



National Association of State Head Injury Administrators

## Capitol News!

August 31, 2011

Vol. 8, Issue 12

Dear NASHIA Member,

Welcome to *Capitol News*, Vol.8, Issue 12, which you receive as a member of NASHIA. In this issue you will find information regarding the budget and appropriations, and NASHIA activities this past week. For further information on public policy and past issues of *Capitol News* go to [www.nashia.org](http://www.nashia.org).

As a reminder, the hotel block cutoff date is Sept. 6, for those of you who are attending the upcoming State of the States Conference to be held in Kansas City, MO, Oct. 4-6 (pre-conference session is Oct. 3). Go to [www.nashia.org](http://www.nashia.org) for information on room reservations and conference registration. During the meeting, the NASHIA Public Policy Committee will also be meeting. Please note if you plan to attend on your conference registration form.

### This Week in Congress

Congress is on recess until after Labor Day. Once they return to Washington, D.C., they will resume discussions on budget and spending.



### Budget & Appropriations

#### FY 2012 Spending

While the current federal fiscal year ends September 30, Congress has not finalized any of the 12 annual appropriations bills. On Aug. 19th, House Appropriations Chairman Hal Rogers (R-KY) stated his intention to complete the FY 2012 appropriations process soon and reiterated his commitment to maintaining the recently passed debt-ceiling agreement, which holds discretionary spending to \$1.043 trillion for FY 2012.

The Senate Subcommittees on Energy and Water and Homeland Security have scheduled meetings on Sept. 6 to mark up spending bills for federal programs under their jurisdiction. Committee meetings have not yet been scheduled for the Senate Labor, Health and Human Services (HHS), Education and Related Agencies to mark up the spending bill for those agencies.

NASHIA signed on to a letter along with nearly 200 organizations requesting House and Senate appropriation committee chairs/ranking members to recognize health, education, job training, children's and social services programs as critical national priorities as they determine the final 302(b) allocations for the FY 2012 Labor-HHS-Education appropriations bills. The letter noted that with the enactment of the Budget Control Act, the FY 2012 discretionary spending cap for non-security programs is some \$3 billion below the FY 2011 Continuing Resolution level. While the Senate has not yet made 302(b) allocations, the groups strongly oppose the House subcommittee allocation, which is \$18 billion or 11.6 percent below the FY 2011 level.

Meanwhile, the 12-member super committee established as part of the Budget Control Act of 2011 is to meet either next Thursday or Friday, after Labor Day. Co-chairs Sen. Patty Murray (D-WA) and Rep. Jeb Hensarling (R-TX) have announced the hiring of Mark Prater, the Senate Finance Committee's deputy staff director and minority chief tax counsel, as staff director for the new panel.

In keeping with the law, the joint committee must hold its first meeting by Sept. 16. When Congress returns next week, the panel has just eleven weeks to complete their task or face across-the-board spending cuts. If the committee does not reach consensus or if Congress does not approve a package by Dec. 23, a series of automatic spending cuts would kick in. These cuts would affect defense spending as well as entitlement programs, including a 2 percent reduction in Medicare payments to hospitals and other providers. Medicaid funding would not be touched by that trigger.

### **Sports-Related Concussion Legislation**

Because several Congressional Members have expressed interest in acting to prevent and manage sports-related concussions, Rebeccah Wolfkiel, NASHIA Governmental Consultant, has been participating in stake holder meetings initially organized by the American Physical Therapy Association. After a meeting held earlier this month, Rebeccah arranged a follow-up meeting, held last week, with Rep. Bill Pascrell, Jr. (D-NJ) sponsor of the ConTACT bill last session, which passed the House, but not the Senate. NASHIA has offered assistance in advocating for legislation that would provide funding to States to enact sports-related concussion guidelines, training, and other resources that was included in the proposed legislation (ConTACT) last year. However, Rep. Pascrell is not interested in introducing similar legislation this year, due, in part, to budgetary constraints. Rep. Pascrell has been working with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) with regard to their interest in developing national standards through the regulatory process and we hope to have an announcement in this regard in the near future.

In March, Rep. Pascrell introduced the Children's Sports Athletics Equipment Safety Act, H.R. 1127, relating to the integrity of helmets used by youths participating in organized sports. The proposed legislation directs the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) to determine with respect to standards submitted by a voluntary standards-setting organization regarding youth football helmets, reconditioned helmets and new helmet concussion resistance, particularly: (1) whether it is likely that there will be substantial compliance with the standards, (2) whether compliance with such standards is likely to result in the elimination or adequate reduction of the risk of injury, and (3) whether the standards are maintained by a standards-setting organization that meets American National Standards Institute requirements. Sen. Tom Udall (D-NM) introduced similar legislation, S. 601. Both sponsors announced the legislation during the Congressional Brain Injury Task Force Brain Injury Awareness Day.

### **Administration**

#### **Job Initiatives Focus on Vets, Including Those with Disabilities**

On Aug. 30, 2011, President Barack Obama called on Congress to move quickly on an initiative to offer tax credits to employers who hire unemployed veterans, including those with disabilities. Speaking at the American Legion National Convention in Minneapolis, the President said he has directed the federal government to hire more veterans. During the past year and a half, that directive has resulted in more than 100,000 veteran hires. The President also called on every State to pass laws making it easier for veterans to get the credentials, and jobs for which they qualify. The second part of the initiative calls on the private sector to do its part to hire returning servicemembers.

### **Other**

#### **Brain Injury Program Information**

In response to Congressional staff members interested in federal programs impacting brain injury, NASHIA and the Brain Injury Association of American (BIAA) this week distributed a matrix outlining programs, federal laws and funding sources. The purpose of the matrix prepared by the organizations is to identify available resources, as well as to identify gaps in programs and services for individuals with brain injury. Through Rebeccah Wolfkiel, NASHIA regularly provides brain injury information and resources to Congressional members, especially to members of the Congressional Brain Injury Task Force.

---

**HOTEL CUT OFF DATE: Sept. 6!!**

**Reserve Your Room Now for the  
22nd Annual State of the States in Head Injury Conference**

**Oct. 4-6, 2011!**

Go to [www.nashia.org](http://www.nashia.org)



**Pre-Conference: Oct. 3**  
***Concussions in Sports: Nothing Mild About It***

**Downtown Marriott Hotel**  
**200 West 12th Street**  
**Kansas City, MO**

This update was prepared by Susan L. Vaughn, Director of Public Policy, [publicpolicy@nashia.org](mailto:publicpolicy@nashia.org). William A.B. Ditto, MSW, is Chair of the NASHIA Public Policy Committee. Rebeccah Wolfkiel is Governmental Relations Consultant, [rwolfkiel@ridgepolicygroup.com](mailto: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.*

Find us on Facebook 

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