

Association Of University Centers On Disabilities (AUCD)
Policy Committee Meeting
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>> SARAH MUELLER: Hello and welcome to AUCD's Policy Committee. Thank you for joining us.

My name is Sarah Mueller, and I am AUCD's disability policy fellow. We would like to welcome and thank all of you for joining us today.

Before we begin, I would like to address a few logistical details, because of the number of participants, your audio lines will be muted throughout the presentation. We will have the opportunity throughout the presentation to submit questions in the chat box. I will compile your questions throughout the webinar and address them at the end. Please note that we may not be able to address every question and may combine some questions.

This webinar is being recorded and will be available on AUCD's webinar library. There will also -- we also would like to invite you to provide feedback on our webinar by contacting myself or Rylin. Please join me in welcoming today's speakers. Rylin Rodgers, director of public policy at AUCD, and Liz Weintraub, senior advocacy specialist at AUCD.

To begin we will review our agenda. We will do some welcome and introductions. Rylin will share updates on the COVID-19 policy responses, as well as updates on AUCD priorities for the second half of the 116th Congress, and your Opportunities for Impact.

I'm going to turn it over to Liz, who will introduce AUCD's Policy Team.

>> LIZ WEINTRAUB: Thank you, Sarah. And as Sarah said, my name is Liz Weintraub, I'm the senior advocacy specialist. I wanted to introduce the Policy Team, which is John Tschida, who is the executive director. And Rylin Rodgers, who is the director of public policy. Sarah Mueller, who you just heard from. And she's the disability policy fellow. Denise, who is the director of initiatives for public policies.

And myself.

So I'm going to turn it back over to Sarah.

>> SARAH MUELLER: Thanks so much, Liz. And we wanted to take a moment to talk a little bit about our Policy Committee, if this is the first time you are joining us, welcome and thank you. We are a committee of the AUCD Board, and we are led by co-chairs from throughout the network, including Marty Blair, Kara Ayers, Celia Feinstein and president Sachin.

We meet 4:00 to 5:00 eastern standard time the 2nd Tuesday each month via Zoom.

You can find more details about AUCD's policy work on our website. We have linked it here on our PowerPoint, which is a reminder both the agenda and the PowerPoint are available for download on the bottom underneath your check box.

Our policy is made up monthly committee as well as two working workgroups, the rural area code caucus led by Marty Blair, and the right to communicate.

I'm going to turn it over... oh, sorry. Then I also wanted to flag and remind everybody about our last virtual event of this week for DPS, disability policy seminar, which is our Virtual Hill Visit Day. We have provided scripts, materials and guidance that you can find on our website and we will be doing social media throughout the day tomorrow and hope that you all are contacting your members of Congress and their staff to engage with them about the important needs of people with disabilities during this time.

I'm going to turn it over to Rylin Rodgers, who will give us important and critical updates from the COVID-19 response.

>> RYLIN RODGERS: Welcome, everyone. It's great to be with you this afternoon virtually. If you are at all like me, you are likely receiving quite a lot of information about what is happening around the country and in your states and communities in response to the public health emergency. We wanted to first frame what has happened to date and some background information about the decision making and the authority for the changes that are already in place. We want to let you know what is being debated exactly at this moment, what we see as next steps so that you can engage and educate and advocate around critical issues for people with disabilities and take your questions so that we're able to work together going forward.

It's important always when we think about policy to be thoughtful about what is a state decision, what is a decision made by Congress or the legislative branch and what things are made by the executive branch. And this public health emergency, we have seen many different levels of decision making that all are creating a very important web of impact on our different systems.

So I wanted to start by flagging that the executive branch, the president and the administration, including multiple agencies continue to take executive actions both in regulations and waiving rules and through emergency action that impact people with disabilities and all Americans. Some of those actions include the extension of the tax filing date from the yearly deadline of April 15th. This year it has been extended to July 15th.

