



Capitol News!

produced by the National Association of State Head Injury Administrators

Vol. 14, Issue 7

September 5, 2017

Dear NASHIA Member,

Welcome to *Capitol News!*, which you receive as a NASHIA member. Congress returned today facing a number of issue, including, passing the twelve annual spending bills for FY2018, lifting the federal debt ceiling, providing disaster relief to Texas, and reauthorizing the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). Today, the President gave Congress another task -- addressing the DACA program, known as the Dreamers, in the next six months. Meanwhile, NASHIA continues to advocate for retaining the Federal TBI State Grant Program as a stand alone program, rather than eliminating it and combining it with two other programs as proposed by the Administration. Rebeccah Wolfkiel, NASHIA Governmental Relations, has met with House and Senate Appropriations staff over the summer to advocate for the merits of the program in keeping with the TBI Act.

Read below for further information on what lies ahead. Meanwhile, NASHIA maintains a [webpage](#) that lists its key priorities along with support letters, testimony and other information. To learn how you may affect policy issues, click on the [Get Involved](#) page that has suggestions for advocating as a State employee and other tidbits. As always, 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

Congress returned to work this afternoon facing a heavy load. Senate Republicans are preparing to attach relief aid for Hurricane Harvey to the debt ceiling, with a vote as soon as this week.

While funding for Hurricane Harvey is one of the immediate items to be addressed, the Senate's first orders of business will be to also take up the National Defense Authorization Act. On Thursday, the full Senate Appropriations Committee will mark up the Labor-HHS-Education spending bill.



FY 2018 Appropriations

Senate Subcommittee to Markup of the FY2018 Labor, HHS, Education Appropriations Bill

On Wednesday, the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services (HHS), Education, and Related Agencies will mark up the spending bill relating to the agencies under that subcommittee's jurisdiction. The full Senate Appropriations Committee is to take up the bill on Thursday along with the bill to fund State-Foreign Operations.

House Considers Minibus Spending Bill for Labor-HHS

The House is considering a minibus to fund government past October 1, the beginning of fiscal year 2018, that may include the Labor, HHS and Education bill (along with seven others). On July 19, the House Appropriations Committee approved the draft fiscal year 2018 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education (LHHS) funding bill. The bill cuts funding to lower-priority programs, while targeting investments in medical research, public health, biodefense, and important activities that help boost job growth.

For a third consecutive year, it allocates a significant funding increase of \$1.1 billion for the National Institutes of Health (NIH), which will benefit a wide range of biomedical programs, including public health preparedness and readiness in biodefense, and research programs to find cures spanning from cancer to Alzheimer's. The recommendations reflect increases for special education funding; and early childhood education programs; and language to prevent advocacy regarding gun control.

Administration for Community Living (ACL) -- Most of the Administration for Community Living (ACL) programs that support the elderly and people with disabilities would receive funding equal to fiscal 2017. The State Health Insurance Program, which received \$47.1 million in fiscal 2017, would be eliminated. The measure transfers the Senior Community Service Employment Program from the Labor Department to ACL and provide \$300 million for fiscal 2018. That would be \$100 million less than provided in fiscal 2017.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) -- The legislation includes a total of \$7 billion for CDC - \$198 million below the fiscal year 2017 enacted level and \$1 billion above the President's budget request. This includes \$840.6 million in transfers from the Prevention and Public Health Fund. The bill also continues the longstanding prohibition against using federal funds to advocate or promote gun control.

Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) -- Most of the funding for CMS is for mandatory programs that are considered appropriated entitlements, meaning the amounts are set under the authorizing law but provided through annual appropriations. The fiscal 2018 allocation would include \$284.8 billion for Medicaid and \$323.5 billion for health care trust funds, which includes financing for parts of Medicare. The measure also would provide \$3.45 billion from the trust funds for program management, \$218.6 million less than provided in fiscal 2017. The bill does not include additional funding to implement Affordable Care Act programs, prohibits funds for the "Navigators" program, and prohibits the collection of user fees from the Health Insurance Exchanges.

National Institutes of Health (NIH) -- The measure would provide more funding across the board for the NIH compared with fiscal 2017. The largest increases would include \$410.1 million more for the National Institute on Aging, for a total of \$2.46 billion, and \$144 million more for the NIH Innovation Account created by the 21st Century Cures Act for a total of \$496 million. Some of the innovation funding would be transferred to specified accounts within NIH, including \$43 million for the Brain Research through Advancing Innovative Neurotechnologies (BRAIN) initiative.

The measure would prevent NIH from capping the amount of grant funding that could be used for administrative costs, which the Administration proposed in its budget request as a way to reduce

expenses. The committee report said the proposal "is misguided and would have a devastating impact on biomedical research across the country."

House and Senate Bills Direct NIST to Establish Safety Standards for Helmets

The House and Senate Appropriations Committees' fiscal year 2018 spending bills for the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) in the U.S. Department of Commerce propose cuts to its overall budget of 9 percent and 1 percent below current levels, respectively. Both the House and Senate Appropriations Committees include language encouraging NIST to establish a standard for determining the inadequacy of football helmets. The House Committee encourages NIST "to investigate an effective national testing standard to better determine scientifically the inadequacies of football helmets while exploring future product designs that can safely reduce the neural risk of playing football. A number of academic institutions have substantial capabilities and knowledge of these issues, and NIST should work cooperatively with the academic community to examine advanced helmets and equipment and in developing new testing standards to ensure player safety."

The Senate Committee encourages NIST to "investigate an effective national testing standard to better scientifically understand the inadequacies of sports helmets while exploring future product designs that can safely reduce the neural risk of playing football, hockey, and other high-impact sports. Additionally, NIST should consider establishing an effective national testing standard to inform the development of youth-specific helmet safety standards."

Committee Hearings and Briefings

Senate HELP Committee to Hold Hearings on Insurance Market

Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee is holding a series of hearings Sept. 6-14, on "Stabilizing Premiums and Helping Individuals in the Individual Insurance Market for 2018." Different days have been set aside to hear testimony from Governors, healthcare stakeholders, and State insurance commissioners.

IVPN Hosts Congressional Briefing on Substance Abuse, Injuries and Violence

The Injury and Violence Prevention Network (IVPN) will host a Congressional briefing on Tuesday, Oct. 24, on the "Intersection of Substance Abuse, Injuries & Violence." Representative Gwen Moore (D-WI) is sponsoring the briefing and has secured a room in the Capitol Visitor Center Meeting Room North (CVC 268) from 10-11:30 am. Speakers are currently being finalized. NASHIA is a member of the IVPN.

This *Capitol News* was prepared by:

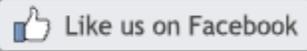
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The National Association of State Head Injury Administrators assists State government in promoting partnerships and building systems to meet the needs of individuals with brain injuries and their families.



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