



## Capitol News!

produced by the National Association of State Head Injury Administrators

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### Dear NASHIA Member,

Welcome to *Capitol News*. After a successful Congressional Brain Injury Awareness Day held last month, NASHIA Government Relations Staff, Rebeccah Wolfkiel, continues to work on brain injury funding and other legislative opportunities to advance services for individuals with TBI. During the Awareness Day activities, NASHIA members made office visits to educate their representative and senators about TBI services in their States and also attended a meeting hosted by the U.S. Administration for Community Living (ACL) to discuss the future of the ACL Federal TBI State Implementation Grant Program.

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

### This Week in Congress

Congress returned from recess this week and has four days to resolve the current budget or shut the government down as funding for this year expires at midnight, April 28. In addition, Republican leaders and the Administration are still considering legislation to repeal and replace the health care reform bill and tax reform proposals -- priorities of the Administration.



### Appropriations

#### Congress Needs to Extend Funding Past Friday

This Friday, funding for federal government expires at midnight should Congress and the President not agree to funding for the remainder of the federal fiscal year ending Sept. 30. Congress needs to pass another continuing resolution or pass the remaining 11 annual bills to avoid a government shutdown. Mick Mulvaney, Director of the Office of Management and Budget, has warned that President Trump could veto the annual funding bills if they do not fund some of his priorities. The President's priorities include a \$30 billion defense supplemental and a \$3 billion border security spending request. It is unclear whether these disagreements between the White House and Congress will lead to a government shutdown or at least require another short-term continuing resolution to allow time to finalize disagreements.

#### President to Announce Recommendations for FY 2018 Appropriations

Meanwhile, the President has yet to release his FY 2018 budget recommendations beyond the "skinny" budget released previously. It is anticipated that he will release his recommendations in mid to late May or early June. The Congressional Brain Injury Task Force Co-chairs, Reps. Bill Pascrell, Jr. (D-NJ) and Tom Rooney (R-FL), circulated a sign on [letter](#) to congressional Members in support of TBI programs housed in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), including the ACL Federal TBI State Implementation Grant Program and

NIDILRR Model Systems, and a second [letter](#) supporting funding for military-related TBI services in the Department of Defense. Both letters have been sent to the appropriators responsible for spending bills for those departments. NASHIA is planning to host a second Capitol News Live! webinar once the President's budget is released.

## Legislation

### **House Leadership Working on Another Health Care Reform Bill**

While the U.S. House of Representatives did not have enough votes to repeal the Affordable Care Act (ACA) last month, House Speaker Paul Ryan (R-WI) and the President still have the goal of repealing and replacing the health care reform law. The republican plan, the American Health Care Act, among other provisions, sought to repeal the essential health care benefits, significantly cut the federal Medicaid program and shift the Medicaid program to the States to administer.

Discussions which are now being floated include allowing States to obtain a waiver to opt out of the essential health care benefits and other provisions of the ACA. Under the "MacArthur Amendment", offered by Rep. Tom MacArthur (R-NJ), States could write their own essential health care benefits and allow insurers to charge people more for pre-existing conditions as long as the State also makes a high risk pool available.

Meanwhile, President Trump is trying to force Democrats to support funding for the "border wall" in the appropriations deal this week by threatening to withhold payments owed to health insurance companies under the ACA, which would force it to collapse.

### **Senators Re-introduce the Disability Integration Act**

On April 7th, Senators Chuck Schumer (D-NY), Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) and Robert Casey (D-PA) reintroduced the Disability Integration Act, S. 910, to prohibit discrimination against individuals with disabilities who need long-term services and supports. The bill would accelerate States' compliance with the Olmstead Decision, requiring a comprehensive State plan that includes enforceable, measurable objectives designed to transition individuals with all type of disabilities at all ages out of institutions and into the most integrated setting. The legislation also establishes a requirement for clear and uniform annual public reporting by States that includes the number of individuals with disabilities who are served in the community; the number who are served in institutions; and the number of individuals with disabilities who have transitioned from an institution to a community-based living situation, as well as the type of community-based living situation into which those individuals have transitioned.

### **Advocates Push for Extension of the CHIP Program**

NASHIA signed on to a sign-on letter to congressional leaders urging Congress to act quickly to enact long-term extension of the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). Funding is currently set to expire on September 30, 2017, but most States are now finalizing their FY 2018 budgets, and, need to know that CHIP will not run out of funding after next September. If Congress fails to extend CHIP funding, millions of children who rely on CHIP will face coverage disruptions -- many would lose coverage altogether.

### **Lawmakers Introduce Legislation to Extend the Steve Gleason Act**

Senator David Vitter (R-LA) and Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-WA) have introduced legislation extending the Steve Gleason Act of 2015 by removing the current sunset date of October 1, 2018. The Steve Gleason Enduring Voices Act of 2017 assures Medicare coverage for speech generating devices (SGD) and related accessories that are uniquely configured for each user will continue to be available even when an SGD user resides for more than a brief period in a nursing home, hospice or hospital. The legislation is named for former NFL player, Steve Gleason, who was diagnosed with ALS in 2011. NASHIA signed on to a letter drafted by the Center for Medicare Advocacy on behalf of older adults and people with disabilities urging Congress to support the Steve Gleason Enduring Voices Act of 2017.

### **Senators Introduce the Independence at Home Act**

In February, Senator Ed Markey (D-MA) introduced S. 464, the Independence at Home (IAH) Act, to establish a permanent Independence at Home Medical Practice Program, under which a primary care practice shall be accountable for: (1) providing comprehensive, coordinated, continuous, and accessible care to applicable Medicare beneficiaries at home and (2) coordinating health care across all treatment settings. The bill is co-sponsored by Senators, Rob Portman (R-OH), Michael

Bennet (D-CO), and John Cornyn (R-TX), among others. The American Academy of Home Care Medicine (AAHCM), along with the Home Care Medicine Action Fund, have created a website to provide information on the legislation. NASHIA is listed along with other supportive organizations on the [website](#).

## Congressional Hearings

### Senate Special Committee on Aging will Hold Hearing Tomorrow

Tomorrow, the Senate Special Committee on Aging is holding a hearing, "Aging Without Community: The Consequences of Isolation and Loneliness." Among those testifying is Rick Creech, who testify on the role of augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) and how it relates to social isolation, and the importance of assistive technology.

### House Committee to Hold Hearing on Military-related TBIs

On Thurs, April 27th, the House Committee on Armed Services' Subcommittee on Military Personnel will hold a hearing on Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder/Traumatic Brain Injury. Witnesses include:

- Capt. Mike Colston, Director, Department of Defense, Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury (DCoE)
- Lt. Colonel Chris Ivany, Chief, Behavior Health Division, United States Army, HQDA, Office of the Surgeon General
- Capt. Thomas Johnson, Site Director, United States Navy, Intrepid Spirit Concussion Recovery Center Camp Lejeune, NC
- Col. Steven Pflanz, Deputy Director of Psychological Health, United States Air Force

### House to Hold Hearing on Social Security Fraud

On April 26, the House Ways and Means Social Security Subcommittee will hold a hearing on "Stopping Disability Fraud: Risk, Prevention, and Detection". The hearing will examine the Social Security Administration's ability to identify and manage fraud risk, and the status of the antifraud initiatives.

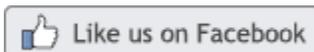
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*The National Association of State Head Injury Administrators assists State government in promoting partnerships and building systems to meet the needs of individuals with brain injuries and their families.*



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