

## Press Statement

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### **AUCD Celebrates One Year Anniversary of the Affordable Care Act and its Positive Impact on People with Disabilities and Families**

SILVER SPRING, MD (March 23, 2011) — AUCD joins with other disability advocates in celebrating the one year anniversary of the signing of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (P.L. 111-148). “This landmark reform has incredible implications for the AUCD network and the communities we serve. Provisions to provide access; increase quality, affordability and community-based services; reduce disability health disparities; and prohibit discrimination based on health status, as well as those that focus on wellness and prevention, are policies that AUCD and other disability advocates have long fought for in the healthcare system. This law is already helping millions of people living with disabilities access care that was denied to them before this law passed,” stated AUCD’s President Daniel Crimmins, Ph.D., Director of the Center for Leadership in Disability at Georgia State University. “AUCD is committed to helping the Administration as it continues to implement this historic law.”

This legislation not only ensures that many individuals with disabilities will now have access to quality, affordable health care, but also includes two of AUCD’s major legislative priorities that will be implemented soon: the Community Living Assistance Services and Supports (CLASS) Act and the Community First Choice Option.

The CLASS Act, championed by the late Senator Ted Kennedy, will establish a new national insurance program financed by voluntary payroll deductions to provide benefits to adults who become functionally impaired. “We are all temporarily abled,” stated George Jesien, AUCD’s executive director. “We are all only one accident, one war deployment, or one age- or disability-related impairment away from needing some sort of daily assistance. This new system will help to preserve the Medicaid program, which currently bears the brunt of covering long-term services. It will promote independence and dignity across the lifespan by giving beneficiaries the right to control and choose what services they receive, how and where they are delivered and who provides them.” As a Charter Member of [AdvanceCLASS](#), AUCD is dedicated to helping the Administration implement this innovative program.

The Community First Choice Option, modeled after the Community Choice Act, will improve Medicaid to provide individuals with disabilities and seniors an equal choice of receiving home and community-based services in Medicaid. This legislation will help correct the institutional bias by providing the option to states to provide community-based personal attendant services and supports benefits within Medicaid. This option will ultimately help save states money since research has shown that providing supports to individuals in the community is less costly than institutional care.

“These two major provisions, along with the provisions to improve access and quality of health care, will result in dramatic improvements to the quality of life for people living with disabilities of all ages. It will also provide options and support to states that want to do the right thing -- provide quality supports and services in the community-- but are struggling with huge budget deficits and need assistance in doing so,” said Kim Musheno, AUCD’s Legislative Director.

The Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD), located in Silver Spring, MD, promotes and supports a national network of interdisciplinary centers on disabilities. The members of AUCD represent every U.S. state and territory. AUCD and its members work to advance policy and practice through research, education, leadership, and services for and with individuals with developmental and other disabilities, their families, and communities. AUCD keeps its members informed about implementation of the Affordable Care Act through its [Health Reform Hub](#). For more information, visit AUCD’s website: [www.aucd.org](http://www.aucd.org).