The president executive order also allowed for reallocating of some medical resources. This includes resources that are in our strategic reserves as a country, and resources that are available in different parts of the federal government.

We have seen several changes that have become very important through the Medicare/Medicaid system in terms of some of their authority of oversight and some of the options to give states flexibility and response, so there are new guidance documents around state options for Medicaid and CHIP, emergency waivers that impact really every aspect of our professional licensing and our healthcare system and oversight, including oversight of hospital systems, also including oversight of what is happening in nursing care facilities. And there's been radical changes to our telehealth system to create significant increased access and the ability for clinicians, including clinicians but other health clinicians to be reimbursed by providing telehealth services during this time.

Some of the executive actions are limited to the health emergency and some will be part of our system moving forward.

There has been -- on our next slide we'll take a look at some of the actions related to education. There has been a lot of concern in the disability space around meeting the needs of students with disabilities both in K-12 settings and higher education settings, and so it's important to note that two separate resources have come out from the Department of Education. It's very notable that the most recent resource came out on Saturday evening, so there was new information about the use of IDEA to support students with disabilities in accessing distance learning opportunities, and that clarification came out over the weekend.

There is also changes to how student loans will be repaid, some relief systems that have been made and suspension of payments going forward. That is separate from congressional action on student loans.

Beyond what the administration is doing, it's helpful to know what is happening in Congress, so we'll take a look at next slide. And in Washington we have started to think about these things in terms of phases. That has been helpful to understand what is passed already and what is being considered. So in terms of passed already, we have phase 1 and phase 2. Phase 1 was the first piece of legislation to pass around the coronavirus response. It passed way back -- it feels like many months ago, but several weeks ago on March 6, 2020, it was \$8.3 billion, which at the time was \$6 billion more than requested by the administration. That bill created some ability for states to start to respond and our public health system to start to respond.

In the disability space, the most important part of that first bill is that it called for a transferring back any appropriations or dollars the federal government had planned to spend on existing programs but had moved to respond to coronavirus. So all of those dollars were restored back. That was a particularly important to systems that impact the lives of people with disabilities because some of the dollars transferred were for research programs like NIDILRR

and for direct support like energy relief for winter energy bills. So those funds were all restored in that \$8.3 billion. That was phase 1.

Phase 2, which is our next slide, passed on the 18th. It was a bill that originated in the House and then passed via unanimous consent in the Senate. It was for -- actually, that's not true. It passed in the House, moved to full unanimous consent and then a vote in the Senate. This bill on the 18th had \$100 billion. So you see some significant changes in the amount of money being spent. It provided access to paying for the cost of coronavirus testing. It's important to note that has not solved some of the other barriers for people getting access to the test. It created for the first time a federal mandate for some paid sick leave in our country. There are limits to that mandate both in employer size and what the leave can cover in terms of whom you are providing care or what the needs are, but there was for the first time paid leave as a mandate in that bill.

It provided significant funds to go to states to ramp up the reality that there would be large numbers of newly unemployed individuals who needed to access unemployment insurance. And it provided the first wave of increased funding to support food security programs.

Also critical to the lives of people with disabilities it did an increased federal funds for Medicaid. Medicaid comes to states using a formula or an FMAP, and this round of funds gave about a 6% -- slightly over 6% increase to every state. Additional dollars went to territories, although their funding comes via a different formula.

So that was all in phase 2. Which brings us to where we are now, which is the active debate around phase 3. It's important to note that many advocates and champions and offices introduced in rapid-fire a number of bills that they very much wanted included in phase 3. We're sharing the titles and links to those bills here as a resource because while we don't yet have final language for phase 3 we are hearing that some pieces of them have made it into phase 3 and that other pieces are under consideration for what comes in phase 4. It's also an important process note when looking at these large relief bills to know that some of the smaller pieces of legislation that have been important to the disability community will be raised in this process. And that starting to articulate needs for people with disabilities as created by this crisis. Sometimes those needs are best articulated in a draft bill or a bill that would later be added to a package. So it's good to know about, to look and see if your members of Congress are cosponsors of these bills, if they're authors of these bills, and a piece to be thinking about, are there other needs that should be introduced as bills in the coming days and weeks.

