

Capitol News!

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Dear NASHIA Member,

Welcome to *Capitol News!* In this issue you will find an update on budget and legislative issues before Congress. As a reminder, the **Congressional Brain Injury Task Force is sponsoring Awareness Day activities on Wednesday, March 13, 2013, in Washington, DC.** The schedule is contained in this newsletter. Additional information will be sent in a separate e-mail. Materials are being posted with regard to recommendations for FY 2014 appropriations for TBI Act programs, TBI reauthorization and NASHIA's priorities for the new Congress. These materials will be housed on the NASHIA website (www.nashia.org) website under Priorities and Key Issues pages. Also, the *112th Congress: Final Report* is finished and is also being placed on the website.

NASHIA members, staff and public policy support team will be attending the Awareness Day events. We look forward to seeing all of you who can come. NASHIA will have an exhibit with materials on our public policy priorities.

This Week in Congress



Both the House and Senate are in session this week. The big issue facing Congress is sequestration, set to go into effect tomorrow. Meanwhile, the House did pass reauthorization of the Women Against Domestic Violence Act today and sent it to the President for his signature.

Budget and Appropriations

Sequestration

Unless a miracle happens between today and tomorrow, discretionary programs will be cut 5 percent across-the-board, which, given that half of the fiscal year is completed, will result in 10 percent cuts to some programs. The TBI Act programs will be subject to cuts, as they constitute discretionary spending. OMB will sequester approximately \$85 billion in FY 2013 spending as mandated by the Budget Control Act (BCA) of 2011. OMB recently calculated that sequestration will require an annual reduction of roughly 5 percent for nondefense programs and roughly 8 percent for defense programs. The exception is the entitlement programs (i.e. Medicaid, Medicare, Food Stamps-SNAP), which are exempt.

The Senate is scheduled to take up a Democratic bill that includes enough cuts and revenues to as an alternative to sequestration. However, even if the Senate passes the bill, the majority in the House of Representatives opposes any plan that includes revenues. The White House released a [memo with links to State-by-State data](#) on the impact of the cuts to State government programs.

As the Concurrent Resolution funding most federal programs is set to expire March 27th, Congress may address spending cuts when extending federal funding through September 30th, as an alternative plan to automatic cuts. NASHIA has signed on to

several coalition letters urging Congress to protect research, injury prevention, disability, and health care programs and funding.

Debt Ceiling

Meanwhile, on Feb. 4th, the President signed the debt ceiling suspension bill, H.R. 325, known as the No Budget, No Pay Act of 2013 (P.L. 113-003). The bill suspends the nation's \$16.4 trillion debt ceiling (and threat of default) until May 19. It also ties salaries of members of Congress to whether their respective chambers pass a budget resolution (BR). If either chamber fails to pass a BR by April 15, the salary for members in that chamber will be held in an escrow account until they pass a budget or until the last day of the 113th Congress.

FY 2014 Appropriations

The House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education has scheduled a hearing for March 13 on FY 2014 funding. NASHIA TBI Stakeholders are preparing testimony to submit with regard to TBI Act programs and the TBI Model Systems. NASHIA is posting a handout on its recommendations for FY 2014 TBI Act programs. The handout will be posted on the Public Policy pages, under Key Issues. TBI Stakeholders are also working with the Congressional Brain Injury Task Force to circulate a "Dear Colleague" letter in support of TBI funding.

The President has yet to release the Administration's budget recommendations for FY 2014. By law, the request should have been made the first Monday in February (Feb. 4th).

Legislation Passed

Congress Passes VAWA

Today, Congress passed and sent the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) reauthorization to the President for his signature. S.47 included many important improvements, such as addressing the criminal justice response to sexual assault, domestic violence homicides, housing needs, and campus victimization, which was included in legislation introduced last year. The bill also maintains enhanced protections for tribal, LGBT and immigrant victims. These provisions were identified as critical priorities by advocates across the country and received overwhelming bipartisan support last year in the Senate. The House agreed to expand the authority of tribal courts to prosecute nonnative American men who are accused of crimes on Indian reservations, an expansion of the law's reach, intended to help address problems of abuse on reservations.

Another provision was added in the Senate, the SAFER Act, S. 80, originally sponsored by Leahy and Cornyn (R-TX), which passed unanimously in the Senate late last year, and promotes the elimination of sexual assault evidence (rape kits) backlogs that could be used to prosecute offenders and solve cold cases.

Legislation Introduced

Transition and Employment

On February 5th, Representative Gregg Harper (R-MS) reintroduced three bills collectively, known as the Transition toward Excellence, Achievement and Mobility (TEAM) Act or the TEAM-Empowerment Act of 2013 (H.R. 51). The bill seeks to redesign federal programs for youth with intellectual disabilities as they transition from secondary school to the workforce. The bill would strengthen the transition from high school to workforce/post-secondary provisions of the IDEA., the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act, and the Rehabilitation Act. The bill directs the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) to award competitive grants to States for the development and implementation of an individual transition plan (ITP) for each individual with a developmental disability in the State who is transitioning from secondary school into adulthood.

