



# Affordable Care Act

## FACT SHEET

2012 DISABILITY POLICY SEMINAR

The Arc | UCP | AUCD | AAIDD | NACDD | SABE

## Background

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) of 2010 will provide access to affordable health insurance for over 50 million Americans who are currently uninsured. The law represents an historic opportunity to expand access to affordable, quality health care for persons with disabilities.

Our organizations are long-standing advocates for universal access to health care and fully support funding and implementing the ACA. Our support is based on the many provisions that eliminate discrimination against people with health conditions, expand health insurance coverage, and improve prevention and public health. The ACA's most critical provisions for people with disabilities are:

### ***Insurance Market Reforms***

- *Prohibit pre-existing condition exclusions, lifetime and annual caps, discrimination based on disability and health status, and rescission of coverage.*
- *Prohibit consideration of health status when setting premiums.*
- *Require guaranteed issue and renewal of insurance policies.*

### ***Expanding Access to Coverage***

- *Establish temporary high risk pools to cover those who are currently uninsured.*
- *Provide significant subsidies to assist low income individuals to purchase coverage in the Exchanges.*
- *Include coverage of dental and vision care for children in the Exchanges.*
- *Include coverage of critical disability-related services, such as mental health services, rehabilitative and habilitative services and devices, in the Exchanges.*

### ***Medicaid and Medicare***

- *Expands Medicaid eligibility to 133 percent of the federal poverty level with significant federal funding.*
- *Establishes the Community First Choice Option for states to cover comprehensive community attendant services under the state's optional service plan.*
- *Eliminates Medicare Part D (drug coverage) co-pays for dual eligibles receiving waiver services, and improves access to key medications.*

### ***Prevention, Provider Training, Data Collection***

- *Eliminates co-pays for critical prevention services.*
- *Creates the Prevention and Public Health Fund (PPHF) to provide new funding for transformational investments in promoting wellness, preventing disease, and other public health priorities.*
- *Increases opportunities for training of health care providers (including dentists) on the needs of persons with developmental and other disabilities.*
- *Improves data collection on where people with disabilities access health services and where accessible facilities can be found.*

## Key Issues

The partisan disagreements over the law continue in the 112<sup>th</sup> Congress with multiple strategies to repeal all or portions of the law and other efforts to block implementation and funding for key

provisions. Most recently, the House Budget Resolution, introduced by House Budget Chairman Paul Ryan (R-WI) and passed on a vote of 228 to 191, called for the repeal of the ACA. The House Budget Resolution also called for \$810 billion in cuts over 10 years to the Medicaid program and turning Medicaid into a block grant to the states. These proposals would hurt Medicaid beneficiaries who would risk losing eligibility for health care and long term services and supports. These proposals would also jeopardize the goal of achieving access to health care for nearly all Americans.

## **Prevention and Public Health Fund**

The Prevention and Public Health Fund is intended to provide new funding for transformational investments in promoting wellness, preventing disease, and other public health priorities. In the President's FY 2013 budget, \$903 million of the \$1.25 billion available from the Fund for FY13 will be used to supplant, not supplement, CDC's budget. Earlier this year, \$6.25 billion was cut from the trust fund to pay for the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act. These cuts and proposals threaten the ability of the trust fund to bring down health care costs through preventing disease and improving public health.

## **CLASS Program**

The Community Living Assistance Services and Supports (CLASS) program creates a national long term services insurance program which assists eligible individuals and their families to meet long term needs with a cash benefit and without forcing them into poverty to receive Medicaid benefits. The Administration has put the program on hold due to concerns about authority to make adjustments to ensure long term financial stability. The House has voted to repeal the provision.

## **Recommendations**

- Congress should oppose full or partial repeal of provisions that are important to people with disabilities.
- Congress should provide adequate funding to implement the ACA.
- The Senate should oppose repeal of the CLASS program and work to ensure its viability.
- Congress should protect the funding for the Prevention and Public Health Fund.
- Congress should oppose deep cuts to Medicaid and turning the program into a block grant.

## **Relevant Committees**

House and Senate Appropriations Committees  
House and Senate Budget Committees  
House Education and the Workforce  
House Ways and Means Committee  
House Energy and Commerce  
Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee  
Senate Finance Committee

For more information, please contact The Arc at (202) 783-2229, United Cerebral Palsy at (202)776-0406, Association of University Centers on Disability at (301) 588-8252, American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities at (202) 387-1968, National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities at (202) 506-5813, or Self-Advocates Becoming Empowered at SABEnation@gmail.com

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