



# Community

## FACT SHEET

AAIDD | The Arc | AUCD | NACDD | SABA | UCP

### Background

**Long Term Services and Supports:** The federal/state Medicaid program is the major - sometimes the *only* - source of funding for long term supports and services (LTSS) that many people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) rely on to live in the community. This effective and cost efficient program is a lifeline for people with I/DD, making it possible for them to live and work among their neighbors.

Many states, however, have long waiting lists for participation in such Medicaid-funded community-based supports and services. Due to medical and technological advances, people have longer life expectancies and often live with aging parents. As the population ages, the need for LTSS will increase for both people with I/DD and their caregivers.

**Housing:** Medicaid provides essential services and supports, but by law typically cannot pay for a person's housing costs. Programs operated by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) help make housing affordable (through rent subsidies) and help create new affordable, accessible housing. These include HUD's Section 811 Supportive Housing for Persons with Disabilities program and Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program. Despite these programs, the need for affordable, accessible housing for people with disabilities is far greater than the availability. Housing is one of the top barriers as states seek to implement *Olmstead* plans, Money Follows the Person grants, and other initiatives to help people with disabilities live in the community.

### Key Issues

**Medicaid Per Capita Caps:** There are proposals to place per capita caps on Medicaid federal spending. Such caps would put pressure on programs to reduce costs by cutting services and threaten states' ability to support or expand community-based options. These proposals could cause substantial conflict between groups with diverse needs which compete for scarce dollars.

**Medicaid Block Grant:** There are proposals to block grant Medicaid. A Medicaid block grant will not control health care costs which will continue to rise as people get older, use more health care services, and as the general cost of all health care increases. Block grants would only shift costs to the states and increase out-of-pocket health expenses for individuals.

**Medicaid Managed Care for LTSS:** The movement toward Medicaid managed LTSS continues even though there is little to no evidence that it provides better services to people with I/DD.

### Key Message to Congress

Congress must preserve Medicaid, Medicare, Social Security, SSI and other vital programs for people with disabilities.

These efforts are a fundamental shift in our health and LTSS system from services mostly based on need, to services based on a reduced budget.

**Affordable Housing:** The ongoing effects of deficit reduction and automatic cuts continue to pressure HUD's affordable housing programs, limiting production of much-needed new affordable housing and put existing affordable housing at risk.

**LTSS Crisis:** Much more needs to be done to address the looming need for an affordable and accessible system of LTSS that complements the Medicaid program. People should not have to become impoverished in order to become eligible to receive needed LTSS. Steps must be taken to remove the institutional bias of federal programs, waiting lists must be addressed, and Congress should strengthen the right to a full life in the community. Some of these issues are addressed in the Disability Integration Act (S. 2427) as introduced by Senator Charles Schumer (D-NY).

## Recommendations

- Congress must understand that Medicaid is a lifeline to people who have I/DD and their families!
- Congress should protect the individual entitlement to Medicaid and Medicare.
- Congress should reject reductions or caps to the Medicaid program, and reject any effort to block grant Medicaid.
- Congress should address the nation's need for an affordable, accessible system of long term supports and services.
- Congress should provide at least \$179 million for HUD's Section 811 Supportive Housing for Persons with Disabilities program in FY 2017. This will allow HUD to continue to fund all existing Section 811 units, and will also provide \$25 million to create nearly 800 new Section 811 units under the integrated, community-based 811 Project Rental Assistance Program.
- Congress should provide full funding for HUD's Housing Choice Voucher program in FY 2017 to ensure that all Housing Choice Vouchers can be renewed and that no tenants are displaced.
- Members of Congress should act to remove the institutional bias of federal programs, eliminate waiting lists for LTSS, and to strengthen the right to community living for individuals with disabilities.

## Relevant Committees

House & Senate Appropriations Committees  
House and Senate Budget Committees  
House Ways and Means Committee  
House Energy and Commerce Committee  
House Financial Services Committee  
Senate Finance Committee  
Senate Banking Committee

For more information, please contact The Arc at (202) 783-2229, Association of University Centers on Disabilities 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, Self-Advocates Becoming Empowered at [SABEnation@gmail.com](mailto:SABEnation@gmail.com), or United Cerebral Palsy at (202) 776-0406.

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