

July 29, 2011

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CELEBRATING THE 21ST ANNIVERSARY OF THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

By Assistant Secretary for Aging Kathy Greenlee

Today is the 21st anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). In 2009, the President announced the Year of Community Living, signaling this Administration's commitment to addressing isolation and discrimination against people with disabilities that still exists today. Since then, HHS created the Community Living Initiative to advance the directive of the Olmstead decision.

I am committed to collaborating with people with disabilities and their advocates. Today, I am proud to announce two grant awards to support community living across the lifespan – six new Lifespan Respite Care Program grants and the Accelerating Participant Direction Philosophy and Models in the Aging Network Project. I believe it is only fitting that this announcement is made on the 21st anniversary of the ADA.

The first grant of more than \$1.1 million goes to six states to implement the Lifespan Respite Care Program in order to reduce family caregiver strain and increase the ability of a caregiver to continue to provide essential care. Grant awards were made to Colorado, Hawaii, Montana, New Jersey, Ohio and Virginia to expand and enhance respite care services to family caregivers of children or adults of all ages with special needs. Grantees will also strengthen statewide dissemination and coordination of respite care, improve access to respite programs and enhance the quality of respite care services.

These six states join 24 others that have received grants since 2009, all of which are working to improve the availability and quality of respite services across the lifespan.

The second grant of \$2.25 million goes to The Trustees of Boston College's National Resource Center for Participant Direct Services (NRCPPDS). This grant is an investment to help strengthen our commitment toward providing services based on both the needs and preferences of those we serve. The three-year grant, Accelerating Participant Direction Philosophy and Models in the Aging Network, was awarded to the former Cash and Counseling Demonstration and Evaluation National Program Office, which has expertise in consumer direction and consumer-directed services.

The goal of this grant is to develop core competencies for job occupations that deliver home and community-based services, including competencies necessary to provide consumer direction and development of an environment that supports consumer direction and person-centered planning. Products over the next three years include workforce competencies by job category, assessment tools and an extensive resource training guide.

These are just two recent efforts in our greater strategy to ensure the promise of the Olmstead decision and community living for all. I hope you will join me in celebrating the promise of the ADA signed 21 years ago and continue to celebrate this victory for civil rights.

FROM THE ADMINISTRATION

White House

President Obama Proclaims the Anniversary of the ADA

July 26, 2011

Tuesday marked the 21st anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which was signed into law on July 26, 1990. To commemorate the occasion, [President Obama issued a Proclamation honoring the ADA's 21st Anniversary](#) on July 25. Recognizing the need to build upon the steps already taken to achieve the promise of the ADA to level the playing field for employment of Americans with disabilities, on July 26, President Obama [announced new efforts by his Administration](#) to increase employment opportunities for persons with disabilities by drafting a strategic plan to improve compliance with [Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act](#), which requires federal agencies to maintain electronic and information technology, such as websites, in a manner that ensures these portals are accessible to people with disabilities.

Federal Judge Rules in Favor of Stem Cell Research

July 27, 2011

On Wednesday, a federal judge ruled in favor of the government in a lawsuit challenging the Obama Administration's work to support stem cell research. This research may lead to treatment or cures for diseases such as Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, and heart disease. President Obama signed an Executive Order in 2009 which removed barriers to responsible scientific research involving human stem cells.

Scientists and experts in the private sector and at the National Institutes of Health have been investigating new responsible research opportunities with stem cell lines that adhere to the new guidelines, but were not available to experts under restrictions from the previous Administration.

More information on this decision can be found [here](#).

Health and Human Services

HHS Secretary Sebelius Marks the Anniversary of the ADA

To celebrate the anniversary of the passage of the ADA, HHS Secretary Sebelius released a statement on Tuesday highlighting several initiatives the Obama Administration has recently undertaken to fulfill the ADA's goals of ensuring "equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency" for all Americans with disabilities. Specifically, the Secretary referenced the recent announcement by CMS regarding the availability of \$2.1 million in [Real Choice Systems Change grants](#); as well as the opportunity for the public to comment on both the [draft regulations for the Affordable Insurance Exchanges](#), and the [new draft standards for collecting and reporting data on disability status](#).