So a little more detail about where we are for phase 3 on our next slide.

So it turns out I had the power all along.

A couple of other things to flag. I mentioned in terms of process detail that there were introduced that could be part of phase 3 or phase 4. There are a lot of dear colleagues or caucus letters moving around that are elevating particular issues. Of note the autism... I'm going to pause for a second and make sure that I'm being heard.

I apologize on our end, we appear to be having some technical issues, so we will all get through this virtual meeting together. Thank you for your patience.

As I was saying, many members of Congress and coalitions of champions in Congress are raising issues, and they're raising issues in the form of dear colleagues letters. One of note, the autism caucus led by Congressman Chris Smith from New Jersey and congressman Mike Doyle from Pennsylvania put about the needs of people with autism and how they should be included in the relief package. Important pieces of the letter were additional resources for home community-based services and a callout to increase the funding for LENDs to create capacity around telehealth around the country both in training the workforce and in some cases of reacting to the need.

So that's another piece to be aware of when communicating with members. You can ask questions about what letters have you signed on to, what are the priorities that you're fighting for, and they're often able and willing to share with you those letters, which is great information to share back with our network as we're trying this moving system.

So where we are in phase 3, and I am 100% sure that during the course of this phone call we will get new information and we will be sharing that back out with you over time, later today potentially in an action alert and certainly talking points tomorrow. And the reason I say I'm 100% sure it's all going to change is right before I joined this call I was on a call with congressional champions telling us that they were at the five-yard line on the Senate in terms of getting to a decision on phase 3. The current process that they are hoping to use is a bipartisan decision out of the Senate and then pass it tonight in the Senate, and then it would go to the House under unanimous consent and could pass there. That's a critical piece of this because the House is not currently in Washington and getting them back to vote is an increasing challenge. There are members who are under quarantine. There are members who live -- are under quarantine because they have tested positive for the virus. There are members that live in communities with travel bans. All the things that many of us are experiencing in our lives are also happening to members of Congress and their staffs, and getting them back to Washington to vote is an additional challenge at this particular moment.

So the hope is to get to agreement from the leadership and really we're at a leadership level agreement, and then move forward.

It is helpful to know that we have seen texts from two separate bills. One came out of the House. It's frequently referred to as the Democrat proposal. That's because the House has Democratic majority. The other came out of Republican leadership in the Senate. It's being referred to as the Republican proposal. The Senate has a Republican majority.

There are some positive things for people with disabilities in both versions. Of note to our network, the Republican, the Senate version, the last time I saw the draft included one year extension of money follows the person and spousal impoverishment. It included some positive additions to allowing direct support professionals to go with individuals with disabilities to other care facilities. So if a person with a disability becomes ill and needs to be hospitalized, current regulations and barriers prevent their professional who might be an effective partner in their life

from supporting them in a hospital setting. The Senate bill would address that so that folks can get those partners and critical support in all settings.

The House bill has something that the disability community has been fighting hard for, which is a significant increase in influx of resources for home community-based setting services. At this time we are hearing from all of you all around the country that it's critically needed, that in order to maintain the workforce to support community-based settings, we need some additional dollars. We are hearing that folks in that workforce need access to personal protective materials, they need training, they need information and support. We're also aware that there are many individuals who are eligible for home community-based services but not yet getting them, whose needs may become more significant during this crisis and there needs to be new resources to address them.

So whether or not that ends up in tonight's bill remains to be seen, but it's something that we continue to push hard for.

