Appropriation Committees

On April 14, the Senate Appropriations Committee adopted its 302(b) spending allocations, allowing the 12 subcommittees to begin writing their individual spending bills funding federal agencies. The allocation for Labor-Health-HHS-ED is \$161.9 billion, which is \$270 million less from the amount provided in the FY 2016 omnibus bill. The budget resolution sets the total level of discretionary funding (known as the "302a allocation") for the next fiscal year. After allocations are adopted, the funding levels are distributed to the Appropriations Committee and Subcommittees.

Senate Appropriations Committee Works on Spending Bills

Today, the Senate Committee on Appropriations advanced the Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2017 and the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2017. The FY2017 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies (THUD) Appropriations Act provides \$56.5 billion to fund the U.S. Department of Transportation, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies. The bill represents an \$827 million decrease from FY2016 enacted levels and \$2.9 billion below the President's budget request. It provides \$20 million to support more than 2,500 new family unification vouchers to prevent youth from becoming homeless after exiting foster care. An additional \$40 million is included to test comprehensive efforts to end youth homelessness in urban and rural areas.

On April 7, the National Institutes of Health, Francis S. Collins, MD, PhD, Director, and Institutional Directors presented the FY 2017 budget proposals to the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor-Health-HHS-ED. Among NIH initiatives, Dr. Collins highlighted the Brain Research through Advancing Innovative Neurotechnologies (BRAIN) Initiative, which continues to address basic neuroscience questions and to revolutionize our understanding of the human brain and to provide new therapeutic avenues to treat, cure, and prevent neurological and psychiatric conditions such as Alzheimer's disease, autism, schizophrenia, epilepsy, traumatic brain injury, and addiction.

Legislation Introduced

Legislators Introduce Bill to Ease Financial Burden on Caregivers

On April 7, Senator Joni Ernst (R-IA) introduced S.2759, Credit for Caring Act of 2016, to provide up to a \$3,000 nonrefundable tax credit to working family caregivers for qualified expenses. Co-sponsors include Senators Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), Michael Bennet (D-CO), and Kelly Ayotte (R-NH). In March, Rep. Tom Reed (R-NY) introduced the companion bill, H.R.4708, to help alleviate some of the out of pocket expenses that caregivers often take on and would provide some relief for the added costs caregivers incur, such as travel costs for transporting a loved one, home modifications to accommodate a family member's special needs, medication management services, and more. Co-sponsors are Representatives Linda Sanchez (D-CA), Daniel Donovan (R-NY), and David Cicilline (D-RI).

Advocates Support Youth Sports Concussion Act

NASHIA, BIAA and other organizations have signed on to a letter in support of Senator Tom Udall's Youth Sports Concussion Act, S. 2508, that would allow the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) and the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) to review the National Academies' report on sports-related concussions and future research in such area for any matter that may impact products under the CPSC's jurisdiction or inform the FTC's efforts to protect consumers. The bill makes it unlawful to sell or offer for sale in interstate commerce, or import into the United States for such purposes, athletic sporting equipment for which the seller or importer makes any deceptive claim with respect to the safety benefits of such item. [Click here](#) to view the [letter](#) to Representatives Fred Upton (R-MI), Chairman, and Frank Pallone (D-NJ), Ranking Member, House Energy & Commerce Committee, and the [letter](#) to Senators John Thune (R-SD), Chairman, and Bill Nelson (D-FL), Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

Senators Introduce Bill to Promote Medicaid Expansion

Senator Mark Warner (D-VA), and seven co-sponsors, has introduced S. 2787 to promote Medicaid expansion in States that have not yet moved forward with expanding health coverage to those who need it. This bill amends Title XIX of the Social Security Act to provide the same level of federal matching assistance for every State that chooses to expand Medicaid coverage to newly eligible individuals, regardless of when such expansion takes place. H.R. 4588, the Incentivizing Medicaid Expansion Act, was introduced earlier this year in the House by Rep. Gene Green (D-TX) and currently has 17 co-sponsors. Both bills would give all States three years of full federal funding when they expand Medicaid so that States that have not yet adopted expansion, or recently expanded States, receive three full years of the 100 percent federal match.

Congressional Briefings

House Members Hold CRT Briefing

Today, Representatives Jim Sensenbrenner and Joe Crowley, in collaboration with the Complex Rehabilitation Technology (CRT) stakeholders are holding a briefing on CRT in the House Cannon Building, Room 240 at 1:00pm - 4:00pm (ET) to learn more about CRT and the benefits it provides to people with disabilities. There will be 20 minute briefings repeated on the hour during this time, followed by a Product Exposition to allow attendees to have an interactive experience with CRT products. CRT is very different from standard Durable Medical Equipment (DME) and faces unique access issues within the Medicare program. Attendees will hear and see how CRT is different from standard DME, including: the people who rely on it, what the products look

like, and how the technology is individually configured to meet the specific needs of those with disabilities.

Congress can ensure access by passing two important CRT bills this year that have broad bipartisan support in both the House and Senate:

- H.R. 3229 / S. 2196 to prevent CMS from inappropriately applying Competitive Bid Program pricing to Complex Rehab manual and power wheelchair accessories; and
- The "Ensuring Access to Quality Complex Rehabilitation Technology Act of 2015" (H.R. 1516 / S. 1013) to establish a separate category for CRT and provide needed improvements in coverage, coding, and provider standards.



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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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