The HHS Advisory Committee on Minority Health Releases New Report

The HHS Advisory Committee on Minority Health (ACMH) released a new report, [Assuring Health Equity for Minority Persons with Disabilities: A Statement of Principles and Recommendations](#), in which it highlights the unique challenges facing minorities with disabilities, including lack of culturally competent care and limited data and research on health inequities among this population. To address and overcome these barriers, the ACMH recommends that HHS implement strategies to raise awareness of the health inequities that persons with disabilities experience; that disability be considered a fundamental component of cultural competency for health professionals; that competency be required for all health care providers and professionals; that Congress improve research and data collection on minorities with disabilities; and that federal agencies with influence on health care providers examine strategies to ensure a workforce that provides high quality care for people with disabilities. To learn more about the Committee, please follow [this link](#).

HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius today announced \$71.3 million in grants to expand nursing education, training and diversity.

July 29, 2011

Nursing workforce development programs, reauthorized by the Affordable Care Act and administered by HHS' Health Resources and Services Administration, are the primary source of federal funding for nursing education and workforce development. These programs bolster nursing education at all levels, from entry-level preparation through the development of advanced practice nurses. They also prepare faculty to teach the nation's future nursing workforce.

"These awards reflect the critical role of nurses in our healthcare system, and our ongoing commitment to attract and retain highly-skilled nurses in the profession," said Secretary Sebelius.

Administration on Aging

AoA Awards Six New Lifespan Respite Grants

July 26, 2011

On July 26, AoA announced the availability of \$1.1 million in Lifespan Respite Grants to six new states including Colorado, Hawaii, Montana, New Jersey, Ohio, and Virginia. These grantees join the twenty-four states that have received grants since 2009, all of whom are working to improve the availability and quality of respite services across the lifespan. Notably, AoA plans to announce Expansion Supplement Grants to several of the 2009 and 2010 grantees to enable them to expand work already underway through the direct provision of respite services. For more information about the implementation of the Lifespan Respite Care Program, and to learn more about the key activities of each of the grantees, please visit AoA's Lifespan Respite Care Program web portal.

Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services

External Stakeholders Meeting for the *Survey of Retail Prices: Payment and Utilization Rates, and Performance Rankings Contract*

July 26, 2011

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) will host a stakeholders meeting on Part II of the *Survey of Retail Prices: Payment and Utilization Rates, and Performance Rankings* contract that went into effect in July 2011. The meeting will be held August 4, 2011 at CMS's central office in Baltimore, Maryland from 9:00 am-12:00 pm EDT.

You may register for the meeting by:

- Registering for in-person attendance. There will be approximately 100 slots for in-person attendance. Please note that attendance may be limited to one representative per organization.
- Registering for a call-in attendance. Phone lines will be provided for those who would prefer to call into the meeting. There will be an opportunity for you to ask questions during the questions and answers session.

If you are interested in attending this meeting, contact Joseph Fine at 410-786-2128 or joseph.fine@cms.hhs.gov before 4:00 pm August 1, 2011.

More information can be found [here](#).

The Affordable Care Act Will Lead to Slight Spending Increase

July 28, 2011

Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) released a report that indicates that the Affordable Care Act will drive up health care spending slightly, to nearly one fifth of the country's GDP by 2020, and will extend insurance coverage to 30 million more Americans. The report also indicates, as an aftershock of the recession, that once all the data are in, health spending in 2010 will have grown at a historically low rate - 3.9 percent.

The report does not count the estimated savings the Obama administration believes could be realized by the ACA's overhaul of medical payment and delivery systems, including medical homes, accountable care organizations, and comparative effectiveness research.

The report, and more information, can be found [here](#).

Corporation for National and Community Service

September 11 Service Challenge

September 11 has been designated the Day of Service and Remembrance. In keeping with the spirit of this day and in keeping with the upcoming 10th anniversary, the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) recently announced its September 11 Service Challenge. Through this challenge, CNCS will award up to \$500,000 to 10 to 15 groups in order to encourage organizations to expand participation in the 10th anniversary of September 11, 2001 and to fund service activities for future September 11 Days of Service and Remembrance. The challenge is open to all 53 state service commissions to increase their capacity to carry out 9/11 activities this year.

More information on this challenge is available [here](#).

Disability.gov

Employer Resource Guide

Disability.gov released a new employer resource guide for public and private employers, human resource personnel, hiring managers and supervisors. It has information about laws that prohibit employment discrimination, job accommodations, tax incentives and where to find qualified candidates with disabilities.

The guide can be found [here](#).

Social Security Administration

Social Security Reduced Office Hours

The Social Security Administration announced on Wednesday that starting August 15, 2011, the Social Security field offices will close 30 minutes early each day. The Social Security offices that are usually open to the public Monday through Friday from 9am to 4pm will now close at 3:30 pm.

