

July 9, 2009

Kathleen G. Sebelius  
Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services  
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Sebelius:

On behalf of the Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD) we thank you for the Administration's support for the Community Living Assistance Services and Supports (CLASS) Act during the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee mark up of the Affordable Health Choices Act. AUCD strongly supports the CLASS Act.

The CLASS Act acknowledges the universal nature of disability and addresses impending needs of an aging population. While nearly 10 million Americans need long-term care services and supports to assist them with activities of daily living, this number will more than double in coming decades with the aging of the baby boom generation. The CLASS Act provides options to purchase long-term care insurance through a national program. By pooling risk, premiums will be more affordable to all Americans, including working individuals with disabilities. Subsidies are also provided to assist low-income individuals with premiums.

The CLASS Act will assist individuals with disabilities and their family caregivers allowing individuals to purchase supports and services and thereby prevent unnecessary institutionalization. It will also produce Medicaid savings over time that we hope can be reinvested to strengthen Medicaid home and community-based services. In addition to the CLASS Act, we also believe improvements are needed within Medicaid to eliminate the institutional bias and expand home and community-based services. We hope that you will work with Congress to incorporate additional changes that will support states to improve their home and community based infrastructures and provide incentives to target resources to address the needs of people with disabilities in the community.

Thank you again for your support of the CLASS Act. We look forward to working with you and to the Administration's support for long-term services and supports improvements within Medicaid as health care reform moves forward.

Sincerely,



Michael Gamel-McCormick, Ph.D.  
Board President & Associate Director  
Center for Disability Studies  
University of Delaware



George Jesien, Ph.D.  
Executive Director  
AUCD

● 1010 Wayne Avenue  
Suite 920  
Silver Spring, MD 20910  
t: 301-588-8252  
f: 301-588-2842  
www.aucd.org

Michael Gamel-McCormick, PhD  
*President*

Tamar Heller, PhD  
*President-Elect*

William E. Kiernan, PhD  
*Past President*

Royal P. Walker, Jr., JD  
*Past-Past President*

Marion Taylor Baer, PhD, RD  
*Secretary*

Daniel B. Crimmins, PhD  
*Treasurer*

Lann E. Thompson, EdD  
*Council for Interdisciplinary Service*

Gordon G. Richins, BS  
*Council on Community Advocacy*

Kendall Corbett, BA  
*Council on Community Advocacy*

Arnold Birenbaum, PhD  
*Council on Research and Evaluation*

Barbara Wheeler, PhD  
*Multicultural Council*

Mary Mercer, MS  
*National Community Education Directors Council*

Judith M. Holt, PhD  
*National Training Directors Council*

A. Anthony Antosh, EdD  
*Member at Large*

Kathleen Braden, MD  
*Member at Large*

Julie Anne Fodor, PhD  
*Member at Large*

Charlie Lakin, PhD  
*Member at Large*

Robert W. Marion, MD  
*Member at Large*

George S. Jesien, PhD  
*Executive Director*