

➤ *Legislative Session Will Not End*

The Minnesota Legislature went into special session right after Monday's official adjournment of the 2017 Legislative Session. They hope to wrap up business by Friday morning, May 26th; if not then, they hope to finish on Tuesday, May 31st. The health and human services spreadsheet was released, listing what programs and initiatives were funded and at what level. If the bill passes as posted, we will have some victories and some lost opportunities. A summary of the provisions we have been tracking:

- Consumer Directed Community Supports were expanded to make the program work for more adults.
- Housing supports were expanded.
- Parental fees were lowered by 13%. This was not the 25% reduction parents were fighting for, but it is at least a step in the right direction.
- The Medical Assistance spenddown was raised 1%.
- \$496,000 for statewide self-advocacy efforts.
- The new employment services are included, we believe, but this cannot be verified until the official legislative language is shared with the public.
- Across the board wage increases for direct support professionals were not included.

➤ *Engage in May 31st "This Is Medicaid" Conversations*



You can help protect Medicaid by attending and engaging in one of three community conversations on May 31st running from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. Agencies that advocate for and/or provide services to Medicaid recipients, including The Arc Minnesota, have formed a coalition to educate and engage the public about this vital program. The conversations are entitled, "This Is Medicaid," and they are being held in Bloomington, Northfield, and St. Cloud.

These events will bring together members of the general public and of the stakeholder groups, where they will receive more information about the impact of proposed cuts to the program, share personal stories about how Medicaid benefits them, and prepare to engage in ongoing advocacy on this issue. We invite you to attend an event in one of the following communities:

- St. Cloud -- Great River Regional Library; [sign up here](#).
- Bloomington - St. Luke's Lutheran Church; [sign up here](#).
- Northfield - St. John's Lutheran Church; [sign up here](#).

Please also let The Arc know that you are attending one of these events by filling out this brief [form](#). Invite people in your network to attend, too, by forwarding them [the event flyer](#).

➤ *White House Budget Cuts Lifeline Programs, Other Supports*

The White House released its budget proposal for the federal government for the coming fiscal year starting on Oct. 1, 2017. It calls for drastic cuts to programs that benefit people with disabilities, including Medicaid and Social Security Disability Insurance. In total, the President's budget proposes \$1.7 trillion in cuts to mandatory programs over 10 years. This amount appears to include the more than \$800 billion in Medicaid cuts in the House-passed health care repeal, plus more than \$800 billion in additional

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cuts to Medicaid, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and possibly other programs. It also proposes historic tax cuts. The [Star Tribune reported](#) on how this budget could affect Minnesotans, and I was able to share my thoughts on the impact it would have on people with disabilities.

The President's budget is a broad blueprint of the administration's priorities and is not binding. The U.S. House and Senate develop their own budgets, resolve any differences, and then use the amounts agreed to in order to develop spending bills and/or instructions for congressional committees to develop specific legislation that affects mandatory spending and revenues. Peter Berns, CEO of The Arc of the U.S., strongly criticized the administration's budget in [a blog post](#) on The Arc of the U.S. website.

➤ *CBO Predicts 23 Million Lose Insurance Through AHCA*



The non-partisan Congressional Budget Office (CBO) has [released its analysis](#) of how the American Health Care Act (AHCA) would affect people who currently

receive health care and supports through the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and Medicaid. When the U.S. House drafted its first proposal in March to repeal the ACA and cut Medicaid, the CBO predicted that 24 million Americans would lose health care coverage by 2026. In its "score" of the AHCA, the CBO found little change from the original bill. It predicts that under the AHCA, 23 million people will lose their health care coverage by the year 2026. This would occur as a result of ending the Medicaid expansion, which has provided health care coverage to 200,000 Minnesotans, including those with disabilities. It would also leave more people uninsured because the bill cuts the amount of financial help available to those who purchase health care coverage through the individual insurance market. In addition, it gives states the option to decide whether to end ACA's essential health benefits (which includes mental health services and prescription drug coverage), and it allows states to waive the ACA requirement that insurers charge everyone in a certain region the same for premiums, regardless of medical condition.

The AHCA retains the provision from the bill drafted in March that cuts more than \$800 billion over the next decade from Medicaid (i.e., Medical Assistance) by dramatically reducing the money the federal government pays to help states cover their Medicaid costs. Because the bill reduces the federal deficit by \$119 billion over ten years, the AHCA can be sent to the Senate. Majority leaders in the Senate want to pass this bill by a simple majority vote (51 senators in favor), but they have to use a special rule, called reconciliation, in order to avoid a Senate filibuster, which would require 60 votes for the bill to pass. (In order to be eligible for the reconciliation rule, a bill has to reduce the federal deficit.

The Arc of the U.S. urges its members to share their Medicaid stories with their state's U.S. Senators to make them aware of the impact the AHCA will have on people with disabilities and their families. Staff members from Sen. Amy Klobuchar's and Sen. Al Franken's are taking personal stories from the public. You can e-mail your story to Sen. Amy Klobuchar's office at Susie_Nanney@klobuchar.senate.gov and to Sen. Franken at SaveMyCoverage@franken.senate.gov. Please e-mail a copy of your story to [Mike Gude](#).

➤ *Videos Show Medicaid, ACA Are Crucial*

In addition to sharing your Medicaid story with our U.S. Senators and your representative, The Arc encourages you to share videos it has produced featuring several individuals and families who benefit from the ACA and/or Medicaid. The first video, "[If I Could Say One Thing](#)," features clips of a variety of Americans telling Congress and the President why Medicaid and the ACA are so important. You can also watch the two latest videos in this series, entitled "[Meet Bryan](#)" and "[Meet Soojung and Alice](#)," two stories showing how important Medicaid and ACA to maintain independence and to support families. Please share all these videos with your networks.

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