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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.

ONGOING

[* Help Protect Medicaid Services *](#)

[Ask Your Representative to Cosponsor the Protecting Medicaid Safety Net Act of 2008 \(H.R. 5613\)](#)

http://ucpact.convio.net/site/MessageViewer?em_id=1481.0

MAJOR EVENTS LAST WEEK

Medicaid

Despite a veto threat letter received the day before from Health and Human Services Secretary Leavitt, the House Energy and Commerce Committee, chaired by Rep. John Dingell (D-MI), passed by a vote of 46-0, the [Protecting the Medicaid Safety Net Act of 2008 \(H.R. 5613\)](#). The legislation imposes a one year moratorium on 7 Medicaid regulations including those on rehabilitative services, case management and school based services/transportation.

Housing

President Bush announced that he would nominate Steve Preston, Administrator of the Small Business Administration, to replace Alphonso Jackson who recently resigned as Secretary of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. HUD is at the center of the administration's plans to address the subprime mortgage crisis.

Employment

The House Oversight and Government Reform Committee approved bipartisan legislation to give federal employees four weeks of paid parental leave. The Committee voted, 21-10, on April 16 to approve the measure (H.R. 5781), which would allow federal employees to use an additional eight weeks of accrued sick leave on top of the paid four weeks.

International

The DPC met with Mrs. Sarah Brown, wife of the United Kingdom's Prime Minister Gordon Brown, to discuss intellectual disability policy, programs, and development of the disability movement in the United States.

MAJOR EVENTS AHEAD

FY 2009 Budget and Appropriations

House and Senate negotiators working on the Fiscal Year 2009 Budget Resolution (BR) have made little headway in resolving key differences between their two versions. Most problematic is whether or not to offset the lost revenues when adding another one year "patch" to the Alternative Minimum Tax (AMT). The House is insisting on the offsets while the Senate remains resistant. An approximately \$3.5 billion difference in domestic discretionary spending also remains unresolved. As in recent election years, the Congress may give up on passing the FY 2009 BR, instead approving a "deeming" bill that sets a cap on spending for the next fiscal year. Once passed, the "deeming" bill allows House and Senate appropriators to begin working on the twelve FY 2009 appropriations bills. There is little expectation that all twelve appropriations will be sent to the President given the recent history of President Bush vetoing any appropriations bills that increase spending beyond the levels he wants. FY 2009 spending for disability programs hang in the balance as the larger political struggles around revenues and spending unfold.

War Supplemental/Economic Stimulus

The Congress is also strategizing over how to deal with emergency war funding. One possible option is to increase war funding into 2010 in order to avoid further battles with the Administration. Such conflicts seem inevitable, however, since both Houses are expecting to add a second economic stimulus package to the war supplemental. President Bush has signaled his intent to veto the bill if it contains non defense spending.

Medicaid

On Tuesday, the House of Representatives will vote, under suspension of the rules, on the [Protecting the Medicaid Safety Net Act of 2008 \(H.R. 5613\)](#).

ADA Restoration

The ADA Restoration Act (ADARA) remains the topic of much conversation on the Hill. Although ADARA has 244 co-sponsors in the House ([H.R. 3195](#)), many Republicans

and conservative Democrats want the business community's buy-in before they move the bill forward. Thoughtful dialogue between the disability and business communities has taken place over the last several weeks. These efforts are expected to come to a head soon, possibly this week.

Social Security

The House Ways and Means Committee, chaired by Rep. Charles Rangel (D-NY), will hold a hearing on Wednesday on “Clearing the Disability Backlog – Giving the Social Security Administration the Resources it Needs to Provide the Benefits Workers Have Earned”. The DPC's Marty Ford is scheduled to testify on behalf of the CCD Social Security Task Force. For more information, see: <http://waysandmeans.house.gov/hearings.asp?formmode=view&id=6871>.

Employment

On Friday, DPC and ANCOR staff will be conducting a workshop on [H.R. 1279, the Direct Support Professionals Fairness and Security Act of 2007](#) at The Arc of Maryland's convention.

Transportation

The Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee will mark up [H.R. 3985, the Over-the-Road Bus Transportation Accessibility Act of 2007](#) on Thursday. The legislation gives the Department of Transportation additional tools to require over-the-road buses to be accessible to people with disabilities.

National Council on Disability

The DPC will attend the National Council on Disabilities (NCD) meeting Monday and Tuesday of this week in Arlington, VA. The NCD is a bipartisan Federal agency appointed by the President. The NCD has been a forceful voice for the ADA Restoration Act (H.R. 3195, S. 1881), among many other policy issues, and recently issued a strong letter countering opposition voiced by the U.S. Department of Justice.

Maternal and Child Health

The DPC will be presenting at the Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Leadership Conference in Washington, DC this Wednesday on the importance and effectiveness of the MCH Leadership Trainee program. MCH offers leadership training programs to professional students in cross-discipline areas such as pediatrics, social work, physical therapy and public health. The DPC will highlight the importance of policy development and progressive disability models as part of the training process.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

[CMS Consumer Call re: power wheelchair concerns.](#)

On Tuesday, April 22, 2008 CMS will host a consumer call between 2:30- 3:30 p.m. EDT. Learn more about Medicare's scheduled reimbursement reduction of power wheelchairs on a conference call this Tuesday. Starting July 1, 2008 power chair reimbursement will be reduced by 19%-- this is in addition to the 26% decrease in 2006. Private insurance, Medicaid, and dual eligible benefits are often based on Medicare reimbursement rates, so this scheduled shift is far-reaching. CMS will provide an update on competitive bidding program for durable medical equipment, prosthetics, orthotics, and supplies (DMEPOS) and policy experts will be available to answer questions. Dial toll-free: 800-475-0456 (Please call in 15 minutes before the session begins). Pass code: NMTP. For more information, see:
<http://www.cms.hhs.gov/NationalMedicareTrainingProgram/EmailUpdates/itemdetail.asp?filterType=none&filterByDID=-99&sortByDID=1&sortOrder=ascending&itemID=CMS1209880&intNumPerPage=10>

Webinar on Economic Stimulus

The Coalition on Human Needs is sponsoring a webinar on Friday, April 25 at 3:00 p.m. EDT. The webinar will provide information on proposals before Congress to respond to the recession and growing effort by advocates to support the most effective forms of aid - extending unemployment benefits, help with the high cost of food and home energy, and providing funds to prevent cuts to Medicaid and other vital spending. The webinar is free. To register visit www.bostonconferencing.com/chn