



**CONSORTIUM FOR CITIZENS
WITH DISABILITIES**

March 18, 2010

Dear Representative:

Re: Disability Community Supports Critical Provisions of Senate Bill

The following members of the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD) strongly urge you to vote for the *Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act* (H.R. 3590). . CCD, a coalition of national consumer, service provider, and professional organizations, advocates on behalf of persons with disabilities and chronic conditions and their families.

We believe the goal of health care reform should be to assure that all Americans, including people with disabilities and chronic conditions, have access to high quality, comprehensive, affordable health care that meets their individual needs and enables them to be healthy, functional, live as independently as possible, and participate in the community. The Senate bill goes a long way toward meeting that goal and we hope that the legislative history developed during the debate and consideration of the reconciliation bill will also help to improve the legislation for individuals with disabilities and chronic conditions.

Within H.R. 3590, the following provisions stand out as particularly beneficial to the disability and chronic illness community:

- Major insurance market reforms such as the elimination of discrimination based on health status, a prohibition on pre-existing condition exclusions (including implementation of an immediate ban on exclusions for children), guaranteed issue and renewal requirements, and the elimination of annual and lifetime caps;
- Creation of a high-risk pool to provide immediate assistance to those currently uninsured with pre-existing conditions before insurance market reforms are implemented;
- Inclusion of critical services for people with disabilities in the new Health Insurance Exchange's essential benefits package such as rehabilitation and habilitation services and devices, mental health services, and pediatric vision and oral services;
- Inclusion of the Community Living Assistance Services and Supports (CLASS) Act, a new actuarially sound, premium-based, voluntary, national long term services insurance program to help adults with severe functional impairments to

- remain independent, employed, and a part of their communities, without having to impoverish themselves to become eligible for Medicaid;
- Inclusion of a Community First Choice Option to Provide Medicaid Coverage of Community-Based Attendant Services and Supports which allows states to offer such services to people otherwise eligible for Medicaid institutional services;
 - Significant investments in Medicaid to dramatically expand eligibility;
 - Substantial federal subsidies and out-of-pocket limits to make coverage as affordable as possible;
 - New mechanisms and payment methods to better coordinate chronic care for people with disabilities;
 - An extension of the exceptions process to the Medicare therapy caps on physical, occupational, and speech and language therapies;
 - Requirements for the development of standards for accessible diagnostic and other medical equipment;
 - Implementation of a very deliberate, evidence-based approach to bundling of post-acute care, which includes a requirement that the Secretary conduct the Continuing Care Hospital (CCH) pilot;
 - Inclusion of “disability” as a subpopulation in the provisions regarding Comparative Effectiveness Research (CER); and
 - Requirements that CMS collect data on the health care provided to people with disabilities.

On behalf of the individuals and families we represent, we urge you to support meaningful and comprehensive health reform legislation for people with disabilities and chronic conditions. Please feel free to contact any of the CCD task force co-chairs listed below with questions or requests. Thank you.

Sincerely,

ACCSES

American Association of People with Disabilities
 American Association on Health and Disability
 American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities
 American Council of the Blind
 American Foundation for the Blind
 American Medical Rehabilitation Providers Association
 American Network of Community Options and Resources
 American Occupational Therapy Association
 Association of Assistive Technology Act Programs
 Association of University Centers on Disabilities
 Autism National Committee
 Autism Society
 Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law
 Brain Injury Association of America
 Burton Blatt Institute
 Council for Exceptional Children

Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund
Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children
Easter Seals
Epilepsy Foundation
Family Voices
Harris Center for Disability and Health Policy
Helen Keller National Center
IDEA Infant Toddler Coordinators Association
Learning Disabilities Association of America
Mental Health America
National Alliance on Mental Illness
National Association of County Behavioral Health and Developmental Disability
Directors
National Association of State Directors of Special Education
National Center for Learning Disabilities
National Coalition on Deaf-Blindness
National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare
National Council on Independent Living
National Disability Rights Network
National Multiple Sclerosis Society
National Respite Coalition
National Spinal Cord Injury Association
Paralyzed Veterans of America
Physician-Parent Caregivers
The Arc of the United States
United Cerebral Palsy
United Spinal Association
VetsFirst

CCD Health Task Force Co-Chairs:

Mary Andrus, Easter Seals (mandrus@easterseals.com)
Angela Ostrom, Epilepsy Foundation (aostrom@efa.org)
Liz Savage, The Arc and United Cerebral Palsy (savage@thedpc.org)
Peter Thomas, Brain Injury Association of America (Peter.Thomas@ppsv.com)
Tim Nanof, American Occupational Therapy Association (tnanof@aota.org)

CCD Long Term Services and Supports Task Force Co-Chairs:

Marty Ford, The Arc and United Cerebral Palsy (ford@thedpc.or)
Suellen Galbraith, American Network of Community Options and Resources
(sgalbraith@ancor.org)
Andrew Morris, United Spinal Association and National Spinal Cord Injury Association
(amorris@unitedspinal.org)

Lee Page, Paralyzed Veterans of America (leep@pva.org)