Mental Health Access

On February 7th, a bipartisan group of Senators introduced legislation called the Excellence in Mental Health Act that seeks to expand access to mental health treatment by allowing federally qualified mental health centers to bill Medicaid for their services. Co-sponsors include Sens. Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), Roy Blunt (R-MO), Barbara Boxer (D-CA), Patrick Leahy (D-VT), Jack Reed (D-RI), Susan Collins (R-Maine) and Marco Rubio (R-FL). According to a Hill press release, the legislation would allow 2,000 mental health centers to serve an additional estimated 1.5 million people each year.

Pediatric Research Consortia

On January 14th, Rep. Lois Capps (D-CA) and ten other bipartisan co-sponsors, introduced the National Pediatric Research Network Act of 2013, H.R. 225, which calls on the NIH Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute on Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) and in collaboration with other national entities involved in pediatric research, to create a national pediatric research network focused on rare childhood diseases and conditions, including genetic disorders and birth defects. The bill would allow NIH to fund public and private entities to train researchers or meet unmet pediatric research needs.

Family-to - Family Health Information Centers

Rep. Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-NJ) has introduced H.R. 564, Access to Health Information Centers for Families with Disabilities Act of 2013, amending Title V of the Social Security Act to extend funding for family-to-family health information centers to help families of children with disabilities or special health care needs make informed choices about health care for their children.

HeLP America Act

Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA) has introduced S. 39, HeLP (Healthier Lifestyles Prevention) America Act, to improve public health across the nation. The bill focuses on prevention, wellness, and health promotion and has provisions addressing obesity, nutrition, physical activity, preventive services, and mental health services. The bill specifically addresses people with disabilities, promoting equality in physical activity opportunities for students with disabilities and community sports programs for children, youth, and adults with disabilities.

Other Congressional Actions

Mental Health Senate Hearing

On January 24th, the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee, in the aftermath of the mass shooting in Newtown, Connecticut, held a hearing on America's Mental Health Systems. The hearing featured testimony from a variety of mental and behavioral health experts who offered resources, recommendations, and personal stories to shape and address this conversation. Dr. Thomas Insel, director of the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) testified to the necessity of "closing the gap" between the onset of symptoms, diagnosis, and treatment. Chairman Harkin (D-IA) spoke to the stigma associated with mental illness, a stigma he went on to say "results in too many people suffering in silence without access to care." The hearing also featured testimony about the critical need for peer-to-peer support, and the increased role of peer specialists in recovery and treatment. The webcast of the hearing is available on the [HELP Committee website](#).

Long-term Care Commission Appointees

Senator Mitch McConnell (R-KY) and House Majority Leader John Boehner (R-OH) have each appointed three members to a new Commission on Long-Term Care. Senator Harry Reid (D-NV) and House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) each appointed three members to the Commission as well. The Commission was created in the American Taxpayer Relief Act that took effect on January 1, 2013, which repealed the Community Living Assistance Services and Supports (CLASS) Act. The Commission is to develop a plan to establish, implement, and finance a comprehensive, coordinated, and high-quality system of long-term services and supports, including the roles of Medicare, Medicaid, and private long-term care insurance. Appointed:

- **Bruce D. Greenstein**, Secretary of the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals
- **Neil L. Pruitt, Jr.**, Chairman and Chief Executive officer of UHS-Pruitt Corporation
- **Mark J. Warshawsky**, former Assistant Secretary for Economic Policy, Treasury Department
- **Judith Brachman**, Member of the Ohio State Crime Victims Assistance Advisory Board
- **Stephen L. Guillard**, Chief Executive Officer and President of Belmont Nursing Center Corp.
- **Grace-Marie Turner**, President of the Galen Institute
- **Dr. Bruce Allen Chernof**, President and Chief Executive Officer of The SCAN Foundation
- **Judith Stein**, Founder and Executive Director of the Center for Medicare Advocacy, Inc.
- **George Vrandenburg**, Civic activist, philanthropist, and President of the Vrandenburg Foundation
- **Laphonza Butler**, President of SEIU ULTCW - the United Long Term Care Workers' Union representing in-home attendants and nursing facility workers in California
- **Judith "Judy" Feder**, Professor of Public Policy at Georgetown University and was Dean of the Georgetown Public Policy Institute from 1999 through 2007
- **Javaid Anwar**, M.D., CEO of Quality Care Consultants

Other

CBITF Plans Brain Injury Awareness Day March 13th

The Congressional Brain Injury Task Force and TBI Stakeholders are finalizing plans for Brain Injury Awareness Day, March 13th. Further information will be sent once all speakers for the Briefing are finalized. Meanwhile, below is the schedule:

- 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM Brain Injury Awareness Fair**
First Floor Foyer of the Rayburn House Office Building
- 2:30 PM - 4:00 PM Briefing: "Promoting Brain Injury Awareness Through Public/Private Partnerships"**
The Gold Room 2168, Rayburn House Office Building
- 5:30 PM - 7:30 PM Reception Celebrating Brain Injury Awareness Month**
B-354, Rayburn House Office Building

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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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