



**CONSORTIUM FOR CITIZENS  
WITH DISABILITIES**

September 26, 2017

Dear Senator:

The undersigned Co-Chairs of the Technology and Telecommunications Task Force of the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD) write to express our strong opposition to the Graham-Cassidy-Heller-Johnson (GCHJ) proposal.

The Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD) is the largest coalition of national organizations working together to advocate for Federal public policy that ensures the self-determination, independence, empowerment, integration, and inclusion of children and adults with disabilities in all aspects of society. The Technology and Telecommunications Task Force focuses on national policy regarding matters of telecommunications and technology, including assistive technology, in order to help move society toward our ultimate goal of full inclusion for all people with a disability.

Similar to previous proposals, GCHJ would make huge cuts to and place caps on the Medicaid program, end the Medicaid expansion and marketplace subsidies in the Affordable Care Act, and allow states to waive protections for people with pre-existing conditions. As a result, GCHJ would have a devastating impact on people with disabilities who rely on assistive technology for their independence and wellbeing. These include people like [Maggie Breschi](#) featured in the short video at right who uses assistive technology for mobility and basic communication.



Approximately 10 million people with disabilities depend on critical products and services provided by Medicaid. For decades, Medicaid has helped people with disabilities of all ages have access to home- and community-based services (HCBS) that allow them to live in their communities instead of more costly and unwanted institutions.

Under the proposed per capita cap (PCC) model in the GCHJ proposal the federal contribution will decline dramatically. Current estimates are that this proposal will result in a cut of more than \$1 trillion to the traditional Medicaid program over 20 years.

Presently, Medicaid is by far the largest public funding source for assistive technology. The program covers assistive technology under several categories in both institutional and HCBS settings. Unfortunately, the vast majority of the HCBS coverage categories are “optional.” In addition, much of the assistive technology that is presently provided falls under a subset of optional

services known as “waiver” services, which further limits their availability because states cap the number of individuals in each waiver program.

With the significant loss of federal funding that the GCHJ proposal would bring, combined with the existing institutional bias in the Medicaid program, we expect states to severely curtail or outright eliminate coverage for assistive technology in HCBS settings. This will force many people with disabilities to make the awful choice between having the assistive technology that they need and living in an institution, a choice no American should ever have to make.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact one of the CCD Technology and Telecommunications Task Force Co-Chairs: Eric Buehlmann, [eric.buehlmann@ndrn.org](mailto:eric.buehlmann@ndrn.org); Mark Richert, [4justice@concentric.net](mailto:4justice@concentric.net); Audrey Busch, [audrey.busch@ataporg.org](mailto:audrey.busch@ataporg.org); or Michael Brogioli, [mbroglioli@resna.org](mailto:mbroglioli@resna.org).

Sincerely,

Mark Richert, American Foundation for the Blind  
Audrey Busch, Association for Assistive Technology Act Programs  
Michael Brogioli, Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society of North America  
Eric Buehlmann, National Disability Rights Network