Reducing hours will allow SSA employees, who will continue to work their regular hours, to complete face-to-face service activities like interviews without using overtime. In FY 2011, the funding is nearly \$1 billion less than the President's budget requested.

Between easy-to-use services online at www.socialsecurity.gov and the toll-free number at 1-800-772-1213 and TTY number at 1-800-325-0778, or through mail, virtually all services can be offered without a face-to-face meeting.

FROM CONGRESS

Resolution Designates November 16, 2011 as "National Information and Referral Services Day"

July 27, 2011

U.S. Senators Robert Menendez (D-NJ) and Patty Murray (D-WA) announced on Wednesday that they are introducing a resolution designating November 16, 2011 as "National Information and Referral Services Day." The resolution aims to raise public awareness and increase utilization of information and referral services. For example, calling 2-1-1 in many communities allows individuals who need critical health and human services, including food, shelter, health care, or counseling, to be referred to the appropriate community resource.

"Especially in this current economic crisis, information and referral services can be a lifeline to provide critical assistance to families across New Jersey and the nation," said Senator

Menendez. "I am proud to introduce this resolution to recognize their important role and encourage communities to promote these services."

"Connecting families with information and referral services is so important, especially as so many of them continue to struggle to get the support they need in these tough economic times," said Senator Patty Murray. "That's why I have championed federal efforts to expand information and referral services across America. And I am proud to cosponsor this resolution with Senator Menendez to highlight the important role these critical services play across the country."

The resolution can be read [here](#).

Debt Negotiations in the House

While a clear path for resolving the stalemate in Congress has yet to emerge, earlier this week, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) and House Speaker John Boehner (R-Ohio) released dueling plans for moving forward. Last night, the House leadership postponed a scheduled vote on Boehner's bill, after failing to convince enough Republicans in the lower chamber to support the measure. In efforts to secure the necessary votes, House leaders announced Friday their plans to tweak the bill for a third time, making a second debt limit increase conditional on congressional passage of a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution. With those changes, it seems increasingly likely that Boehner will be able to pass the legislation (S 627), with Democrats united in opposition, as the inclusion of the balanced budget amendment provision was the main point of contention in Thursday night's talks between GOP leaders and the holdouts. The House plans to vote on the bill Friday afternoon.

The original measure set up a two-stage process that would have immediately increased the debt limit by \$900 billion, while making \$917 billion in spending cuts over 10 years. A second chunk of \$1.6 trillion in borrowing authority would be contingent on enactment of a to-be-written \$1.8 trillion deficit reduction package, put together by a newly-established 12 member committee. That requirement has not been altered, even with the addition of the balanced budget provision. Senate Democrats, along with the White House have already said Boehner's original proposal was dead on arrival in the Senate, and the modifications to the plan will only make the measure more unpalatable in the Senate.

Debt Negotiations in the Senate

Senate Majority Leader Reid filed for cloture Friday on his own plan to raise the debt limit ([S 1323](#)), setting up a weekend vote. Reid's plan would raise the debt ceiling, in one step, by the full amount needed through 2012 and cut spending by \$2.2 trillion over 10 years. To implement deeper cuts, Reid proposes setting up a new 12-member panel of lawmakers to propose a sweeping array of changes to the tax code and entitlement programs.

Senate Republicans have not signed on to Reid's plan, though they have been involved in behind-the-scenes discussions about a potential compromise, and Reid has said that he is open

to alterations to his plan in order to secure GOP votes, which he would need to break a possible filibuster attempt. Currently, to win Republican support, Democrats are considering adding stronger trigger mechanisms to move forward the joint committee's recommendations. If the committee cannot reach agreement, one fail-safe under discussion could be directing Congress to cast an up-or-down vote on the Senate Gang of Six proposal, a \$3.7 trillion package.

Impact on States

Absent an agreement to raise the debt limit by August 2, the federal government will be unable to meet all of its financial obligations, likely forcing the government to choose which obligations it will pay, and which it will defer until the debt limit is raised. Depending on the choices made, states are likely to feel the impact of reduced or delayed federal payments and reimbursements.

Unfortunately, according to a New York Times article published earlier this week, some states are already feeling the impact of a potential failure to raise the debt limit. Maryland postponed a bond sale after it was warned that its credit rating would probably be lowered in the event of a federal downgrade. California, which typically issues short-term bonds for cash-flow reasons at this time of year, is working to arrange bank loans instead, citing the market uncertainty. Some state pension funds are worried that a default could erode the value of their investments, which are still recovering from losses during the recession.