Other pieces that folks continue to push hard for are the increased funding to support special education services in schools. We're hearing from school systems that they're aware that they need to access new technological solutions and new solutions in terms of adapting curriculum to meet the needs of students with disabilities. That's been an important part of the conversation. It's also been an important part of the conversation to make sure that the civil rights and access to services protections for students with disabilities are maintained during this crisis and beyond. I know I heard from many of you that there were deep concern about waiving IDEA protections or giving states flexibility to waive some pieces of IDEA, and we are advocating significantly on that front.

We also have heard that we -- many people with disabilities are having significant trouble accessing the supplies they need, not supplies that are particular for the virus, but the supplies that they need as part of their regular lives. So making sure that there is an ability to address that has been a significant part of the conversation.

Another part of the conversation that folks have asked me a lot of questions about is money. And getting direct funds to the people who need it most. You may have heard news headlines about a one-time \$1,200 check going to individuals, and you may have heard other folks advocating for increased payments for SSI and SSDI. What we know about both of those options is that we're hearing that it will most likely at this point be a one-time payment. We've been advocating for whatever the economic relief package is for individuals that we need to make sure all means all, so that it includes people with disabilities and all parts of our economy. And so we are advocating that folks don't get left out.

And we're also really working hard to make sure that accessing those payments does not create a domino effect that makes somebody not eligible for other income-based or means-based or asset-based programs.

So we don't want somebody to get a check that then jeopardizes their housing voucher or jeopardizes their access to Medicaid.

We're also aware that another critical need is nutrition and direct access to food both for people with disabilities but also for their families and caregivers.

So I'm going to pause there and think about taking a couple of questions from sort of what the priorities are and what we're hearing. I'm wondering if Sarah can... go ahead.

>> SARAH MUELLER: Yeah, Rylin, this is Sarah. We have a question around siblings being included in family medical leave or any introduced paid leave expansion. Can you clarify who that means and what that means for people with disabilities and their families?

>> RYLIN RODGERS: Yes, that's such a great question, and this is an important time to think about those phases. So in phase 2, if you are a sibling of -- an adult sibling with a disability and you need to take leave to support them because they're ill or because their services were disrupted, that leave would not have been covered as paid under phase 2. And people are aware that that is a significant challenge.

Other challenges in phase 2 related to that is that if you are apparent of an adult who has a disability and you needed to take leave to be a caregiver for them related to coronavirus, if they were over 18, so not a legal child, you were not able to access that leave. We know that that doesn't reflect how American families work and how communities work in terms of how we define each other. And support each other. So there has been quite a lot of conversation.

What I know and have seen is in the Democratic draft, it's not perfect, but it's significantly better in that it broadens the definition of families and who counts, and the ability to be a caregiver to those that are not legal children and still access paid leave.

So it's better, not 100% there. Those issues were not addressed in the Senate version, the last draft I saw, which was 1:30 this afternoon draft, but was by no means final.

I will say this is also a really good example of those sort of pull-out bills from our original list. Senator Gillibrand had a robust bill that really sort of filled the reality of what people are saying that they need in terms of paid leave to get through this crisis right now. So it's a piece that is on the table as part of the phase 3 discussion. And we'll certainly keep advocating for in phase 4. That's a really good question because it's one to watch what happens and to know that if it's not resolved, that doesn't mean that it's over. That means that we need to continue to raise it, we need to continue to advocate about how families and communities work and how we needed to define paid leave.

Is there another question?

>> SARAH MUELLER: Our next question is around voting. So we have seen some states address this by delaying their primaries, but is there anything federally happen around voting and access to polls?

>> RYLIN RODGERS: That's yet another question. It has not been a clear federal decision. There has been quite a lot of discussion about the need to go to a mailing voting system, both for primaries and for the general election based on this emergency. We are starting to see some states make a move to do that either as one-time for the primary or go ahead and try to implement it for November. There is, again, language in the House bill that does a rather deep dive into what that would look like and how we would do that as a country. That does not -- did not exist in the most current version of the Senate bill, and I am, again, 100% competent that that is an issue that is going to come back up.

