

## **AUCD Statement on Open Enrollment; Federal Government Shutdown**

SILVER SPRING, MD (October 1, 2013) — Silver Spring, MD – The Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD) is excited and proud to watch the opening of Health Insurance Exchanges today, October 1. The Marketplaces and their accompanying reforms in the insurance market mark a new day for people with disabilities and their access to health care. For three long years we have looked forward to this moment, when people with disabilities can no longer be excluded from private health insurance.

Unfortunately, this day has been overshadowed by Congress' inability to reach an agreement to continue funding the federal government. Worse, their primary disagreement has been whether to allow this law to stand as written. Opponents have had their chance – including two Congressional elections, a Presidential elections, and over 40 votes in the House against the law – to change the Affordable Care Act. Now is the time to focus on continuing a functioning government, not repealing a law that benefits millions of people.

When the Affordable Care Act became law, people with disabilities could begin to consider the possibility of purchasing private insurance. Today that possibility becomes reality. For the first time, people with chronic conditions can work and earn a living, knowing that their health status will not jeopardize their access to high quality health care. And for the first time, parents of children with disabilities know that they can access and affordable health care plan that covers the habilitative services their child needs. Today some Americans with disabilities and their families will sign up for private health insurance coverage for the very first time.

The Affordable Care Act builds upon the promise of the Americans with Disabilities Act to end discrimination in access to high quality health care. We worked together to enhance preventive services, accessibility, long-term services and supports, and access to health care for people with

disabilities and it is time to celebrate. It's time for Congress to work together to govern and pass a continuing resolution without delaying, defunding, or otherwise dismantling this crucial law.

The Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD) is a membership organization that supports and promotes a national network of university-based interdisciplinary programs. Through its members, AUCD is a resource for local, state, national, and international agencies, organizations, and policy makers concerned about people living with developmental and other disabilities and their families. AUCD Network members consist of 67 University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD), 43 Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities (LEND) Programs, and 15 Intellectual and Developmental Disability Research Centers (IDDRC). For more information and directory of University Centers, see [www.aucd.org](http://www.aucd.org)

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