



Washington Update!

Special Edition!

March 26, 2015

In This Issue

Action Alert

NASHIA and BIAA Recognize Senators

CBITF Awareness Day

Injury Prevention Briefing



Action Alert!

Senate Proposes Cuts for SSDI and UI

As the U.S. Senate considers its 2016 budget resolution, on the table are **cuts to benefits for people who receive both SSDI and Unemployment Insurance (UI)**. Senator Jeff Flake (R-AZ) and Senator Joe Manchin (D-WV) filed an amendment yesterday to cut these extremely modest, but vital benefits. More amendments are possible. Action on amendments and the budget resolution is expected today.

SSDI and UI are earned benefits, paid for by workers and their employers. Workers who qualify for both should be able to receive the insurance benefits they have earned. 73 national organizations, including NASHIA, signed on to a [letter](#) opposing cuts to the social security disability programs. Click [here](#) to *Get the Facts!* and take action! Call your Senators Now!

Dear NASHIA Member,

Last week, NASHIA was in Washington, DC to participate in a number of events, including meetings sponsored by the Injury and Violence Prevention Network; the Congressional Brain Injury Task Force (CBITF) Brain Injury Awareness Day; Congressional office visits on the Hill, as well as a meeting with the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), which administers State and P&A grants in accordance with the TBI Act. NASHIA and the Brain Injury Association of America (BIAA) recognized TBI Act Reauthorization House and Senate bill sponsors by presenting each with a clock in appreciation of their leadership and commitment to brain injury issues.

This week, both the House and the Senate worked on their budget resolutions, which the proposals were released last week. The House and Senate will be in recess for the next two weeks for the Easter and Passover holidays. This will be an excellent time to talk to your Members while they are in their home districts. There are a number of issues before Congress. Visit NASHIA's public policy pages for more information at www.nashia.org.

*Congressional Brain Injury Task Force
Brain Injury Awareness Day*

Exhibitors Showcase TBI Information

The Congressional Brain Injury Task Force (CBITF) hosted the Brain Injury Awareness Day on Wednesday, March 18th. An array of organizations and federal agencies participated in the Awareness

Therapy Cap Repeal is in Jeopardy! Call Your Legislators Today!

It seems the House of Representatives' final package to repeal the Sustainable Growth Rate (SGR) formula in order to prevent a 21% cut in Medicare provider payments does not provide for the full repeal of therapy caps. The negotiated package ONLY includes a short term extension of the therapy cap exceptions process rather than full repeal.

NASHIA and other organizations support the repeal of the Medicare outpatient therapy caps, which has been averted twelve times over the years by Congress. Without combining full repeal of the therapy cap with the full repeal of the SGR, the impact will fall on the 1 million beneficiaries impacted by the cap each year.

House and Senate Work on Their Budget Resolutions

Last week, the House and Senate Budget Committees released their budget resolutions providing a spending plan for FY 2016. The House Committee recommended \$1.1.07 trillion in discretionary spending and added \$90 million for defense. This represents more than \$5.5 trillion in cuts over 10 years with plans to cut \$4.2 trillion by repealing the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and cuts to mandatory spending.

The House proposal would convert Medicaid financing to a block grant and fold the Children's Health Insurance Program into Medicaid, reducing funding by \$913 billion over ten years. The block-grant program would be called State Flexibility Funds and remove many of the federal rules that protect beneficiaries. The budget also proposes to privatize Medicare by providing "premium support" vouchers for Medicare beneficiaries to purchase private health insurance claiming to save \$150 billion. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) would also be turned into a block grant program.

The Senate Budget Committee set discretionary spending for FY16 at \$1.081 trillion and cuts \$4.5 trillion over ten by

Day Fair held in the Rayburn House Office Building Foyer. The Fair was held prior to the Briefing and Reception. Materials were available to Congressional staff to learn more about brain injury.



Briefing Focuses on Service Needs After TBI

The CBITF Co-chair Rep. Bill Pascrell, Jr. (D-NJ)

convened the Briefing, "Finding a New "Normal": Post-Injury Supports and Services That Make a Difference" held in the Cannon House Office Building. In his opening remarks he announced



Moderator Bobby Silverstein (r) introduces Rep. Bill Pascrell, Jr., CBITF Co-chair.

new legislation that he and Co-chair Rep. Tom Rooney (R-FL) introduced, H.R. 1420, the National Traumatic Brain Injury Research and Treatment Improvement Act of 2015. The bill calls on CDC to set up a "National Traumatic Brain Injury Surveillance System".



Bobby Silverstein, Principal, Powers, Pyles, Sutter, & Verville, moderated the panel discussing issues and needs related to rehabilitation, community

repealing the ACA and cutting mandatory programs. The Senate resolution requires \$600 billion in cuts through "reform of welfare programs." It also plans additional savings through Medicaid and calls for converting Medicaid to a model similar to the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), which is a block grant program.

Legislators Introduce Bills to Improve Medical Rehabilitation Research

On March 19th, Senators Mark Kirk (R-IL) and Michael Bennet (D-CO), along with Senators Orrin Hatch (R-UT) and Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) and Reps. James Langevin (D-RI) and Gregg Harper (R-MS) introduced companion bipartisan bills, S. 800 and H.R. 1469, to enhance the stature and visibility of medical rehabilitation research at the National Institutes of Health (NIH). The Disability Rehabilitation Research Coalition (DRRC), of which NASHIA is a member, enthusiastically supports these companion bills to improve the quality of life of persons with disabilities and chronic conditions by enhancing medical rehabilitation research at NIH and, by so doing, improve the provision of rehabilitation services and devices.