It's an important issue because we really need to -- that's a place where our education and advocacy can be addressed in multiple ways.

So if you have information to share about that, if you have concerns, if you have information from your work and the disability community about how to make mail-in voting accessible to all, then this is the time to be sharing it with both your state and with your congressional delegation, because folks are going to operate probably on multiple fronts and we need to make sure that state and local election officials are hearing from the disability community along with our congressional delegations.

>> SARAH MUELLER: Rylin, can you clarify around student loan debt negotiations, if that includes students with disabilities.

>> RYLIN RODGERS: That's a great question. And the answer is "yes, but..." and the "but" has to do with the type of loan you have and where that loan comes from, and that is true of all student loan relief. Some types are federal programs and those are the ones that will be most impacted by the relief packages, but other types of loans are not federal programs and would need to be administered and handled differently. So really understanding what the loan product is helps you know how best to voc around that. And that's becoming true of a lot of the other types of grants that we're seeing both circulated as ideas or people have questions about. The best place to start is do a dive into what exactly your loan or grant is, and that can give you direction on where to follow up.

>> SARAH MUELLER: We have another question around the direct payments that Americans will be getting to make ends meet over the next weeks and months and you mentioned it not impacting people's asset limits but what about being able to use that money to put in an ABEL account?

>> RYLIN RODGERS: That's a great question. I should say very clearly we don't have a permanent decision -- we don't have a decision, the law hasn't passed in terms of what these payments would look like. If sort of history would guide us, and we look at the tax relief payments that people got during the last recession, people were able to put those in some tax deferred programs like 529s, so that would indicate that you could likely put it in an ABEL account. I will say that the effort has been to make sure you don't have to have an ABLE account to protect your eligibility just to be able to receive that payment. Because not everyone with a disability is able to access an ABLE account, and that's another really important issue and really interesting issue that comes together right now we as a disability

community have been doing a lot of advocacy to raise the age of being able to have an ABLE account and maybe that's one of the things that moves through one of these packages. I haven't heard it for package 3 but it might be part of package 4. It may be part of the discussion as members of Congress and their staff are reacting to their learning of what the asset limits are and what resource limits are and how critical that is. And so that education gives us a next piece to follow up with to talk about ABLE after the crisis.

I think that's an important piece for -- I don't think I said that very quickly, but I think it's important to remember that this is a crisis, and there's critical things moving and it feels fast and it feels overwhelming. But in many cases, lots of the issues we're talking about are issues that we know really well through our lived experience, through our clinical practice, through our research, and there are issues that touch our lives on an ongoing basis. So we can advocate for this moment, but we're also connecting to the other pieces that we have been educating about over time and the system pieces that we know aren't working well and really bringing that together.

Are there other questions?

>> SARAH MUELLER: Rylin, I know this is going to be in our next Disability Policy News, but could you speak now about the impact on the census?

>> RYLIN RODGERS: Yes. So that's a great question, and one that we're learning more about every day. Obviously this is an incredible challenge for pulling off the census. In order to get an accurate count, the Census Bureau relies on significant activities from community partners and it relies on temporary employees going and doing count door to door. So two things have been tremendous barriers at this moment. Most of the traditional community partners that do census work have been fully engaged in meeting their community needs related to this emergency. So their capacity to deal with the census has been limited and we also don't have good information or a crystal ball to know will it be safe for temporary census workers to go door to door and do counts in our country.

What we know is that the Census Bureau is doing some planful reorganization of their community partnerships. They are putting new resources in and they're sort of launching a new plan that we'll have more details about in the next two weeks.

To this point, we are hearing that they plan to continue the census. It's really an opportunity for those of us that got our census forms in the mail, many of us have some extra time in our homes and so now is a great time to be answering that form. And also reaching out to your networks of other folks. You need a break from all things coronavirus, reaching out and connecting about the census forms is a way to elevate the count.

But definitely more to come about how it's going to be handled over time, if there's going to be an extension, what the logistics will be.

