



**CONSORTIUM FOR CITIZENS
WITH DISABILITIES**

Health Task Force 2016 Report

The CCD Health Task Force works on all the issues encompassed in the very broad term "health". Specific emphasis is placed on private health insurance, public programs such as Medicaid and Medicare, including managed care, as well as quality assurance and consumer education and protections. Our major work for 2016 is highlighted by subject below. We know that 2017 will present new and serious challenges and following a summary of our prior work, we briefly discuss our plans for 2017.

Affordable Care Act:

CCD continues to monitor the implementation of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), providing an ongoing voice for people with disabilities and chronic conditions. During 2016, the Health Task Force commented on regulations and provided input to federal agencies, Congress and the White House about how the law is functioning and how the process could be improved for people with disabilities and chronic conditions.

The focus of the Health Task Force is to work toward better access and quality health outcomes for people with disabilities. This goal takes a range of forms, including monitoring regulatory action to ensure the ACA functions well in the real world and aims to fulfill the promises made for insurance market reforms, strong structure of benefits, costs that remain affordable, and strong Medicaid and Medicare program expansions. A critical issue for the Health Task Force continues to be supporting federal and state efforts to ensure that the essential health benefits package covers critical benefits for people with disabilities such as behavioral health services, habilitation services and durable medical equipment, prosthetics and orthotics as well as supplies.

The Health Task Force has taken the lead on submitting comments from the disability community on . Comments and contributions in 2015 include:

October 6, 2016

- CCD Comments on the 2018 Notice of Benefits and Payment Parameters

October 25, 2016

- CCD Open Enrollment Flyer for members to use regarding the open enrollment period for the health plans authorized by the ACA

December 12, 2016

- CCD Letter Opposing Repeal of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) to Senators
- CCD Fact Sheet: People with Disabilities Benefit from the Affordable Care Act

Medicaid/Medicare:

The Health Task Force remains focused on monitoring potential changes to the Medicare and Medicaid programs. With the numbers of people utilizing the programs growing and the discussion of cost containment unrelenting, these programs are increasingly vulnerable. The Task Force focused legislatively this year, responding to Congressional proposals and requests. We also continue consistent work to protect Medicaid funding and to increase reimbursement of providers. Deficit reduction discussions have focused on the cost and efficiency of the Medicaid program, creating a forum for the discussion of structural changes. CCD continues to oppose efforts to utilize per capita caps or to block grant Medicaid.

As reducing cost and improving efficiency has moved to the forefront of concerns, Medicaid managed care has become a reality in most states. Relying on the set of principles and recommendations developed previously to assist the discussion about transitioning people with disabilities into Medicaid managed care, the Health Task Force has remained committed to keeping the quality of care in the center of those discussions.

Communications on protecting and strengthening the Medicaid and Medicare programs have been directed to the Center on Medicare and Medicaid Services, Congress and the White House in response to budget proposals and other efforts to cut or change the funding of these integral programs. Comments and contributions in 2016 include:

January 8, 2016

- CCD Health Task Force commented on the request for information regarding what additional data sources and approaches could be used to determine whether access to care is sufficient
- CCD Health Task Force submitted comments on the final rule for information relating to access to care in the Medicaid program

February 1, 2016

- Joint CCD Health and Long Term Services and Supports Task Forces recommendations to the Senate Finance Committee regarding policy options to improve care for people with chronic health conditions in the Medicare program

June 27, 2016

- CCD Health Task Force provided comments on the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking regarding the Merit-based Incentive Payment System and Alternative Payment Model under the Physician Fee Schedule in the Medicare program

August 5, 2016

- Comments to Senate Finance Committee in Support of and with Additional Proposals for the Medicare Affordability and Enrollment Act of 2016

National Health Interview Survey:

CCD Health Task Force continued to track potential changes to the National Health Interview Survey, including changes that would eliminate some of the disability questions.

June 30, 2016

- CCD Health Task Force provided comments on the proposed redesign of the National Health Interview Survey.

November 7, 2016

- CCD Health Task Force submitted comments on the redesign of the National Health Interview Survey urging them to maintain key disability related questions.

Other Comments:

January 28, 2016

- CCD comments in response to the EEOC's proposed rule to modify its current rules implementing the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act (GINA) and authorize workplace wellness programs to impose large penalties on employees' covered spouses who decline to disclose disability related information

March 29, 2016

- Joint CCD Health Task Force and Developmental Disabilities, Autism, and Family Support Task Force letter thanking the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) for directing Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Program carriers not to exclude coverage of applied behavior analysis (ABA) for the treatment of autism spectrum disorders in the 2017 plan year

Anticipated 2017 Priorities:

- Monitor and counter legislative attempts to repeal the ACA
 - o Pending continuance of the ACA
 - continue to track ongoing operation and improve function of the ACA policies and exchanges through the federal and state legislative and regulatory processes;
 - Monitor changes to the ACA made by the federal agencies and the court system;
 - Support the ongoing development of Medicaid expansion programs in states and monitor those that are in place to ensure that quality is not reduced in the expansion;
- Protect the Medicare, Medicaid, and CHIP programs from efforts to block grant or make other structural changes and budget cuts; and
- Monitor the Medicare DMEPOS program for gaps in access, service and quality.

Co-Chairs:

Peter Thomas, Brain Injury Association of America

Julie Ward, The Arc of the United States

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