DRRC urges you to contact your members of Congress and their key staff asking them to co-sponsor this critical legislation.

Are your representative and senators members of the Congressional Brain Injury Task Force? If not, invite them to become one and direct them to contact Alyssa Penn in Rep. Pascrell's office for more information

Alyssa.Penna@mail.house.gov

Associations Recognize TBI Act Sponsors

NASHIA and BIAA staff and board members presented clocks to the senate sponsors of the TBI Act Reauthorization Act of 2014: Senators Orrin Hatch (R-UT) and Robert Casey, Jr. (D-PA).

services and supports, including family supports. Speaking were: **Mac Fedge**, TBI Survivor; **Kathy Fedge**, TBI Family Caregiver; **William (Bill) Ditto**, Chair of the NASHIA Public Policy Committee; **Matt Breiding, PhD**, CDC; and **David Williamson, MD**, Neuropsychiatrist & Medical Director, Inpatient TBI Program, Walter Reed National Military Medical Center. During the briefing, Dr. Breiding announced that the CDC would soon be releasing its Report to Congress outlining recommendations to improve TBI rehabilitation services.



Advocates Celebrate Awareness Day!

After the day's events, Members of Congress, staffers and advocates relaxed and visited during the reception sponsored by the Bob Woodruff Foundation, Wounded Warriors Project, BIAA, NASHIA and NDRN.

William A.B. (Bill) Ditto, on behalf of NASHIA, and Daniel Chamberlain, as BIAA Board Chair, presented a clock to Rep. Pascrell and expressed appreciation for his work to promote brain injury research, rehabilitation and services, including passage of the TBI Act Reauthorization Act of 2014.



Rep. Pascrell read a letter from President Obama acknowledging Brain Injury Awareness Month.



Pictured above are: Rebecca (Becky) Wolfkiel, Lorraine Wargo, Senator Robert Casey, Jr., Susan Vaughn and Bill Ditto.



From left to right: Amy Colberg and Susan H. Connors, BIAA; Senator Orrin Hatch; and Susan Vaughn, Rebecca (Becky) Wolfkiel, and Lorraine Wargo, NASHIA.

IVPN Sponsors Hill Briefing

Several organizations, including Safe States Alliance, NASHIA, and the Injury and Violence Prevention Network, sponsored a Briefing, "SURVEILLANCE: Building the Evidence to Address Prescription Drug Overdoses, Violence, and Traumatic Brain Injuries," on March 17th in the Russell Senate Office Building. The briefing focused on the vital role of data to prevent injuries and violence and to plan for TBI service delivery.



Rep. Frank Pallone (D-NJ) visits with BIAA and NASHIA.



The annual reception is an opportunity to network and meet new people. Individuals traveled from several states to attend and visit with their Congressional Members.

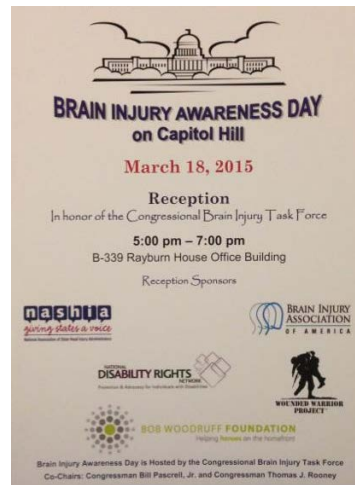


Becky Wolfkiel, NASHIA Governmental Relations, shares a laugh with Rep. Patrick Meehan (R-PA).



Speakers: **Maryann Mason, PhD**, Illinois National Violent Death Reporting System (pictured at the podium), **James Mercy, PhD**, Director, NCIPC's Division of Violence Prevention, **Karyl Thomas Rattay, MD, MS**, Director, Delaware Division of Public Health; **Grant Baldwin, PhD, MPH**, Director of the NCIPC's Division of Unintentional Injury Prevention; and **Susan L. Vaughn**, NASHIA Director of Public Policy.

For further information on NASHIA public policy go to www.nashia.org or contact Susan Vaughn at publicpolicy@nashia.org

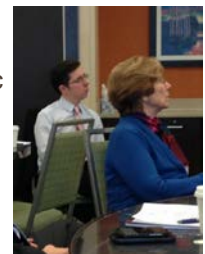


IVPN Holds Meeting on Injury Prevention

On March 17th, the Injury & Violence Prevention Network (IVPN) held a meeting in Washington, D.C. to provide an opportunity to hear from key officials in the Centers for Disease Control's (CDC) National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (NCIPC) with regard to activities and priorities. Debra Houry, MD, MPH, Director of the NCIPC, (pictured right) also provided an overview of the President's budget request for FY 2016. Also in the picture is Rod McClure, Director, Division of Applied Research and Practice Integration.



NASHIA Executive Director, Lorraine Wargo, RN; Susan Vaughn, NASHIA Director of Public Policy; and Rebecca Wolfkiel, NASHIA Government Relations, attended the meeting and participated in the break-out discussion on cross-cutting partners, facilitated by the Office of the Director and the Office of the Director & Division of Analysis, Research & Practice and Integration.



This Special Edition of Washington Update was prepared by:

Susan L. Vaughn
 Director of Public Policy, publicpolicy@nashia.org

William A.B. Ditto, MSW, is
Chair of the NASHIA Public Policy Committee, WilliamABDitto@aol.com

Rebecca Wolfkiel
NASHIA Governmental Relations Consultant, rwolfkiel@ridgepolicygroup.com

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.

www.nashia.org

Like us on Facebook 

National Association of State Head Injury Administrators | PO Box 878 | Waitsfield | VT | 05673