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ACTION ALERTS



ONGOING:

None

[HTTP://WWW.UCP.ORG/UCP_GENERALSUB.CFM/1/8/11981](http://www.ucp.org/ucp_generalsub.cfm/1/8/11981)



MAJOR EVENTS LAST WEEK

U. S. Congress

The sudden illness of Senator Edward Kennedy (D-MA) put a damper on Senate floor action throughout the week. There is concern that a prolonged absence of the Senator, who chairs the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, during his medical treatment may delay key bills such as the Higher Education Act reauthorization and the Mental Health Parity bill.

Appropriations/Medicaid

The Senate approved a \$165 billion war supplemental spending bill which included a one year moratorium on seven Medicaid regulations (including the rehab option, case management and school based administration/transportation rules). The moratorium was part of a domestic spending amendment which passed by a 75-22 vote. The House passed a different supplemental appropriations bill previously which also included a one year moratorium on the seven Medicaid regulations. These bills need to be reconciled as the major differences on issues such as troop withdrawal from Iraq and levels of domestic discretionary funding.

Medicare

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) released a list of the suppliers who have signed contracts to participate in the first round of competitive bidding for durable medical equipment which will be rolled out in 10 metropolitan

statistical areas on July 1. A list of the suppliers, the metropolitan statistical areas and other program information is available at:

<http://www.cms.hhs.gov/CompetitiveAcqforDMEPOS/>

Social Security

The Social Security Administration published final regulations on the Ticket to Work and Self Sufficiency program on May 20. While advocates are now reviewing the new regulations, initial reactions are that the regulations will mean some major improvements in the program. The final regulations can be found at:

<http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2008/pdf/E8-10879.pdf>. SSA will be posting a side-by-side table comparing selected provisions in the New Ticket rules with the old and other resources on its site: www.ssa.gov/work.

Transportation

On Thursday, the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee marked up H.R. 6003, a bill to reauthorize Amtrak. The bill authorizes funding to help Amtrak pay for the work needed to bring the train stations into compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. The Senate passed its bill last fall without the ADA funding, but with a request for an updated plan on how Amtrak plans to comply with the ADA.

ADA Restoration

Negotiations carry on for ADARA. The business and disability communities continue to meet to draft mutually-agreed upon language in an effort to move ADARA forward in a bipartisan fashion. Without this consensus, it is unlikely ADARA will garner the support it needs to be signed into law. Final language is expected this week, and business and disability groups will decide if they support the deal. In addition to content questions, timing and strategy are also looming issues. To pass the bill in this Congress, it needs to move quickly. In addition, with Senator Kennedy's (D-MA) health keeping him away from Congress for an undetermined amount of time, it is unclear how ADARA would move through the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee, the primary committee of jurisdiction in the Senate.

Rights

The DPC met with several members of the Civil Rights Division of Department of Justice to discuss issues central to people with disabilities including the ADA, voting, emergency management, housing, and others. The DOJ was very receptive to the issues raised and asked the DPC for follow-up.

The Courts/Accessibility

A ruling by a federal appeals court in Washington found that because different denominations of paper money are indistinguishable by touch, the government is discriminating against people with visions impairments. The decision could force the Treasury Department to make significant changes to currency, such as printing different-sized bills for different denominations or giving them raised markings. A three-judge panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia issued the 2-1 ruling in a lawsuit by the American Council of the Blind. The government has been fighting the case for about

six years and could appeal the ruling. While this victory will support individuals who are blind, accessible currency features may also benefit individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

MAJOR EVENTS AHEAD

U. S. Congress

The Congress is out all week for its Memorial Day recess.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Disability Policy Collaboration

DPC staff will make a presentation at the annual conference of the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD) to be held on May 28 – 30. The DPC will be presenting on personnel and career development in the field of developmental disabilities. For more information on AAIDD's annual conference, see: <http://www.aidd.org/Events/DC/info.shtml>