>> SARAH MUELLER: One last question, Rylin, and then we can continue on. How confident do you feel that there will be a package 4 and what are Opportunities for Impact from our network to be engaging in those process and signing letters to send to Congress?

>> RYLIN RODGERS: So it feels like a lot there. I'm as confident as I've ever been about anything that there will be a package 4. Largely because there is a growing awareness that we don't yet fully understand what the needs are and what the impact is. And that this is moving quickly and Congress is reacting to things in front of them, but it is growing in their understanding of other needs.

So I think there will be a package 4. I think there probably will be a 5 and a 6. I think we're a long way from the end of the emergency congressional response. I think the piece that is going to get trickier about how fast these next packages come is how does Congress continue to function with quarantines and members of Congress and their staff having the virus.

So that's the biggest piece of unknown about the future packages, but they are definitely coming. I think the question about how -- what do we do and how do we best advocate is really our collective work. The good news is that many of you have been engaged in building relationships with policymakers over time. We have seen those relationships really pay huge dividends because we're getting great questions from staff that are trying to understand what is happening and what do people with disabilities need?

We're in a great position to help inform and educate members of Congress and their staff about what the needs are and direct them. There was a great part of that question about what letters can we sign. I have to say that some of the overwhelming work that has happened in the last number of days have been the remarkable work of lots of our coalition partners and the number of letters that are going out. It's a lot and we are actively reviewing and suggesting and adding language to and looking at coalition to make sure each and every issue has comprehensive letters that have lots of organizations signed on. So that piece is happening. I think what I anticipate happening after we get through phase 3 is you all get an action alert from the AC Network letting you know what's happened in phase 3 and letting you know what is still left so you're able to go back and educate your members of Congress and their staff about the next steps. And that process will probably continue back and forth. It's also incredibly helpful for us to hear from you about what the unmet needs are and growing needs are in the community.

I got great input from our network, all sorts of interesting really concrete, these are critical emergency needs and also these are things that we see coming that we're able to meet if we had additional funding, and continuing that conversation as a network is going to be helpful in moving forward.

So keep your questions coming. And we'll go on to dive in.

Another topic that we have been engaged in learning about and advocating for is that we're hearing from clinical practitioners all over the country, particularly in areas of the country that have large numbers of individuals who are symptomatic and need hospital care, that they need guidance on what they see as a coming ethical challenge related to not having enough supplies or resources to care for everyone who needs it. This is really, frankly, upsetting idea to consider, but it is a reality that we have seen in other countries around the globe and it is likely a reality that it is coming here.

So it's been important for us, again, to remember the history of disability rights and human rights and civil rights for people with disabilities in our country and to remember the lessons of that history and raise issues to talk about what the needs are to be sure that people with disabilities are not disproportionately denied care because they have a disability. And so we have been engaged in lots of conversations about this issue with legislators and with agencies. So members of presidential administration and leadership in agencies are asking for feedback and questions and research guidance and what has gone before.

To date there has been a couple of action steps that AUCD has been engaged with. Councilman Chris Smith, who is a Republican from New Jersey, led a letter to Secretary Azar and Attorney General Barr asking for guidance on care and making sure that there was not discrimination for those with disabilities as part of the standards of care during the outbreak. Happening today is a similar letter from champions in the Senate that will go to the Office of Civil Rights elevating it as a civil rights issue.

We did also hear from the Office of Civil Rights that this is on their radar screen and that they anticipate being active and engaged. I think the quote was that we are not ending the civil rights of people with disabilities because there is a public health emergency.

I don't think that is enough of a comfort to folks that are actively worried about it, but I think it's helpful to know that there is ongoing advocacy around these issues and that it's happening on a bipartisan basis from leaders at all levels.

It's also helpful to know that there is quite a lot of communication around this. There have been multiple op-eds and opinion pieces raising this in part of the public discourse.

