



Capitol News!

by the

National Association of State Head Injury Administrators

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Dear NASHIA Member,

Welcome to *Capitol News!* This week, Congress is on recess and Members are back in their home districts to celebrate Independence Day. Before recessing, the Senate Majority Leader hinted that the appropriations process may be stalled in the Senate until the House Democratic Leadership and the President can agree to spending caps for domestic discretionary spending. Read further below about appropriation bills and other legislation before Congress. For more information about NASHIA's public policy priorities, go to the Key Issues [web page](#). Meanwhile, Happy July 4th!

This Week in Congress

This week, Congress is on recess and back in their home districts to celebrate July 4th and will return July 8. This means that many will be out and about in their home districts, particularly with regard to July 4th events, such as fairs, parades, picnics and other local activities providing an excellent time to talk to them about brain injury issues.



FY2020 Appropriations

House Passes Appropriations Bills for Labor-HHS-Education

The House of Representatives has set its on spending caps and is proceeding with passing appropriation bills. On June 19, the House passed a package of four appropriation bills, which included the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services (HHS), Education and Related Agencies. The bill includes:

- An additional \$1 million for a total of \$12.321 million for the HHS' Administration for Community Living (ACL) TBI Program that awards grants to protection & advocacy (P&A) systems and to States to improve service delivery.
- Level funding for the ACL National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR) research program and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Injury Center TBI program.
- An additional \$2 million for CDC's Injury Control Research Centers for a total of \$11 million; an additional \$1 million for the CDC elderly falls prevention program for a total of \$3.05 million; and \$25 million for firearm injury and mortality prevention research.

On June 21, NASHIA and the Brain Injury Association of America (BIAA) sent a joint [letter](#) to the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Related Agencies calling for increases for fiscal year 2020 for TBI programs, including NIDILRR.

administered by the Administration for Community Living (ACL) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). On May 28, NASHIA also submitted [testimony](#) to the Senate Subcommittee supporting increased funding.

Legislation Introduced

Senator Introduces Spousal Protection Bill

On June 27, Senator Robert Casey, Jr. (D-PA) introduced S. 2000, the Protecting Married Seniors from Impoverishment Act, which would make permanent existing protections that allow the spouse of a person receiving Medicaid-covered home and community-based services (HCBS) to retain a share of the couple's income and assets and avoid poverty -- same protections as for institutional care. The bill amends title XIX of the Social Security Act to remove an institutional bias by making permanent the protection for recipients of home and community-based services against spousal impoverishment.

Senators Offer Legislation to Reauthorize Assistive Technology

On June 13, Senators Robert Casey, Jr. (D-PA) and Susan Collins (R-ME) introduced S.1835 the 21st Century Assistive Technology Act. The bill increases funding for State assistive technology (AT) programs to provide for greater resource to rural regions and the increasing need among older individuals. AT is any item, device, or piece of equipment used to maintain or improve the functionality of people with disabilities, allowing them to be more independent in education, employment, recreation, and daily living activities. AT includes the services necessary to get and use the devices, including assessment, customization, repair, and training.

Lawmakers Introduce Bills on Emergency Preparation for People with Disabilities

Senator Robert Casey, Jr. (D-PA) and Congressman Jim Langevin (D-RI) introduced the Real Emergency Access for Aging and Disability Inclusion for Disasters Act in their respective houses on June 10 and June 11. S.1755 and H.R. 3208 establish a National Commission on Disability Rights and Disasters to study the needs of individuals with disabilities, older adults and others with access and functional needs throughout emergency preparation and planning, disaster response, recovery and mitigation. Additionally, it would provide financial support to develop and provide technical assistance and training to State and local emergency managers as well as disaster relief agencies.

Senator Casey and Rep. Donna Shalala (D-FL) have also introduced the Disaster Relief Medicaid Act (DRMA) on the same days. S. 1754 and H.R. 3215 would ensure that individuals eligible for Medicaid who are forced to relocate due to a disaster are able to continue to access their Medicaid supported services.

Representatives Introduce Bill for Service Dogs for Veterans with TBI

On June 5, Rep. James McGovern (D-MA), along with a number of co-sponsors, introduced the H.R. 3137, the "Wounded Warrior Service Dog Act of 2019". The bill authorizes appropriations for the Secretary of Defense to establish the "K-9 Service Corps Program", to award competitive grants to nonprofit organizations to assist such organizations in the planning, designing, establishing, or operating (or any combination thereof) of programs to provide assistance dogs to covered members, including members with a traumatic brain injury-related disability. A covered member with a disability means a member of the Armed Forces who is (A) receiving medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy; (B) in medical hold or medical holdover status; or (C) covered under section 1202 or 1205 of title 10, United States Code.

House Members Introduce Transition Bill

Reps. Seth Moulton (D-MA) and Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-WA) introduced the "Customized Approaches to Providing And Building Independent Lives of Inclusion for Transition-aged Youth Act of 2019" or the "CAPABILITY Act of 2019" on June 3. H.R. 3070 authorizes grants to States to help transition-aged youth with disabilities obtain customized, competitive integrated employment.

House Passes Bill to Reauthorize Money Follows the Person Program

On June 18, the House passed H.R. 3253, the Empowering Beneficiaries, Ensuring Access, and

Strengthening Accountability Act.. The bill extends the Medicaid Money Follows the Person (MFP) program through FY 2023, and also extends the Medicaid home and community-based services (HCBS) spousal impoverishment protections through March 31, 2024. The bill is now in the hands of the Senate.

Hearings and Briefings

Subcommittee Holds Hearing on Lifespan Respite Care Reauthorization Bill

On June 25th, the House Energy and Commerce Committee's Subcommittee on Health held a hearing on "Reauthorizing Vital Health Programs for American Families" during which four public health bills were discussed. The Lifespan Respite Care Program Reauthorization Act of 2019, H.R. 2035, was one those bills. S.995, is the Senate companion bill.

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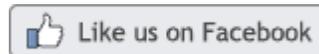
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The National Association of State Head Injury Administrators assists State government in promoting partnerships and building systems to meet the needs of individuals with brain injuries and their families.



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