While there is little certainty to guide the potential impact on states and localities, NASUAD has compiled a Question and Answer document that describes the debt ceiling and the possible implications for not increasing it.

FROM NASUAD

NASUAD Sends Debt Negotiation Recommendations to Congress

July 27, 2011

As Congress works to finalize a framework for achieving deficit reduction and increasing the nation's borrowing authority, NASUAD continues to urge lawmakers to protect programs and services that allow older adults and individuals with disabilities maintain their dignity and independence. Earlier this week, NASUAD sent a letter to the House and Senate leadership, urging them to reject approaches that would shift costs to the states, or onto those who can least likely afford it. The letter is available [here](#).

FROM OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

National Legal Resource Center

NLRC Survey of Aging Service Professionals

The National Legal Resource Center launched a survey to determine what resources, programs, services, and training the center can provide to aging service professionals in order to help older Americans. The Resource Center provides in-depth substantive legal information and expertise, case consultation, technical support on legal service development, and senior legal hotlines and training on issues in law and aging to attorneys, advocates, and professionals in the fields of law and aging. Details on the programs and services of NLRC can be found [here](#).

The NLRC Aging Services Professional survey can be found [here](#). Data will be collected through August 31, 2011 and the information collected will shape the efforts of the NLRC in the coming year.

Alzheimer's Association

Alzheimer's Association 24/7 Helpline

The Alzheimer's Association launched a new 24/7 Helpline to provide reliable information and support to all of those who need assistance. The Helpline can be reached at any time at 1-800-272-3900.

The staff of the Helpline are highly trained and able to help with understanding memory loss, dementia, and Alzheimer's; medications and other treatment options; general information about aging and brain health; skills to provide quality care and to find the best care from professionals; and legal, financial, and living-arrangement decisions. Other features include confidential care consultation provided by clinicians who can help with decision-making support, crisis assistance, and education; help in a caller's preferred language including over 140 languages and dialects; and referrals to local community programs, services, and ongoing support.

The Helpline can be reached at 1-800-272-3900 or TDD at 1-866-403-3073.

For more information, visit the Alzheimer's Association website [here](#).

AARP

AARP Urges Senators to Support Budget Control Act of 2011 Introduced in Senate

July 28, 2011

As the U.S. Congress continues its consideration of legislation to grant the federal government additional borrowing authority, AARP Executive Vice President Nancy LeMond today sent a letter to members of the U.S. Senate urging their support for the Budget Control Act of 2011 introduced in the Senate. AARP members and other older Americans have been urging elected officials in both political parties to not cut Social Security and Medicare benefits as part of a deal to reduce the federal deficit.

The letter can be found [here](#).

Wider Opportunities for Women

Wider Opportunities for Women Leadership Transition

July 28, 2011

Wider Opportunities for Women (WOW) announced the transition plan following the resignation of the current Executive Director, Joan Kuriansky in September. The next Executive Director will be Donna Addkison. Donna currently serves as the Director of WOW's Family Economic Security Program (FES) and has a wealth of experience in the nonprofit, government, and private sectors. Prior to coming to WOW, she served the city of New Orleans as its Chief Development Officer, guiding the newly created Mayor's Office of Planning and Development. During her years in Louisiana, Donna was also the President and CEO of both the Chamber Southwest Louisiana and the Foundation Southwest Louisiana. She served as Vice President and City Executive for the Enterprise Corporation of Delta, campaign manager to U.S. Senator Mary Landrieu of Louisiana, and Deputy Chief of Staff/Special Assistant for Economic Development to former Governor Ronnie Musgrove of Mississippi.

As FES Director at WOW, Donna has provided strategic guidance to projects that target intergenerational economic security that include advocacy, organizing in and across states, research into multiple measures of income adequacy and public opinion. She oversees the technical assistance for advocates, service providers and partners across the country, and she also leads the wide range of GREEN Initiatives that WOW is undertaking.



I&R/A Training and AIRS Certification, September 12-13, Hyatt Regency Capitol Hill, Washington, DC

UPCOMING EVENTS FROM OUR PARTNERS

National Association of State Head Injury Administrators State of the States in Head Injury Meeting, October 3-6, 2011, Kansas City, MO.

National Association of Medicaid Directors Fall Conference, November 7-9, 2011, Washington, DC

Archived Friday Updates are available on NASUAD's website here.