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ACTION ALERTS



ACTION ALERTS are messages for you to send to elected officials and need your IMMEDIATE RESPONSE. Click on the link(s) below to take action on current DPC action alerts.

A critical Action Alert on the Medicaid Regulations Moratorium is posted for chapters/affiliates to contact their Members of Congress this week while they are in their home districts during the spring recess. The Alert can be accessed at http://ucpact.convio.net/site/MessageViewer?em_id=1621.0.

MAJOR EVENTS LAST WEEK

FY 2009 Appropriations

Earmarks or no earmarks? Although there is still no overall plan to consider earmarks in the FY 2009 appropriations bills, House Members were notified that the deadline for submitting earmark requests has been extended to midnight today. The deadline extension was based on a high volume of requests that arrived on the original deadline that Committee staff has yet to complete processing. Both Houses of Congress voted earlier this month to reject a one year earmark moratorium. However, House Speaker Pelosi (D-CA) has hinted she is still considering imposing a moratorium on earmarked spending.

No Child Left Behind

Education Secretary Margaret Spellings announced that up to ten states will be allowed more flexibility under the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act to allow those states to assist schools who need the most intense interventions since they are the furthest behind in meeting NCLB performance goals. Called “differential accountability, this new flexibility policy will only be available to those states that are in full compliance with NCLB. Under this new pilot, single subsets of students which constitute the only subset having trouble meeting NCLB’s assessment requirements, such as those with disabilities, could be jeopardized since the pilots will need to devote much attention and

resources to the full gamut of students who are not achieving in accordance with NCLB standards.

Housing

On March 19th, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) published the general provisions of its FY 2008 Super Notice of Funding Availability (SuperNOFA) which describes the general rules prospective grantees must follow.

The 2008 SuperNOFA containing program application information (including information on applying for grants under the Section 811 Supportive Housing for Persons with Disabilities program) is expected to be released next month. The March 19th document can be accessed at:

<http://a257.g.akamaitech.net/7/257/2422/01jan20081800/edocket.access.gpo.gov/2008/pdf/E8-5626.pdf>

Emergency Preparedness

On March 19th, the DPC and other organizations of the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD) Emergency Management Task Force met with members of the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to discuss its recent report: *FEMA Should Take Action to Improve Capacity and Coordination between Government and Voluntary Sectors* (<http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d08369.pdf>). Key findings include

1. FEMA has not coordinated with the National Council on Disability, in the implementation of various initiatives, as required by the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act of 2006. 2. Despite efforts at the national Red Cross level, local agencies are still not fully prepared to serve individuals with disabilities. 3. Local voluntary organizations experienced difficulty getting accurate information about reimbursement – Key FEMA staff had not received training on these processes and gave inaccurate information. A supplementary report is due this summer.

MAJOR EVENTS AHEAD

U.S. Congress

The Congress is in the last week of a two week spring recess. It will resume work on March 31.

Transportation

The Southwest ADA Center is hosting the fourth in a series of ADA and transportation webinars on Wednesday March 26th. This session will focus on stop announcements and equipment maintenance. Marilyn Golden with the Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund is the featured expert. The Southwest ADA Center is one of 10 regional Disability and Business Technical Assistance Centers. The webinar will be March 26, 2008 3:00 PM Eastern Daylight Time. For more information visit the website: <http://www.ilru.org/html/training/webcasts/calendar.html>

ANNOUNCEMENTS

President Bush has announced his intention to nominate several members of the National Council on Disability. These nominations require Senate confirmation. Among the nominees are John Vaughn from Florida who will remain as Council Chairman, Ann Rader of Virginia who is a member of the United Cerebral Palsy Board of Trustees, John Hager, also of Virginia, the former Assistant Secretary for the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services in the U.S. Department of Education and Marvin Fifield of Utah who has served for many year's as the head of Senator Orrin Hatch's (R-UT) disability advisory committee.

The Departments of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the Department of Justice (DOJ) issued joint guidance designed to help housing providers and homeowners' associations understand their obligations and to help persons with disabilities understand their rights regarding the "reasonable modifications" provision of the Fair Housing Act (FHA). This provision prohibits the refusal by housing providers or homeowner associations to permit a reasonable modification – i.e., a structural alteration – of existing premises, occupied or to be occupied by a person with a disability, when the modification may be necessary to afford the person full enjoyment of the premises. The guidance can be accessed at http://www.hud.gov/utilities/intercept.cfm?/offices/fheo/disabilities/reasonable_modifications_mar08.pdf.

The Social Security Administration has released the 2008 Red Book: A Summary Guide to Employment Supports for Individuals with Disabilities under the Social Security Disability Insurance and Supplemental Security Income Programs. The Red Book is a general reference tool designed to provide a working knowledge of the work incentives that are available to help support beneficiaries who wish to work. Among the highlights in the 2008 version is the increase in the Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA) amount for individuals with disabilities, other than blindness, from \$900 to \$940 for 2008. To access the URL to download the HTML, PDF versions of the Red Book in both English and Spanish please visit the website <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/redbook/>