



Capitol News!

produced by the National Association of State Head Injury Administrators

Vol. 14, Issue 5

June 19, 2017

Dear NASHIA Member,

Welcome to *Capitol News*, which you receive as a NASHIA member. This issue features an update on legislation, including healthcare reform legislation. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) has indicated his plans for the Senate to take up a bill this week, although no one has yet seen the bill outside of the workgroup charged to draft a bill. However, he wants the bill to be voted on before the July 4th recess. Disability and health care advocates have been putting on full court press to prevent critical parts of the House-passed bill from passing - repealing essential health care benefits; guaranteed coverage for pre-existing conditions; and cutting Medicaid significantly and transferring responsibility to the States. Read further below.

Meanwhile, advocates are still reeling from the President's proposed budget cuts for fiscal year 2018, including the elimination of the Administration for Community Living (ACL) Federal TBI State Grant Implementation Program. NASHIA continues to work on all of these issues and calls for grassroots efforts to maintain funding to support individuals with brain injury with rehabilitative and long-term and short-term support services needs through such programs as Medicaid and the Federal TBI Grant Implementation Program which helps States to expand and improve service delivery.

Visit the NASHIA [website](#) to keep abreast of all of NASHIA's public policy activities. Please feel free to use posted materials and to contact Susan L. Vaughn, Director of Public Policy at publicpolicy@nashia.org if you have any questions, comments or suggestions.

This Week in Congress

The House is to return to work tomorrow. The Senate is to convene late afternoon. While the Senate Leadership wants to take up the healthcare reform legislation this week, the *Hill* reports that passing the bill by July 4th may be unrealistic. Republican Members are considering canceling the August recess in order to pass the healthcare bill, take up tax reform and pass the twelve appropriations bills. The federal fiscal year ends Sept. 30th.



FY 2018 Appropriations

Appropriators Are Holding Hearings on the President's Proposed Budget

Both House and Senate Appropriations' Subcommittees are holding hearings on the President's budget recommendations for the various agencies and programs. NASHIA submitted [testimony](#) to the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor-HHS-Ed-Related Agencies on June 2 requesting that the ACL Federal TBI State Implementation Grant Program remain a line-item program with full funding. The President's Proposed fiscal year 2018 budget calls for the elimination of the Administration for Community Living (ACL) Federal TBI State Implementation Grant Program, the State Developmental Disabilities Councils and the Independent Living (I), Part B funding, also administered by ACL, and folds them, into an "innovation" grant program with less than half of the funding these programs receive when combined. The President's budget also calls for cuts and/or elimination of programs administered by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), including the elimination of the elderly falls prevention and the Injury Control Research Centers, and cuts to the National Institute of Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR).

NASHIA, the Brain Injury Association of America (BIAA), National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities (NACDD), and the National Council on Independent Living (NCIL) sent a joint [letter](#) to appropriators and will be coordinating Hill visits.

Other Legislation

Senate is Proposing to Take Up Healthcare Reform Legislation This Week

The Senate Leadership is indicating that the Senate will soon take up its version of the healthcare reform bill, although the provisions have not yet been unveiled. On May 4th, the House passed its healthcare reform bill, known as the American Health Care Act (AHCA). Among the provisions, the bill sunsets the increased federal match to States which expanded Medicaid to low-income childless adults to end 2020; converts the federal Medicaid funding to a per capita allotment and significantly cuts the program; allows States to apply for waivers to re-define essential health benefits for health insurance coverage offered in the individual or small group market and with regard to prohibition on lifetime and annual dollar limits; and adds State option to require work as a condition of eligibility for nondisabled, nonelderly, non-pregnant Medicaid adults. Republicans from States that expanded Medicaid to low-income childless adults are concerned about ending the federal participation. Other Senators are concerned about ending the Medicaid entitlement program as we know it, and transferring responsibility along with less money to the States.

More than half of spending for Medicaid is for long-term services for individuals with disabilities and for those who are elderly. Almost half of the States administer Home and Community-based Medicaid waiver programs specifically for individuals with brain injury. Other States, like Missouri, may rely on Medicaid State Plan benefits to help with services, such as Administrative Case Management.

