

# **Update from Washington, DC**

## **Social Security, Medicaid and Where Things Stand**

The Arc of New Jersey,  
Annual Conference 2021

# Where We Are

The American Rescue Plan (passed March 11, 2021)

- 10% FMAP Bump for Medicaid HCBS
- Inclusion of DSP workforce as essential
- Stimulus Checks (including adult dependents)
- Additional funding for SNAP, Housing
- Continuation of the eviction moratorium
- Continuation and expansion of paid leave tax credits
- Improvements to Earned Income Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit

# Where We Are

Thank you!

Your advocacy made a  
difference!

# Where We Are

March 31, 2021: President Biden announces the American Jobs Plan

- \$400 billion investment in HCBS

April 28, 2021: President Biden announces the American Family Plan

- \$225 billion investment in paid leave
- \$225 billion investment in child care
- Continue expansion of the Earned Income Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit through 2025



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# Medicaid and HCBS

- Momentum and Focus on HCBS
- Part of the American Jobs Plan
- Public Interest and Focus
- Polling

WHY THIS MATTERS?

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# Current Medicaid Challenges

## CORONAVIRUS

### **Illinois National Guard to deploy at developmental disabilities center rocked by COVID-19**

The center is in the middle of a battle. 83 residents and 28 employees have tested positive for the virus.

Two residents and one employee have died.

“But it’s not just at the Ludeman Center,” Mayor Vanderbilt said.

“There are outbreaks at all of the state-owned facilities in Illinois.”

### **People With Developmental Disabilities More Likely To Die From COVID-19**

by Shaun Heasley | June 8, 2020

It’s not entirely clear from the data why individuals with developmental disabilities experience a higher risk of death from the virus, though the findings indicate that this group did have more co-occurring conditions including hypertension, heart disease, respiratory disease and diabetes. The researchers also noted that people with developmental disabilities are more likely to live in congregate settings where it’s harder to limit the spread of COVID-19.

# **What Exactly is Medicaid?**

# Medicaid 101- It's Complicated







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# Why Medicaid Matters Nationally

- One in five people rely on Medicaid for health care (74.6 million people in June 2020!)
- Over **11 million people with disabilities** rely on it for health care services and to live independently.
- It is MUCH more than a health care program, Medicaid is the main funder for LONG-TERM SERVICES AND SUPPORTS (LTSS) including HOME AND COMMUNITY BASED SERVICES (HCBS).
- People with disabilities and senior citizens account for about 48% of the total Medicaid budget and about 21% of the beneficiaries because of their use of those LTSS.

# WHAT ARE HCBS?

## **In the Home**

- Help cooking
- Help with medications
- Assistance with self care
- Budgeting
- Socializing

## **On the Job and in the community**

- Job coaching
- Community volunteering
- Day programs

(What our chapters do!)

# State and Federal Partnership

Because Medicaid is a Federal-State Partnership, the Federal Government makes a basic set of rules and states can decide what else they want to cover as part of Medicaid. This creates some Mandatory services (required by the Feds) and some Optional services (the state has chosen to cover these):

- Mandatory Services
- Most “traditional” health care services
- Prescription drugs
- Nursing Home Services and other Institutional Services\*
- Match guaranteed to states (thanks to advocacy in 2017)

- Optional Services
- **HOME AND COMMUNITY BASED SERVICES**

# Medicaid's Current Structure

Federal Government and states share actual costs of coverage

Agree in each state on who is eligible and what services and supports are provided

Feds pay on average 63%

Different matching rates by state (50-75%)

# The Foundation of Support

What we did in 2017:

- Led Coalition Efforts
- Led Grassroots Advocacy
- Raised the profile of Medicaid
- Specifically the importance of HCBS
- Educated our Constituency (our network, Members of Congress, and the public)
- National Media Attention and Education





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# 2017 Fight to Protect Medicaid and the ACA

- In 2017, The Arc opposed structural changes that would eliminate the Medicaid program we have today and the repeal of the Affordable Care Act
- As we had before when Social Security and Medicaid were threatened, we showed the power of The Arc network and defeated these efforts
- Members of Congress saw the power of the disability community and public awareness of the importance of Medicaid is at an all-time high
- This is not the last threat to Medicaid, we must continue to be vigilant. Unfortunately, the fight is never over.
- But The Arc will always be at the table!



