



## Capitol News!

### Celebrating Brain Injury Awareness Month!

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National Association of State Head Injury Administrators

March 3, 2017

#### Dear NASHIA Member,

Greetings and welcome to the first edition of *Capitol News* this year. Since the new year, we have a new President and 115th Congress. This week, President Trump gave his first speech to Congress outlining his priorities. In anticipation of the President's recommendations for cutting federal programs, Rebecca Wolfkiel, NASHIA Government Relations, is scheduling visits for NASHIA members attending the **Congressional Brain Injury Task Force Awareness Day on March 22**, to inform and educate policymakers as to the importance of the federal TBI State Implementation Grant Program in helping States to improve service delivery. Stay tuned as more information will be forthcoming next week. However, if you are planning to attend, please contact her at [rwolfkiel@ridgepolicygroup.com](mailto:rwolfkiel@ridgepolicygroup.com) or call her at 202- 480-8901.

In addition, the **U.S. Administration for Community Living (ACL)** is hosting a meeting on **March 21** in Washington, D.C. for purposes of discussing the future direction of the Federal TBI State Implementation Grant program. During the lunch hour the next day, on March 22, State employees are invited to a meeting in the Rayburn House Office Building, Room 2013, to solicit input with regard to performance measures for the grant program. Please **RSVP for both the pre-meeting on March 21 and/or the Hill Day brown-bag discussion on March 22** by sending an email to [TBI@acl.gov](mailto:TBI@acl.gov) **no later than Monday, March 6**. ACL will send out the location and other meeting details as the date gets closer. Please include any reasonable accommodation requests along with your RSVP.

Last Friday, NASHIA hosted its first Capitol News *Live!* webinar to provide up-to-date information. You may view the webinar [here](#). Further information on NASHIA's public policy priorities is being posted every week. Please feel free to use that information as you see fit!

#### This Week in Congress

Congress re-convened this week after being in their home districts. The Senate confirmed former governor of Texas, Rick Perry, as the secretary of the Department of Energy, and Dr. Ben Carson as the secretary of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) on Thursday. Among other deliberations, the House is discussing how to replace the Affordable Care Act. Read more below.



## **Legislative Update**

### **Continuing Resolution for FY 2017 Funding Set to Expire in April**

The continuing resolution, which funds federal government programs through the end of this fiscal year, ends April 28. Yesterday, the House Appropriations Committee introduced the final version of the fiscal year (FY) 2017 Defense Appropriations bill, which will be considered on the House floor next week. The agreement provides \$312 million for cancer research, \$125 million for traumatic brain injury and psychological health research, and \$296 million for sexual assault prevention and response. All of these funding levels represent increases above the budget request for these programs. Yet to be determined is the appropriations for the remaining agencies, including the Departments of Education and Health and Human Services (HHS).

### **President to Unveil His FY 2018 Proposed Budget**

According to the *Congressional Quarterly*, the Administration has announced that it is directing federal agencies to find savings in non-defense discretionary (NDD) spending in order to increase defense spending by \$54 billion. Although it is unknown where the cuts will come from, CQ reports that the proposed budget will "rearrange priorities in domestic spending and eliminate programs that administration officials believe have been ineffective or should not be a federal responsibility."

In anticipation of this position, NASHIA asked TBI State grantees to submit examples to NASHIA that demonstrate a positive return on investment through the use of these federal funds. In particular, budget officials have asked for demonstration with regard to positive outcomes for veterans and returning servicemembers with TBI. NASHIA will use information gathered to help make the case for continued funding for the only program assisting States with improving service delivery for individuals with brain injury and their families.

Following the President's State of the Union address, the NDD United sent a letter signed by 2,000 national, State, and local organizations, including NASHIA, to Congress, the President, and over 500 members of the media, along with a statement, calling for leaders to protect NDD programs from further cuts and end sequestration

### **Congress Proposes Budget Reconciliation Process for Repealing ACA**

The House and the Senate are using the budget reconciliation process for repealing the Affordable Care Act (ACA), the same process that was used to enact it. In the Senate, reconciliation bills are not subject to filibuster and the scope of amendments is limited. Reconciliation can be used to address "mandatory" or entitlement spending, but not Social Security.

Plans have been floated to introduce two budget reconciliation bills with one bill to repeal the ACA and the other bill to address taxes created by the ACA by offsetting the tax cuts through, in part, reining in Medicaid spending. See more below.

### **Lawmakers Propose ACA Replacement**

Republican leaders are floating plans to replace the Affordable Care Act (ACA) that would include Health Savings Accounts, tax credits and State high risk pools. Congressional leaders are proposing to shift the administration of the Medicaid program to the States and reduce spending either by setting per capita caps or converting Medicaid to a block grant program in lieu of an entitlement program as it is now. This proposed reduced spending is to make up for revenue loss from repealing ACA taxes, which are to be repealed, as well as to slow the growth of the Medicaid program overall. There are not many details with regard to State requirements, such as match requirements, required populations or benefits or even the amounts that would be appropriated to the States to administer.

NASHIA has signed on to a [letter](#) urging Congress to not make radical structural changes to Medicaid through block grants or per capita caps. The Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD), of which NASHIA is a member, has been arranging meetings with members of Congress daily expressing concerns with regard to proposed Medicaid and ACA changes, and consider the needs of individuals with disabilities in their deliberations.

Meanwhile, there is speculation that the House Energy and Commerce Committee is planning to mark up a replacement bill next week, although the proposal has not yet been shared with anyone. Click [here](#) for the *Better Way Plan*, also known as the Speaker Ryan Plan, issued last June, outlining strategies for replacing ACA.

### **Lawmakers Introduce Pre-existing Conditions Protections Bill**

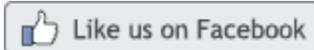
Separate legislation has already been introduced to protect individuals with pre-existing by the chair of the House Energy and Commerce (E&C) Committee, Rep. Greg Walden (R-OR), along with 40 plus co-sponsors. The purpose of H.R. 112, the Pre-Existing Conditions Protection Act of 2017, is to reaffirm guaranteed health care access, ensure that enrollees cannot have benefits excluded from a plan due to a pre-existing condition, and that patients will not pay more based on their health care status.

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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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