



Capitol News!

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National Association of State Head Injury Administrators

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Dear NASHIA Member,

Greetings and welcome to this issue of *Capitol News!* This has been a busy, exciting month for NASHIA and the brain injury community. On September 11th, Jim Macrae, Acting Administrator, Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), and Kathy Greenlee, Administration for Community Living Administrator (ACL), [announced](#) that the HRSA Federal TBI Program would be moving from HRSA to the ACL, effective October 1. This has been a high priority for NASHIA and other TBI stakeholders, Brain Injury Association of America (BIAA) and National Disability Rights Network (NDRN), in order to align with other disability and aging home and community and family resources.

Last week, on September 16th, Rep. Bill Pascrell, Jr. (D-NJ) and Rep. Thomas J. Rooney (R-FL), Co-Chairs of the Congressional Brain Injury Task Force (CBITF) in association with the Senate Special Committee on Aging, NASHIA, BIAA and the National Council on Aging hosted the briefing falls and TBI-related injuries among older adults. William A.B. (Bill) Ditto, Chair of the NASHIA Public Policy Committee, participated on the panel. Yesterday, Rep. Pascrell was joined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) officials, student athletes and other local officials at an in-district public school (Garfield) announcing the release of a new CDC report regarding concussions amongst student athletes, along with highlighting Garfield school district's concussion policies. Rebecca Wolfkiel, NASHIA's Governmental Relations Consultant, was instrumental in coordinating this event, as well as last week's briefing.

This Week in Congress

This week, the U.S. Senate is in session and the House of Representatives will convene Thursday. As Yom Kippur is on Wednesday and Pope Francis is scheduled to address Congress on Thursday, both the House and the Senate are expected to work on Friday.



Legislation

Congress Has One Week to Pass FY 2016 Appropriations

Congress has one week to pass a measure to fund federal government beginning October 1, beginning of the new fiscal year. Yesterday, Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman Thad Cochran (R-MS) encouraged Senators to support a short-term continuing resolution (CR) to continue funding for government operations through Dec. 11, 2015, and to prohibit funding for Planned Parenthood. On Thursday, the Senate is to convene and resume consideration of H.J.Res.61, Hire More Heroes Act of 2015, a legislative vehicle making continuing appropriations for FY 2016 (Senate Amendment 2669). Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) proposes to offer the amendment for Senator Cochran to the joint resolution, which amends the Internal Revenue Code to exempt any employee with coverage under a health care program administered by the

Department of Defense, including the TRICARE program, or by the Department of Veterans Affairs from classification as an eligible employee of an applicable large employer for purposes of the employer mandate under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act to provide eligible employees with minimum essential health care coverage.

Meanwhile, the President and Minority Leaders Reid (D-NV) and Pelosi (D-CA) are pushing for a short-term CR at flat funding as long as there are no policy riders. Democrats also insist that they will only vote for a CR with an agreement to negotiate a long term budget with higher spending caps. They also insist that there be parity with the amount raised for defense spending caps. President Obama is threatening to veto any appropriations bill sent to him should it defund Planned Parenthood. Some members of Congress have threaten to filibuster the passage of a CR, unless all federal spending for health services provided by Planned Parenthood is cut. This disagreement over Planned Parenthood funding has led to threats of government shut down.

Senators Approve Resolution Designating Direct Support Week

Earlier in the month, the Senate unanimously approved a resolution designating the week of September 13 as "National Direct Support Professionals Recognition Week." Senators Ben Cardin (D-MD) and Susan Collins (R-ME) were the primary sponsors and movers of Senate Resolution 245, which recognized Direct Support Professionals (DSPs). Other co-sponsors included Senators Rob Portman (R-OH), Angus King (I-ME), Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Chris Murphy (D-CT), Chuck Grassley (R-IA), Bob Menendez (D-NJ), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Cory Booker (D-NJ), Edward Markey (D-MA), Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), Kelly Ayotte (R-NH), Patty Murray (D-WA), Al Franken (D-MN), Robert Casey (D-PA), and Elizabeth Warren (D-MA).

Congressional Hearings and Briefings

Task Force Holds Briefing on Elder Falls and TBI

Last Wednesday, Representatives Bill Pascrell, Jr. (D-NJ) and Thomas J. Rooney (R-FL), Co-Chairs of the Congressional Brain Injury Task Force and the Senate Special Committee on Aging in association with the BIAA, National Council on Aging, and NASHIA hosted the Congressional briefing; "Preventing Falls and TBI-Related Injuries Among Older Americans".

Dr. Wayne Gordon, Jack Nash Professor, Vice Chair, Department of Rehabilitation Medicine, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai and Chairman of the Research Council of the Brain Injury Association of America served as moderator. The panel included Grant Baldwin, PhD, MPH, Director of the Division of Unintentional Injury Prevention at the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; Edwin Walker, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Aging, Administration for Community Living; Howard Bedlin, Vice President, Public Policy and Advocacy, National Council on Aging; William A. B. Ditto, Chair of NASHIA's Public Policy Committee; and Martha A. Roherty, Executive Director, National Association of States United for Aging and Disabilities (NASUAD).

Neuroscience Caucus Holds Briefing on BRAIN Initiative

On September 10, 2015, the Congressional Neuroscience Caucus hosted a briefing on "Peering into the Brain: Public and Private Investment in the BRAIN Initiative", highlighting the work of GE, Inscopix, and the Brain & Behavior Research Foundation supporting the goals of the Brain Research through Advancing Innovative Neurotechnologies (BRAIN) Initiative. The briefing was organized and co-hosted by the American Brain Coalition and sponsored by Inscopix. Speakers showcased how private investment is complementing the public effort being made to find the missing puzzle pieces needed to understand the mysteries of both the functional and dysfunctional brain.

Other

Pascrell Issues Press Release on TBI Program Transfer

Rep. Bill Pascrell, Jr. (D-NJ), Co-chair and Co-founder of the Congressional Brain Injury Task Force, issued a press release regarding the decision of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to elevate the federal Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) program to the Administration for Community Living (ACL). For nearly 20 years, HRSA has administered this program, which awards grants to State government for purposes of expanding service delivery and to state Protection and Advocacy Systems to expand advocacy services to include individuals with TBI.

"HHS should be commended for elevating the TBI program and recognizing the important role it serves in the lives of so many," said Pascrell. "I fought to have the federal TBI program elevated in order to allow it to adapt based on the needs of TBI survivors and to allow for better coordination among federal agencies. This will result in better resources for individuals impacted by devastating head injuries. A traumatic brain injury can impact anyone at anytime, so we must remain vigilant in making TBI treatment and prevention a priority."

HRSA and ACL staffers are working closely to ensure a smooth transition of the program, which will be housed in the Administration on Disabilities in the ACL. The State Grant Program will be under the Independent Living Administration and the Protection and Advocacy Grant Program will be housed in the Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. After October 1, 2015, ACL will assume responsibility for grant oversight and administration and issue new grant awards as existing projects come to conclusion. For now, grantees who have questions should contact their current HRSA project officer or grants management specialist.



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