

Capitol News!

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Dear NASHIA Member,

Welcome to *Capitol News*, Vol.8, Issue 13, which you receive as a member of NASHIA. In this issue you will find information regarding the budget and appropriations, and congressional hearings on a variety of topics. For further information on public policy and past issues of *Capitol News* go to www.nashia.org.

For those of you who have yet to register for the upcoming NASHIA State of the States Conference scheduled for Oct. 4-6, and/or Pre-conference Workshop (Oct. 3), **the hotel block has been extended**, so that you can still get the special government/non-government rates. Go to www.nashia.org for information on room reservations and conference registration. As a reminder, the NASHIA Public Policy Committee will meet on Tues., Oct. 4, from 11:30 am to 1:00 pm, in the Roosevelt Room, Kansas City Downtown Marriott Hotel.

This Week in Congress

The House is in session, and will vote this week on a continuing resolution to extend federal programs past Oct. 1, when the new fiscal year begins. The House proposes to cut discretionary programs by 1.5 percent during the first seven weeks of the new fiscal year. The House bill would also provide \$3.6 billion in disaster aid, half the amount that the Democratic Senate has supported. The Senate is also in session. The congressional Super Committee met yesterday and will hold a public hearing tomorrow morning, Thursday, on tax issues.



Legislation Signed

Transportation Bill

On Sept. 16, the President signed the Surface and Air Transportation Programs Extension Act of 2011, H.R. 2887 (PL 112-030). The law extends the allocation of certain transportation program funds to States for specific programs, including the Interstate and National Highway System program, the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement program, the highway safety improvement program, the Surface Transportation program, and the Highway Bridge program; and (2) the Territories and Puerto Rico. The law amends SAFETEA-LU to extend the authorization of appropriations for specified National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) safety programs (including NHTSA administrative expenses) and Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) programs. H.R. 2887 authorizes appropriations through FY 2012 for: (1) drug-impaired driving enforcement; and (2) older driver safety and law enforcement training.

Legislation Introduced

FY 2012 Appropriations

The House will take up a continuing resolution (CR) today to keep federal government programs operating after Sept. 30, which FY 2011 ends. The bill extends funding until November 18 at a total discretionary level of \$1.043 trillion, as established by the Budget Control Act. The cap is almost \$7 billion less than FY 2011 levels, so funding provided in the CR is 1.4 percent less than current levels.

On Sept. 20, the Senate Labor, Health and Human Services (HHS), and Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee approved a FY 2012 bill that provides \$158 billion in current year discretionary funding, including offsets and cap adjustments. Highlights of the bill include: maintaining the maximum Pell Grant award level; creating a new center at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) dedicated to translating basic research into cures; doubling funding for the Promise Neighborhoods community transformation program; preserving the number of children served by Head Start; and nearly doubling the funding for locally led efforts to prevent chronic disease.

The bill includes \$14.6 million for a new initiative targeting mental health and substance abuse treatment services to homeless and at-risk families. This initiative, in collaboration with the Department of Housing and Urban Development, aims to provide permanent supportive housing to those who experience chronic, long-term homelessness. The Senate bill provides nearly \$11.5 billion, the same amount as the FY 2011 level, under section 611 of part B grants to States for educating students with disabilities. The bill includes nearly \$14.5 billion, the same amount as the FY 2011 level, for Title I grants to local education agencies for improving education for low-income students.

Although program specific details are not yet posted, it appears the bill includes a \$50 million cut to the Title V Maternal and Child Health Block Services Grant (MCHB). A full Appropriations Committee vote is expected tomorrow.

Education

Charter Schools

On Sept. 13, the House passed the Empowering Parents through Quality Charter Schools Act, H.R. 2218. The bill replaces the current charter school grant program with a program awarding grants to State entities (State educational agencies, State charter school boards, or Governors) and, through them, sub-grants to charter school developers to open new charter schools and expand and replicate high-quality charter schools.

Restraint & Seclusion in Schools

Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA), Chairman of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, hopes to introduce a bill soon to limit the use of restraint and seclusion in schools. The bill will be similar to the Keeping All Students Safe Act (H.R. 1381) introduced by Representative George Miller (D-CA) earlier this year.

