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BACKGROUND

Long Term Supports and Services: The federal/state Medicaid program is the major—often only—source of funding for long term supports and services (LTSS) that many people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) rely on to live in the community. This effective and cost-efficient program is critical to people with IDD, making it possible for them to live and work in their communities with family and friends.

Home and Community-Based Services: The term LTSS includes both facility-based services and home and community-based services (HCBS). HCBS include assistance with living independently, getting around the community, employment supports, and other daily activities. Unfortunately, many states have long waiting lists for Medicaid HCBS. People wait an average of three years to access these essential services. Many states are also facing workforce crises because Medicaid does not pay direct care workers a living wage.

ISSUES

The Better Care Better Jobs Act (S. 2210 and H.R. 4131): It is long past time to invest in HCBS and address these waiting lists and raise wages for direct care workers. The Better Care Better Jobs Act would invest billions of dollars in the HCBS system, reducing waiting lists and increasing wages for direct care workers. Significant investments are needed to preserve and expand access to services and address the crisis in the workforce. The workforce crisis, including low wages and increased turnover, has been exacerbated by COVID. In many states, insufficient state Medicaid reimbursement rates do not allow an adequate response to these urgent needs, making a federal response even more critical.

The Money Follows the Person (MFP) Program: MFP provides additional federal Medicaid funding for transitional services for individuals who wish to leave a nursing home or other institution. While the program was reauthorized for an additional three years, funding has been allowed to expire. States need the program to be stable into

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FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT

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the future—without that certainty, some states have closed their MFP programs or may in the future. MFP should be made permanent as soon as possible.

Eliminate the Institutional Bias in Medicaid: The COVID-19 pandemic has shown the public health danger of large congregate settings, but because HCBS are optional in Medicaid, many people with disabilities cannot access them and are stuck on waiting lists. The institutional bias also means that people are stuck living in one state because they might not be able to access the right services in another state or would have to go onto a waiting list if they moved. Congress should make HCBS mandatory and reverse the institutional bias.

Housing: Medicaid provides essential services and supports, but by law typically cannot pay for a person's rent or mortgage payment. Programs operated by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) help make housing affordable (through rent subsidies) and help create new, affordable, accessible housing. These include Section 811 Project Rental Assistance, Mainstream Vouchers, and other Housing Choice Vouchers. Even with these programs, the need for affordable, accessible housing for people with disabilities is far greater than the availability.

WHAT SHOULD CONGRESS DO?

- Congress must pass the **Better Care Better Jobs Act** (S.2210, H.R. 4131).
- Congress should make the **Money Follows the Person Program** permanent.
- Congress should **end the institutional bias** in Medicaid.
- Congress should **invest in affordable and accessible housing**.

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