I point to those and to these congressional letters as yet another way for you to have the ability to educate and share on multiple levels.

If you are in a position where you're hearing from a hospital systems ethics board that they're diving into the conversation, it may be helpful to share back both what is happening in the media and what is happening from congressional champions to be a part of the conversation.

It's a very real and concerning conversation and deeply personal to many of us, so I think that I want folks to know that while they will not be seeing a law about it tonight as part of whatever phase package comes out, there is really active work trying to address this and move this forward. At the same time there's active work happening in states and hospital systems to desperately attempt to get the resources that they need so that they are not in a position to have to make rational choices.

So all of that comes together in a slide that if I had a red pen I would like to encourage you to join us now and tomorrow and next day. And likely the day after that.

But this is actually Disability Policy Seminar. We were all supposed to be together here in Washington having this conversation in person. Part of Disability Policy Seminar is a day

spent on the Hill educating members of Congress and their staff about the needs of the disability community, educating members of Congress and their staff about the work of the AUCD's network, the tremendous expertise and resources that our network has to offer as they're dealing with the toughest policy decisions of our time. I'm thrilled to say that even though we're not doing that in Washington, we're doing it and we're doing it now. Many have transitioned in-person meetings into phone meetings. If you have not been able to do that, we encourage you to transition your in-person meetings into email meetings. And we also encourage you to elevate the conversation via social media.

When I said my red pen would be tonight, tomorrow and the next day, I would not limit your education and advocacy around the issues that we're having a conversation about today until tomorrow.

This evening is actually going to be a critical time. Members of the Senate and the House are coming to those final five yards on a football field to get into the end zone on this package. Often it is the final voices of advocacy that nudge something one way or the other. I always talk about it as the value of being at the top of the pile. It's not too late to work hard to get some of the pressing needs into the current package, and the work of this advocacy will move forward into the next package.

So we encourage you to engage in our Virtual Hill Day. We encourage you to also elevate it, to share it on social media. We traditionally, here when Disability Policy Seminar is happening in Washington, the DPS hashtag becomes a trending hashtag on Twitter. I would love for it to be a trending hashtag on Twitter this year throughout the United States, because it's a real chance for the disability community to speak up. I will highlight there is an additional hashtag that the disability community is using to advocate in this space and it's #WhatWeNeed so when posting on social media about the ethical questions of rationing or more dollars to go to home and community-based services or paid leave to include sibling caregivers, those issues using the Disability Policy Seminar and the DPS2020 hashtag are what we need to be critical pieces.

I'm going to take a deep breath because I would be remiss if we only talked about the coronavirus, even though it's hard to think about a world where we're engaged in other kinds of policy, we do know there will be opportunities based in the future to really circle back to some of the critical issues we've been working on in the 116th Congress and we're preparing to work on in the 117th Congress. We wanted to share those with you today and really think about it. It is helpful to see the overlap in sort of those other issues and what is happening in the current emergency response conversation, and you see the overlap in the number-one issue in the slide here is the home community-based settings infrastructure act. You heard me talk about there has been tremendous advocacy and the House bill is significant language and dollars related to more home community-based settings services.

So it's a real indication that we laid the groundwork and had these follow-up conversations. Also really notable that one of those pieces about the home community-based settings, that hospital rule that we've all been dealing with for a number of years is currently in both the Senate and House bill. So likely to be part of the package that we see tonight. So that is a tremendous step forward.

The other piece that we have been working on for quite some time is trying to get to permanent reauthorization from Money Follows the Person and spousal impoverishment, again, issues that were in both packages because those issues have to be addressed as an ongoing solution in this crisis and emergency. So knowing that there is lots of overlap in how disability policy works in this time and there will be a point to come back from these conversations that are very intense right now related to what is happening and think about what other systems we have to go forward.

So I wondered if there -- I think we have time for a question or two before we move on to some other ways for you to stay engaged and up to date.

