

Allies for Independence Washington Insights

Week of April 1, 2024

CAPITOL HILL UPDATE

Congress returns next week after the holiday recess with six weeks of session until Memorial Day. There is a lot on Congress' plate, and not just in the health care space, but it again is not clear when or if there is momentum to advance anything not attached to a larger package. Congress is expected to spend time on the FY25 Appropriations process, and hearings will continue in earnest around a variety of important policy topics. It is important to closely monitor the committee space for movement on key policy issues, as this is where much of the activity will be in the weeks and months ahead.

Absent Congress working in a bipartisan, bicameral manner to advance items pending in the queue for the last year, legislating will continue to be a hurry up and wait process.

ON THE RADAR

Casey Unveils Long-Term Care Workforce Support Act

Chair Bob Casey (D-PA) of the Senate Special Committee on Aging introduced the Long-Term Care Workforce Support Act last month. The legislation would make certain changes to Medicaid funding for long-term care and direct care and provides for grants to states to strengthen the direct care workforce. It would also provide for grants and contracts to support direct care professionals and the direct care workforce in several ways. The legislation also requires a new Department of Labor standard regarding workplace violence prevention plans for certain health care and social delivery sites (including skilled nursing facilities and assisted living) and creates a new paid sick time mandate for direct care professionals.

Lastly, the bill would require HHS and the Department of Labor to engage external evaluators to assess the effects of the bill.

This bill would have a tremendous impact on the long-term care community and will be important to watch as aspects of the bill could be included in larger packages, such as the upcoming Older Americans Act reauthorization.

Medicare Access to Address Health-Related Social Needs

In last year's Physician Fee Schedule (PFS) rule, CMS outlined four services intended to address health

equity priorities, including new service codes for community health integration (CHI) and principal illness navigation. These new service codes provide a direct pathway for reimbursement for work performed by community health workers to the Medicare provider. This allows providers to contract with community-based organizations, such as area agencies on aging and centers for independent living, to provide staffing to address identified health-related social needs. For more information, please [click here](#).

ACL Request for Information on Elder Abuse

The Administration for Community Living released a Request for Information (RFI) to get input from the public, researchers, practitioners, and those who have experienced elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation on: (1) how the Elder Justice Coordinating Council (EJCC) can benefit the larger elder justice community; (2) the areas of elder justice in which the EJCC should focus their attention; (3) the activities, tools, resources, or components that would best help states and communities create and strengthen their systems of elder justice services and supports; and (4) how the EJCC can advance equity. Comments are due April 24, 2024. For more information, please [click here](#).

HHS Publishes Report on Long COVID Work

HHS' Office of Long COVID Research and Practice published a report on its current understanding of Long COVID and the activities the federal government is undertaking to meet the challenge of Long COVID. The report estimates that of the over 140 million cases of COVID-19 in the United States, an estimated 11% of adults may be experiencing Long COVID with symptoms that have lasted three months or longer. People experiencing Long COVID have increased health care needs and could be considered an individual with disability under federal disability rights law. Our understanding of Long COVID is still in its infancy, but will remain an important issue going forward and relevant to the long-term care space. You can read the report by [clicking here](#).

Save the Date: May 2nd – Older Adult Mental Health Awareness Day Symposium

Mark your calendars to join ACL on Thursday, May 2, 2024, for the 7th Annual Older Adult Mental Health Awareness Day Symposium! This free, all-day, virtual event will feature an engaging plenary, informative sessions, and a diverse array of topics addressing the most pressing needs in older adult mental health. For more information, please [click here](#)!

RECOMMENDED READS

- *The Seattle Times* – [Keep long-term care insurance mandatory in Washington State](#)
- *Association of Health Care Journalists* – [Green Houses: A communal approach to elder care](#)
- *Dakota News Now* – [Demand for long-term care in aging care industry being met with a rewarding career](#)

Allies for Independence promotes inclusion, equity, and economic security across the lifespan!

Contact us!

For questions, please contact

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