

VOLUME 12, ISSUE 40
OCTOBER 8, 2007

ACTION ALERTS

ACTION ALERTS are URGENT messages for you to send to elected officials and need your IMMEDIATE RESPONSE. Use the link below to visit UCP's online Action Center today and take action

NEW ALERT

[Ask your Representative to Vote for the National Affordable Housing Trust Fund Act \(H.R. 2895\)](#)

* [Urge Your Representative to Vote to Override President Bush's Veto of the SCHIP Bill](#) * This alert was sent today only to persons who reside in target House member districts. Therefore, no link is provided and this alert will not be posted on the Action Center website.

ONGOING ALERTS

[Help Support the ADA Restoration Act \(H.R. 3195\): Write to your local media](#)

[Urge your Senators to Cosponsor S. 1730, the Pathways to Independence Act of 2007](#)

MAJOR EVENTS LAST WEEK

FY 2008 Appropriations

One week into Fiscal Year 2008, House and Senate Democrats announced that they had reached an overall agreement to resolve their differences about the actual amount of funding for each of the twelve FY 2008 appropriations bills. Details have yet to be provided. This agreement allows appropriators to begin work to complete action on the bills. Since President Bush has made clear his intent to veto those bills that would provide funding above the levels he requested, the Congressional strategy on which bills to send to the White House has yet to be determined. The President's budget would spend \$23 billion less than the Congress wants to spend. This amount is less than one percent of the federal budget. It is anticipated that some

appropriations bills that spend more than the President wants will be combined with others the Administration supports to make it difficult for the President to veto them.

Health Care/Medicaid

On Wednesday, as expected, President Bush vetoed legislation that would reauthorize the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) and invest an additional \$35 billion into the program over five years. The bill also contains a 6-month moratorium on proposed Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services regulations on Medicaid's rehabilitative services option and school based services for Medicaid eligible children with disabilities in IDEA programs. The President has staunchly opposed the \$35 billion increase, stating that it represents a step toward government-run healthcare.

The House Democratic leadership scheduled a veto override vote for October 18 to give SCHIP supporters time to wage a multi-million dollar advertising campaign in districts of 15 target House members. Since the House vote of 265-159, most of the 8 Democrats and 2 Republicans who originally opposed the bill announced they would vote to override the President's veto.

The Senate vote on the SCHIP bill of 67-29 is sufficient to override the President's veto if not Senators switch their votes.

Americans with Disabilities Act

The Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights and Civil Liberties of the House Judiciary Committee held the first hearing on the ADA Restoration Act (H.R. 3195) on October 4. Lead Sponsor and House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (D-MD) led off the hearing by asserting the Supreme and other courts had badly misinterpreted Congressional intent on ADA coverage in recent court decisions. Congressman Hoyer was followed by a panel comprised of Cheryl Sensenbrenner, the wife of Congressman James Sensenbrenner (R-WI), the former Chair of the Judiciary Committee; Stephen Orr, a man with diabetes who lost his job due to the failure of his employer to grant him a lunch break so he could test his insulin level; Michael Collins, the Executive Director of the National Council on Disability; Chai Feldblum, a law professor at Georgetown Law School who explained the changes needed to the ADA to clarify Congressional intent; and Lawrence Lorber, an attorney for the U.S. Chamber of Commerce who argued that the language of the Restoration Act went too far and would provide more rights than the original ADA intended.

No Child Left Behind

DPC staff continued to work with House and Senate staff as they draft bills to reauthorize the No Child Left Behind Act. House and Senate Committee action on the bills is possible later this month or in November.

Aging

The DPC's Marty Ford who is Chair of the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities met with the Leadership Council of Aging Organizations (LCAO), a coalition of national nonprofit organizations concerned with the well-being of America's older population and

their interests in the policy-making. Ms. Ford and the LCAO members spoke about opportunities for the two coalitions to work together on issues of joint concern.

MAJOR EVENTS AHEAD

U.S. Congress

The Senate is in recess this week and the House will meet on Tuesday through Thursday.

Housing

On Wednesday, the House of Representatives is scheduled to bring consideration of the [National Affordable Housing Trust Fund Act \(H.R. 2895\)](#). This bill authorizes the construction, rehabilitation or preservation of 1.5 million units of housing over the next 10 years for low-income individuals, including people with disabilities receiving Supplemental Security Income benefits.

Health Care

On Thursday, the House Budget Committee, chaired by Rep. John Spratt (D-SC), will hold a hearing entitled “the U.S. Tax Code and Health Coverage.”

Also on Thursday, the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, chaired by Rep. Henry Waxman (D-CA), will hold a hearing entitled “Private Insurance and Medicare Drug Coverage.”

ANNOUNCEMENTS

DPC Office Closing

All of the DPC staff will be participating in The Arc’s National Convention this week. The DPC office will be closed on Thursday and Friday. Several DPC staff will be in Dallas for the Conference as early as Tuesday.

Medicaid Spending

USA Today reported that Medicaid spending has started to soar again, a sharp reversal from last year when costs unexpectedly fell for the first time since the program began in 1965. Medicaid experienced a 10.7% jump in costs during the first six months of the year, according to an analysis of Bureau of Economic Analysis data. That is the biggest increase since 2001 and puts Medicaid on pace to spend a record \$330 billion in 2007. Possible causes of this unexpected rise in cost are efforts to cover the uninsured (such as SCHIP), enrollment growth from backlogged

applications that have recently been approved, and increasing pay for doctors and hospitals that accept Medicaid. The sharp increase in spending is certain to cause State governments to seek cost-cutting measures.

Medicare Fact Sheet

The Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) announced Medicare premiums and deductibles for 2008. The standard Medicare Part B monthly premium will be \$96.40 in 2008, an increase of \$2.90, or 3.1 percent, from the 2007 amount. This monthly premium paid by beneficiaries enrolled in Medicare Part B covers physicians' services, outpatient hospital services, certain home health services, durable medical equipment, and other items. To read more on this announcement please click here for the CMS Fact Sheet http://www.cms.hhs.gov/apps/media/fact_sheets.asp

Continuing Medical Education (CME) Program

The EP Foundation for Education, Inc. will be cosponsoring a CME program entitled, *"Health Consequences of Intractable Spasticity and Movement Disorders Encountered in Persons with Cerebral Palsy: Part 1 (Oral Health & Polypharmacy)*. This EP LiveOnLine event is scheduled for October 16, 2007 at 7:00 PM EDT. It is intended for physicians, allied health care professionals, families and caregivers and registration is free. CME Category 1 accreditation for physicians only provided at no cost to participants who qualify. To register, click on: <http://tinyurl.com/3ywryu>. For more information about this program, see: <http://tinyurl.com/3bcfg5>

National Children's Study Centers

The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) announced last week the award of contracts to 22 new study centers for the National Children's Study. The National Children's Study is the largest study to be conducted on the effects of environmental and genetic factors on child and human health in the United States. The study will follow a representative sample of 100,000 children from before birth to age 21, seeking information to prevent and treat some of the nation's most pressing health problems, including autism, birth defects, diabetes, heart disease, and obesity. Additional information about the National Children's Study is available at: <http://www.nationalchildrensstudy.gov>