



Week of August 10, 2015

Action Alerts

[Honor the Legacy of Social Security, Medicaid, and the Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\)](#)

Major Events Ahead

Congressional Schedule - Due to August Recess Next Capitol Insider to be Sent Out in September

Both the House and the Senate remain in recess this month. Members are due to return September 7, 2015. With that in mind, the next edition of Capitol Insider will be posted in early September.

In the meantime, we encourage you to follow [@TheArcUS](#) on Twitter, visit The Arc Capitol Insider Blog, as well as The Arc's Facebook page for up to date information related to federal policy.

Other ways to get involved:

- Check out our [Advocacy Toolkit](#) to learn about the issues and how you can get involved.
- Attend a public event hosted by your Member of Congress. Reach out to your Member's in-state office to find out when you might catch them in person, and follow them on Facebook and Twitter in case they post updates on events.

Tell us about your experience. Email lifeline@thearc.org with feedback!

Social Security - Celebrating Our Lifeline in August, The Arc Issues New National Policy Matters

As The Arc celebrates Social Security's 80th anniversary this August, we kick off the month by marking the 59th anniversary of Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI). Signed into law on August 1, 1956 by President Dwight D. Eisenhower, SSDI insures nearly all American workers and their families in the event of life-changing disabilities. Without SSDI, millions of people with significant disabilities - including people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) - would face financial dire straits and often unthinkable choices. Learn more about SSDI and the action that we need Congress to take to maintain this lifeline on The Arc's blog and in a new edition of National Policy Matters, *Social Security and SSI for People with I/DD and Their Families*. This edition of National Policy Matters explores how Social Security, SSI and related health insurance under Medicare and Medicaid operate, the vital support they provide, and current policy proposals that may impact people with I/DD and their families

Social Security - Bill Introduced to Cut Concurrent SSDI, Unemployment Benefits

Sen. David Vitter (R-LA) has introduced S. 2005, a bill to cut benefits for Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) beneficiaries who have attempted to work, but lost their job through no fault of their own and as a result, qualify for Unemployment Insurance (UI). The Arc has joined with over 70 national organizations to strongly oppose such cuts. SSDI and UI are separate insurance programs established for different purposes, paid for by workers and their employers. Receipt of concurrent SSDI and UI benefits, while rare, is both legal and appropriate. Cutting these benefits would harm the economic security of SSDI beneficiaries and their families and would single out SSDI beneficiaries, treating them differently from other workers under the UI program. It would also create new disincentives to work for SSDI beneficiaries by punishing beneficiaries who try to work with benefit cuts if they lose a job through no fault of their own. For these reasons, The Arc strongly opposes S. 2005 and any similar proposals.

Housing -- Eleanor Smith Inclusive Home Design Act of 2015 Introduced

Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) has introduced the Eleanor Smith Inclusive Home Design Act (H.R. 3260). The bill would require all newly constructed, federally assisted, single-family houses and town houses to meet minimum standards of visitability for persons with disabilities. Visitability is a set of construction standards through which housing offers a few specific accessibility features making it possible for people with disabilities to visit friends, family, and neighbors. The Arc strongly supports the adoption of visitability standards to promote communities that are welcoming and inclusive for people with disabilities.

Regulations and Program Announcements

Technology - Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services Issues Final Decision Memorandum on Speech Generating Devices

On July 29, 2015, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) issued a final decision memorandum related to coverage of speech generating devices. These devices fall within the Medicare durable medical equipment (DME) benefit category. The memorandum was issued to address significant advances in technology since 2001, when the previous benefit coverage determination was issued. Fortunately, CMS determined that devices that generate speech will still be considered DME even though they can perform other functions (such as email and text messages), as long as they are “used solely by the patient with the severe speech impairment and are used primarily for the generation of speech.” Unfortunately, however, the memorandum excludes coverage for computers, tablets, and similar devices used in conjunction with speech generating applications as they “are not primarily used for a medical purpose and are useful in the absence of an illness or injury and therefore, do not meet the definition of DME.” Disability advocates had sought coverage of computers, tablets, and similar devices because they are less expensive and easier to use than many speech generating devices. Read the memorandum [here](#).