NASHIA members, networks, grassroots, friends and colleagues, especially in key States (listed below) should visit Senators' local offices, email and call with regard to how cuts to Medicaid will affect individuals with brain injury. The key States and target Senators are:

Maine: Collins *

Alaska: Murkowski* and Sullivan*

Nevada: Heller *

West Virginia: Capito *

Colorado: Gardner

Louisiana: Cassidy

Arizona: Flake

Ohio: Portman

Pennsylvania: Toomey

Montana: Daines

Nebraska: Fischer and Sasse

Missouri: Blunt

Wisconsin: Johnson

Indiana: Young
Georgia: Isakson
Alabama: Shelby
South Carolina: Graham
Florida: Rubio

Congressional Briefings Scheduled on Proposed Medicaid Caps

The ACLU and other Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD) organizations are hosting briefings and events this week on proposed Medicaid cuts and caps. A briefing took place this morning focusing on the devastating impact of Medicaid cuts to individuals with disabilities. On Wed., a healthcare rally is scheduled at 11:00 am on Capitol Hill. NASHIA signed on to a Disability and Aging Collaborative (DAC) advertisement that will run next week about protecting Medicaid.

Lawmakers Introduce Lifespan Respite Care Reauthorization

Reps. Jim Langevin (D-RI) and Gregg Harper (R-MS) and Senators Susan Collins (R-ME) and Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) have introduced legislation to extend the Lifespan Respite Care program through FY 2022 at an authorization level of \$15 million annually. NASHIA signed on to a [letter](#) in support of the legislation, as well as an appropriations [letter](#) to fund the program for the coming year.

Legislators Introduce the RISE Act

The RISE Act has been reintroduced, S. 1295 and H.R. 2782, to amend the Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA) to ensure that students with disabilities thrive in college. It focuses on three critical issues 1) Information - provides parents and students with information on disability services in one place, making it easier to know what services are available in higher education and how to access them, 2) Accommodations - requires colleges to accept an IEP or 504 plan as evidence of disability when a student is seeking accommodations in college, and 3) Training - supports a technical assistance center for college faculty to learn more about the needs of students with disabilities.

NASHIA Supports Extending Family and Medical Leave

NASHIA has signed on to an organizational letter calling for Congressional Members to support a strong, responsible national paid family and medical leave policy and reject harmful alternatives, in order for families to care for members with serious injuries, illnesses or disabilities. The paid parental leave proposal included in the Trump administration's FY 2018 budget proposes to require States to provide six weeks of paid leave to parents caring for newborn or newly adopted children. It excludes more than 75 percent of people in this country who take family or medical leave not to care for new babies or newly adopted children, but to care for family members with serious illnesses, injuries or disabilities or for their own serious health issue.

Paid family and medical leave insurance programs have existed in California since 2004, New Jersey since 2009 and Rhode Island since 2014. Strong new programs will take effect in New York in 2018 and in the District of Columbia in 2020. Analyses of California's law show that both employers and employees benefit from the program.

Briefings and Hearings

Bipartisan Disabilities Caucus to Hold Briefing on Assistive Technology

On Thurs., the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities Technology and Telecommunications Task Force, in collaboration with the Bipartisan Disabilities Caucus, is hosting a briefing on Assistive Technology and Independence: Achieving Education, Community Living, Employment and Health and Fitness, followed by an Assistive Technology Expo. Featured guest speakers include Rep. Glenn Thompson (R-PA) and Senator Ed Markey (D-MA). The briefing will be held in 902 Senate Hart Office Bldg. at 12:30pm - 2:30pm.

Rehab Coalitions Sponsoring Briefing

The Coalition to Preserve Rehabilitation (CPR), the Habilitation Benefits Coalition (HAB), and the

Independence Through Enhancement of Medicare and Medicaid (ITEM) Coalition are sponsoring a Congressional Briefing on *The Value of Rehabilitation and Habilitation Services and Devices in America's Healthcare System*, on June 27. NASHIA, along with 56 other organizations are supporting this event. The Congressional Briefing will be held from 12:00 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. in the Dirksen Senate Office Building, Room SD-106.

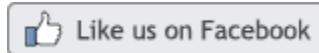
This *Capitol News* was prepared by:
Susan L. Vaughn, Director of Public Policy, publicpolicy@nashia.org

William A.B. Ditto, MSW, Chair of the NASHIA Public Policy Committee, WilliamABDitto@aol.com

Rebecca Wolfkiel, NASHIA Governmental Relations Consultant, rwolfkiel@ridgepolicygroup.com



*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.*



National Association of State Head Injury Administrators
PO Box 78, Waitsfield, VT 05673

Sent by publicpolicy@nashia.org in collaboration with