## **Money Follows the Person**

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# History

## Federal Demonstration Project

- Originated under the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005
- Expanded by the Affordable Care Act Rebalancing Initiative

Congressional Intent: Rebalance the Long-Term Care system from institution to community \*\*Strong Bi-Partisan support

Mechanism: Enhanced federal match earned on HCBS for each MFP participant enrolled in HCBS program following discharge from a qualified institution

3 year extension passed at the end of 2020





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## **Recovery Priorities:**

- A \$400 billion investment to fund expanded access to Medicaid HCBS to people with disabilities on waiting lists, and address the direct care workforce crisis, including raising wages. This effort will also allow unpaid family caregivers who have been filling in the gaps of service for far too long to re-enter the workforce.
- A national paid leave program. The pandemic forced millions of people to choose between their own health, the health of their families, and their livelihood. We must invest in our care infrastructure and pass a national paid leave program that guarantees paid leave to family caregivers.
- Improvements to Supplemental Security Income program. The lowest income people with disabilities who rely on SSI receive extremely limited benefits and cannot have more than \$2,000 in savings, an amount that has not been updated since 1984. SSI benefits, asset limits, and other program rules must be updated to lift people with disabilities out of poverty.

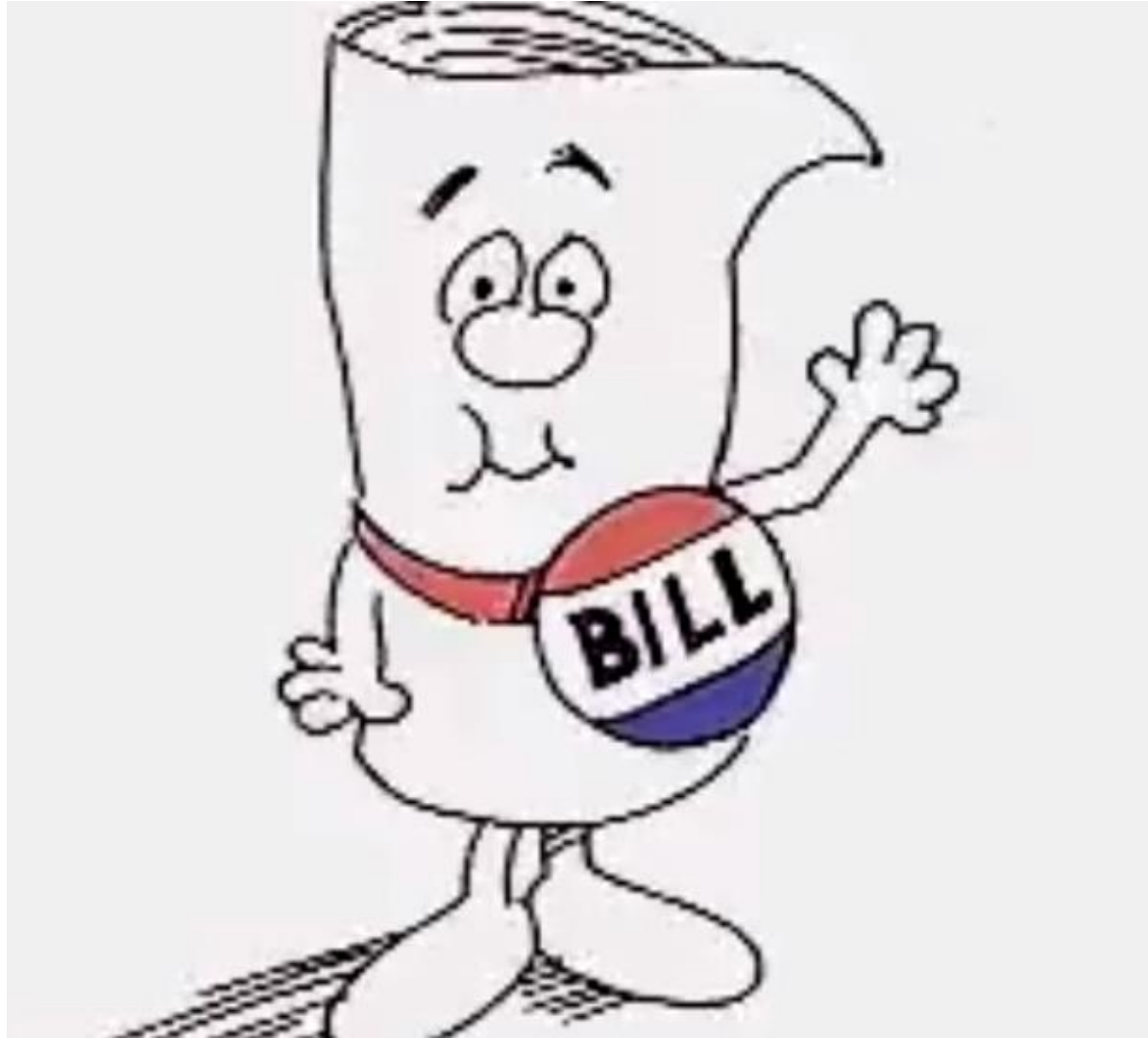
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# **NEXT.....HCBS Access Act is HERE**

The HCBS Access Act (HAA) would address the long-standing issue of limited access to HCBS, staffing shortages, low wages for DSPs, waiting lists, and the issues that have been highlighted in COVID.