>> SARAH MUELLER: Rylin, I will add a question around the last slide regarding appropriations as today's episode of Tuesdays with Liz was you.

>> RYLIN RODGERS: Yeah, sorry for everybody who has seen a lot of me on video today. That has been -- that's a great question because it's been a little bit of an odd time because we are still completing the regular appropriations cycle, getting sign-on letters and asking our health champions to make sure that funds for LENDs and UCEDD and IDRC and programs and projects of national significance, the priorities you can find all the details to ask for on our policy page, that those are moving forward for a September or later package. It is a little bit interesting because some of those pieces may get funded in some of those relief packages and there may be extra money for some of those programs in the relief packages.

I think the biggest worry about appropriations going forward is where are we in terms of our economy and our federal budget when we get past this crisis, and what will that mean for the systems that are critical all the time?

What we have been spending a lot of time talking about is helping members of Congress know that one of the reasons LENDs and UCEDDs and the researchers that are so critical and funded by our RDCs are there to respond to an emergency is because we need a system when it's not an emergency. So we're hopeful that we'll be able to continue to be successful with appropriations. It's fair when you are sending thank you notes about these emergency packages to also talk about the appropriations request for next year. I think it's also important to understand that members of Congress and their staff are overwhelmed. They're as overwhelmed or more overwhelmed than the rest of us, and so their ability to answer or think about appropriations in some of the ways we've done in the past is less. But I will say the work is continuing and we think because of the election year that we'll probably get to a final appropriations package in the lame-duck, which is the time that Congress comes back into session after the election in November but before the new Congress is sworn in in January. So it's great to think about and reminding members that the information that we have in the systems that we have are some important and we need to invest in them all the time, not just in an emergency.

So I'm going to pivot and ask Liz to remind us of Disability Policy News and Tuesdays with Liz and all the ways that you can continue to be engaged with AUCD in these policy conversations.

>> LIZ WEINTRAUB: Thank you, Rylin, for a wonderful informative presentation.

As Rylin said, there are four ways to communicate and keep in touch with AUCD as well as just get Disability Policy News. One is Disability Policy News. That comes out on Monday mornings. One of my favorite things on that is it's in plain language as well as what we call language, so it's great for self-advocates people with disability as well as people who are not as familiar with policy.

So please sign up for that.

Tuesdays with Liz, which is a video that comes out on Tuesday, and Rylin just mentioned that she was the guest this week.

We have a blog called Policy Talk. Please look for that if you're interested in writing a blog, you can be in touch with Sarah or Rylin about that. We're always looking for blog submissions. And also follow us on social media with Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

So, thanks. And I'll turn it over to Sarah.

>> SARAH MUELLER: Go ahead, Rylin.

>> RYLIN RODGERS: I thought we lost Sarah. Thanks, Liz. I did want to tell everybody about the policy blog. We had a late breaking policy blog come out over the weekend where John Tschida, our acting executive director did a dive into the policy needs and the advocacy needs around the COVID-19 response. It's a great blog and I encourage you to think about using it as part of the information you share and educate members of Congress.

If you're not currently getting Disability Policy News, you can sign up for it on AUCD's website. Also happy to follow up and connect with both Sarah or I via email to get you on other listservs. We are grateful that you all took some time to engage with us today.

As we mentioned, this will be archived, so that you can come back and listen to it.

And all of the resources to advocate and educate around the current prices are on our DPS2020 virtual page, so you have lots of talking points and resources there, including a really great training that was largely designed by our emerging leader interns that we did yesterday. And they have a fantastic tool to map out your elevator speech. So if you have a phone call with a member of Congress or staff tomorrow and you want a planning tool for that call, we've got one for you.

So happy to engage and look forward to hearing from you and to hearing -- in particular hearing what you're hearing back from members of Congress and their staff and hearing about needs you're identifying in your communities.

So thanks, everyone, and have a great day. Stay safe and healthy!

>> LIZ WEINTRAUB: Bye!