

Action Alert from National APSE 11/5/2009

Call for Support for Inclusion of Both Legislative Proposals into Final Health Care Reform Legislation

APSE asks its members to call their Senators and request support for inclusion of both the CLASS Act and the Community First Choice Option into the final health care reform package! Call TODAY!

Background

This week the Senate Finance and Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committees are merging their separate bills into one single health reform bill that will go to the Senate floor to begin debate as early as next week. Two critical provisions that change the way long term services are delivered and/or funded for people with disabilities are included. These two provisions complement one another and must be a part of the Senate health reform bill!

The Senate Finance Committee bill includes the Community First Choice (CFC) Medicaid Option. This state option will allow the states to offer broadly defined attendant services and supports in a home or community setting to individuals eligible for nursing home, ICFs/MR, and other institutional level of care. To encourage the states to implement the CFC Option, the state will receive a 6 percent increase in its federal medical assistance percentage (FMAP) match for services provided under this option.

The Senate Health Education Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee's bill includes the Community Living Assistance Services and Supports Act (CLASS) Act. The CLASS Act would create a solvent, affordable, premium-based, national insurance program providing cash benefits that can be used for assistance with the activities of daily living to help people avoid becoming impoverished by spending down to Medicaid eligibility levels. The CLASS Act complements the CFC Option and Medicaid, Medicare, and private long term care insurance.

Action: Please call your two Senators' offices ASAP to convey your support for inclusion of both legislative proposals into the final health care reform package. To reach your Senators' offices, you may call the Capitol Hill switchboard directly at: 202-224-3121. Key targets include: Warner (D-VA), Webb (D-VA), Bill Nelson (D-FL), Landrieu (D-LA), Bayh (D-IN), Lincoln (D-AR), Pryor (D-AR), and Tim Johnson (D-SD). Also, please have your South Dakota members contact Senator Conrad (D-SD) and urge him NOT to raise a point of order during the Senate's consideration of the final health care package, as it could jeopardize the inclusion of the CLASS Act in the final health care reform bill.

Message: Urge your Senators to ensure that both the CLASS Act and the CFC Option are included in the final health care reform bill. Point out that people who need long term services and supports now or in the future should: 1) be part of the solution; 2) self-determine the services and supports that they really want; and 3) exercise personal responsibility.

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