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The HCBS Access Act (HAA) would:

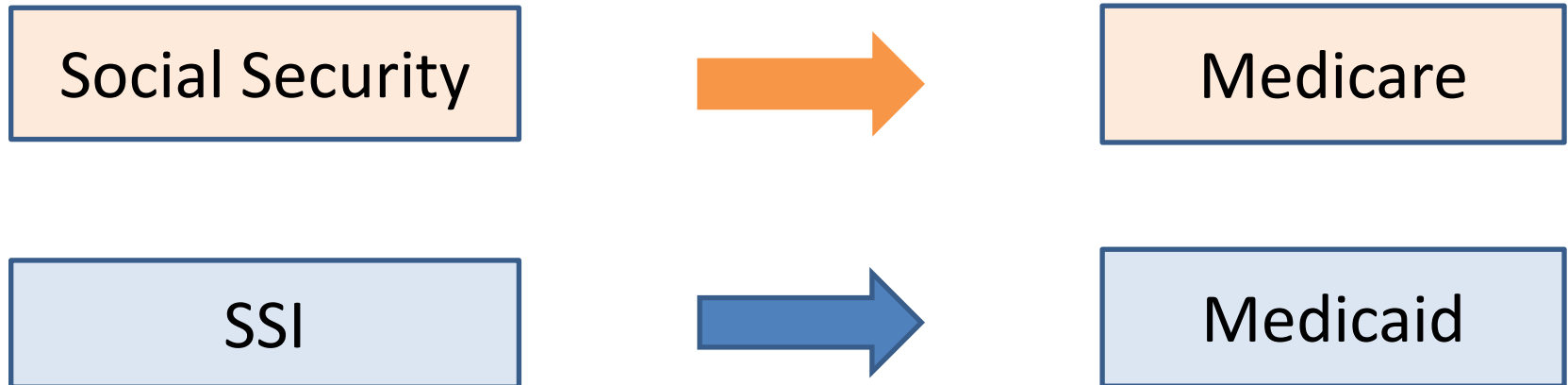
- Make HCBS services MANDATORY Medicaid services
- Provide funding to build capacity and ELIMINATE waiting lists
- Increase funding for DSP wages
- Make Medicaid portable across state lines

It would also fulfill one of the ORIGINAL PURPOSES of our organization and ensure that people with disabilities can have lives in the community!

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# Social Security and SSI

When people talk about “Social Security” they may be talking about two different programs. The first program is Social Security, also called Title II. The second program is Supplemental Security Income (SSI). Both programs provide income support or cash assistance to people with disabilities and both provide health care.



# Social Security and SSI

What did President Biden propose regarding Social Security and SSI?

- Increase SSI benefits to 100% Federal Poverty Level
- Eliminate asset limits
- Eliminate marriage penalties
- Eliminate “in-kind support and maintenance” rules
- Eliminate waiting periods for Social Security
- Eliminate the benefit cliff for Social Security
- Support the ABLE Age Adjustment Act

# Social Security and SSI

What is Budget Reconciliation and why should you care?

- Reconciliation is a set of special Senate budget rules
- Reconciliation means you only need 50 votes to pass legislation
- However, one of the budget rules says that Social Security cannot be changed via reconciliation
- TL:DR, we would need 60 votes for a Social Security bill. We only need 50 votes for a SSI bill.

# Social Security and SSI

## Bicameral Letter (Rep. Bowman etc.)

- The Biden proposals:
  - Increase benefits
  - Eliminate asset limits, food and shelter rules, and marriage penalties
- Implied by the Biden plan, increase income disregards

## SSI Restoration Act (Sen. Brown and Rep. Grijalva)

- All of the above, except for benefits increase

## The ASSET Act (Sen. Coons and Rep. Gomez)

- Increases asset limit in SSI, eliminates for SNAP

# Social Security and SSI

## Other priorities:

- Increasing the Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA) level
- The Stop the Wait Act, which would eliminate the waiting periods for Social Security Disability benefits and Medicare
- Wonky issues related to some Social Security benefits
- Pandemic issues: stimulus checks, field office closures, unemployment insurance





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# COMMUNITY MATTERS!

Share your story.



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# Questions?

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