Congressional Hearings

Medicare Provider Payments

The House Ways and Means Health Subcommittee is to hold a hearing today to examine certain expiring Medicare provider payment provisions. There are a number of Medicare provider payment policies that expire on or before December 31, 2011. Many of these policies have been extended multiple times over several years, even if they were initially contemplated to be short-term or even one-time payment changes.

Senate Finance to Hold Hearing for Dual-Eligible Beneficiaries

Today, the Senate Finance held a hearing titled "Dually-Eligible Beneficiaries: Improving Care While Lowering Costs." The session focuses on efforts to increase coordination of care for individuals who are enrolled in both Medicare and Medicaid programs. Melanie Bella, Director of the Medicare-Medicaid Coordination Office testified.

Senate HELP Committee Holds Hearing for Employment for People with Significant Disabilities

Last week, the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee held a hearing titled "The Future of Employment for People with the Most Significant Disabilities." Witnesses included Katy Beh Neas, senior vice president for government relations, Office of Public Affairs, Easter Seals; Fredric Schroeder, research professor, Interwork Institute, San Diego State University, San Diego, Calif., and former commissioner, Rehabilitation Services Administration, Department of Education; Jonathan Young, chairman, National Council on Disability; Ruby Moore, executive director, Georgia Advocacy Office, Decatur, Ga.; Julie Petty, past president, Self Advocates Becoming Empowered, Fayetteville, Ark.; Deb Pumphrey, Ottumwa, Iowa; Janet Samuelson, president and CEO, ServiceSource, Alexandria, Va.; and Michael Pearson, president, Union Packaging LLC, Yeadon, Pa.

Employment

The Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee held a roundtable last Thursday on employment. The roundtable was one in a series sponsored by Chairman Tom Harkin (D-IA) designed to help the Committee identify barriers and policy solutions to the high unemployment rate for people with the most significant disabilities. Several disability advocates and business people testified at the hearing. An archived webcast can be accessed on the committee website. Senators Michael Enzi (R-WY), Patty Murray (D-WA), Johnny Isakson (R-GA) and Tom Harkin have been working on draft legislation to increase employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

Administration

Conf. Call: President's New Deficit Reduction and Job Creation Plan

On Thursday, Sept. 22, the White House staff is holding a conference call at 2:00 p.m. (ET) to explain the Administration's plan, "Living Within Our Means and Investing in the Future", a comprehensive approach to solving the nation's short- and long-term problems. It includes the American Jobs Act, legislation investing \$447 billion to fund teachers and public safety workers, modernize schools and other infrastructure, target job creation in low-income communities, provide extra help to long-term unemployed, youth, and other especially vulnerable groups, and protect the jobless with an extension of federal Unemployment Insurance.

This proposal also makes cuts to various mandatory programs totaling \$580 billion over ten years:

- More than \$320 billion over 10 years in Medicare, Medicaid, and other health programs (\$248 billion in Medicare, \$51 billion in Medicaid, and between \$21-\$25 billion in other health care savings)
- \$31 billion in reduced agriculture subsidies plus \$2.1 billion in savings from conservation programs
- \$42.5 billion in reduced benefits to federal employees
- and other mandatory savings

While much of these savings avoid reductions in assistance to low-income and vulnerable people, there will be some shifting of health costs to States and other benefit reductions that will affect low- and moderate-income people. There are no cuts to SNAP/food stamps, child nutrition programs, SSI, TANF, or other low-income mandatory programs, however.

To participate, call 800-401-8436. Listeners will be able to ask questions. The White House Fact Sheet about the President's plan: http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/budget/fy2012/assets/joint_committee_reportfact_sheet.pdf. Full Obama Administration Proposal (80 pages): <http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/budget/fy2012/assets/jointcommitteereport.pdf>

Other

Medicaid Rally

Over 50 groups representing disability, aging and civil rights co-sponsored "My Medicaid Matters" - a rally in support of protecting Medicaid-funded programs, today, September 21. Over 1,000 supporters gathered at the national Capitol and local demonstrations are scheduled in California, Kansas, Illinois, Montana, Ohio and Texas. Organizers hope to have an impact on the budget negotiations currently underway by the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction, which can consider reforms to entitlement programs like Medicaid in developing deficit reduction strategies. Individuals who cannot attend are encouraged to call or e-mail their representatives and senators asking that they support Medicaid funding.

HOTEL CUT OFF DATE EXTENDED!!

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



Pre-Conference: Oct. 3

Concussions in Sports: Nothing Mild About It

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

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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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