



**CONSORTIUM FOR CITIZENS
WITH DISABILITIES**

DD, Autism and Family Support Task Force Annual Report 2014

2014 ACTIVITIES

The DD, Autism and Family Support Task Force successfully advocated for the reauthorization of the Combating Autism Act, now the Autism Collaboration, Accountability, Research, Education, and Supports or CARES Act (S. 2449). The Autism CARES Act was signed into law (P.L. 113-157) by President Obama on August 8, 2014. The Act authorizes \$290 million per year from FY 2014 through 2019 for research, education, and training activities related to ASD and other developmental disabilities. It also makes some improvements, including the requirement of HHS to prepare a report to Congress on the needs of transitioning youth; establishing an existing HHS official to serve as a key point person to coordinate federal activities; and by reforming the Interagency Autism Coordinating Committee.

The Task Force advocated for the Caring for Military Children with Developmental Disabilities Act of 2014 (H.R. 4630/S. 2333), a bill that provides behavioral health treatment, including applied behavior analysis, that is prescribed by a physician or psychologist for military dependents' with developmental disabilities under the Department of Defense (DOD) TRICARE program. It was hoped that the bill would be included in the National Defense Authorization bill; however, during negotiations on the final NDAA bill, no amendments were allowed. The Task Force also wrote letters and met with TRICARE officials to advocate for improvements to a demonstration program that provides behavioral health services for military families.

The Task Force advocated for the reauthorization of the Older Americans Act that includes improvements to make the National Family Caregiver Support available to parent caregivers of adult children (18-59) with disabilities to require Aging and Disability Resource Centers to provide future planning services. The Senate reauthorization bill (S. 1562) passed by the HELP Committee included the needed fix to the NFCSP and a previous version (S. 1028) includes the addition of future planning services provided by ADRCs. Unfortunately, the legislation stalled due to disagreements over a funding formula issue that disadvantages states that have experienced the most growth in their populations of older Americans. The Task Force met with staff of the Higher Education & Workforce Training Subcommittee Members and sent a sign-on letter to all Senate offices.

Task force members signed a letter from forty national organizations to Rep. Langevin in support of the Lifespan Respite Reauthorization Act (HR 4683) and the Military and Veteran family Caregiver services Improvement Act (HR 4892), which includes provisions to reauthorize the Lifespan Respite Care Program.

The Task Force met with staff from the Department of Labor to obtain clarification on eligibility of siblings for the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). Staff verbally indicated that siblings are eligible if certain conditions are met and the task force is awaiting their revised guidance documents.

The Task Force submitted comments in support for the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR) proposed priority for the Rehabilitation Research and Training Center (RRTC) on Family Support. The Task Force encouraged NIDRR to ensure that this effort complement the work being done through the Administration for Community Living's (ACL) Communities of Practice and Supporting Family grants that require buy-in and collaboration of both the community and the state government.

The Task Force provided input on a bill to address the issue of wandering by children with intellectual and developmental disabilities. This bill, expected to be introduced by Rep. McKinley (R-WV) in the 114th Congress, will support the convening a stakeholder meeting, conducting a study of state and community approaches to wandering, and developing materials for health care professionals.

FUTURE ACTIVITIES

The Task Force will work on implementation of the CARES Act, including the HHS report on transition services.

The Task Force will continue to advocate to improve and broaden behavioral health services provided to individuals with ASD and families.

The Task Force will continue to advocate for the reauthorization of the Older Americans Act and the Lifespan Respite Care Act.

The Task Force will reach out to the Administration on Community Living to develop capacity of ARDCs to provide future planning services.

The Task Force will continue to seek clarification of sibling eligibility for FMLA.

The Task Force will review provisions in the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) relevant to children with disabilities and their families for possible modifications. CAPTA expires in 2015 and will need to be reauthorized.

CO-CHAIRS IN 2014:

Annie Acosta - The Arc

Kim Musheno - AUCD

Esmé Grant - NACDD

Cindy Smith - NDRN

Jill Kagan - National Respite Coalition

Stuart Spielman - Autism Speaks