

NCSL Standing Committee on Health and Human Services

POLICY DIRECTIVES AND RESOLUTIONS

**2018 NCSL Legislative Summit
Los Angeles, California**

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|----------|
| AGING SERVICES (OLDER AMERICANS ACT)..... | 2 |
| SUPPORT FOR SENIORS AND PEOPLE PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES | 5 |
| NCSL SUPPORTS NATIONAL HEALTH IT WEEK 2018 | 9 |

COMMITTEE: HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

POLICY: AGING SERVICES (OLDER AMERICANS ACT)

TYPE: DIRECTIVE

The Administration on Aging and the programs authorized and funded by the Older Americans Act are extremely important to the states, their senior citizens, and their families. The National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) strongly supports Older Americans Act programs and believes that the services funded through this act should be both cost effective and responsive to the special needs of the elderly. NCSL appreciates the support of Congress and the Administration for the Older Americans Act (OAA) and the National Family Caregiver Support Program.

Recognizing the challenges our country faces in providing services for the increasing number of elderly citizens, NCSL urges Congress to continue its support for the programs of the OAA by appropriating sufficient funding for them, especially the National Family Caregiver Support Program.

NCSL supports the National Family Caregiver Support program, which recognizes the need to support both those caring for older individuals and older individuals caring for children. States must be given the flexibility to establish standards in this program and decide how program funds will be distributed.

NCSL supports increased efforts in the reauthorized Act to ensure that Older Americans Act programs do reach low-income, minority and rural elderly households and to inform them about services available to them under the Older Americans Act and other state and federal programs. The authority of state government through designated State Units on Aging should be strengthened to ensure that service funds under the Act are ~~targeted to~~ **used to support independence in older populations and** the most vulnerable members **of the population** ~~of the older population~~ - the very old, the frail, the isolated, and limited English-speaking individuals, with particular attention to low-income minority

[BACK TO THE TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

persons. States must have the authority to distribute these funds based on their own criteria.

NCSL believes that states should continue to be afforded considerable flexibility in the administration of the OAA. NCSL supports permitting states to transfer funds between the nutrition program and the social services program according to a state's need and to transfer funds between congregate and home delivered meals. States should also continue to be able to determine if Area Agencies on Aging (AAA)'s should directly provide services and to determine which services AAA's can provide.

NCSL supports efforts to put additional resources into the ombudsman program. In addition, NCSL supports Congressional proposals to fund programs on elder abuse, home care, and programs to provide special assistance to the elderly. Provisions should be developed which strengthen the capacity and expand the resources of State Units on Aging and Area Agencies on Aging. This is critical on a wide range of elder rights issues: quality of long term care, elder abuse, consumer protection, guardianship, age discrimination, and beneficiary rights in entitlement programs. NCSL supports the importance of nutrition education and counseling for seniors, which recognizes the unique needs of the elderly.

NCSL believes that participants with incomes below 125 percent of poverty or the federally established level of poverty ~~whichever is higher~~, should not be subject to cost sharing. Fees collected through this mechanism should provide for expanded services and increased availability of services to those elderly with the greatest economic and social need. This will also enhance the coordination and equity between OAA, the Social Services Block Grant, and state-financed programs that are often funded on a sliding fee scale.

Finally, NCSL continues to support the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP). NCSL calls for increased cooperation between the states and the national contractors. NCSL supports Congressional proposals to provide states and

[BACK TO THE TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

54 national contractors more flexibility on administrative costs while keeping these costs to
55 a minimum.

56 **Federal Policies on Aging**

57

58 NCSL urges that the Congress: (1) preserve the financial integrity of the Social Security
59 system; (2) eliminate all forms of age discrimination against older workers; (3) provide
60 funds for direct services for the elderly; (4) fund the development of integrated,
61 coordinated, community-based continued care systems to help prevent the unnecessary
62 institutionalization of the elderly; and (5) provide additional support for gerontological
63 research, education and training; (6) and ensure the flexibility for states to use TANF
64 funds to support programs that serve grandparents raising grandchildren.

[BACK TO THE TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

COMMITTEE: HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

**POLICY: SUPPORT FOR SENIORS AND PEOPLE
PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

TYPE: DIRECTIVE

The development of a comprehensive approach to provide support services for elderly ~~persons and disabled people~~ **persons with disabilities** is critical. Without the development of such a system, long-term care expenditures will continue to overwhelm state and federal health care budgets, limiting ~~needed~~ **necessary** expenditures for primary and preventive health care. States should be given new options for setting financial and functional criteria to qualify for these services. In addition, NCSL supports the development of expanded options for private long-term care insurance, flexible life insurance products, and home equity sharing programs, such as reverse annuity mortgages. NCSL also supports initiatives to provide incentives ~~to~~ **for** employers to offer and for individuals to establish health savings accounts and other innovative financing options to pay for a broad range of supportive services. Finally, much of the care provided to seniors and people with disabilities today ~~are~~ **is** provided by family members. NCSL supports efforts to assist family members who are caregivers, including tax incentives and programs that provide support services, such as respite care, ~~for family caregivers~~. It is critically important to acknowledge the important role of family caregivers as part of the continuum of care in the provision of long-term care services and to provide needed support to maintain this important component of our long-term care infrastructure.

Increasing Options for Home and Community-Based Care

NCSL continues to support the development of more home and community-based options under Medicaid to provide **and integrate** long term care services. States should be encouraged to develop innovative programs to improve the long-term care system. NCSL urges the Administration and Congress to work with states to develop

[BACK TO THE TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

assessment tools that will help states better identify what level of services individual clients need and the most appropriate settings for the client to receive care. These assessments should be made available to all elderly and disabled persons and persons with disabilities to help them plan for their long-term care needs.

Long Term Care Insurance

Recognizing consumers can potentially benefit from the purchase of long-term care insurance, NCSL supports strong federal action to protect consumers of long-term care insurance from predatory pricing or inadequate benefit plans. NCSL also urges the Administration and Congress and to speed the development of long-term care insurance as a viable alternative or complement to Medicaid support for long-term care services. At the same time, tax credits, partnership programs, and other incentives should not be seen as a tool for reduced funding for Medicaid. While the states will continue to take primary responsibility for the regulation of long-term care insurance, NCSL supports the development and evaluation of programs and initiatives that would: (1) provide preferential tax treatment for individuals who purchase qualified long-term care insurance; (2) provide tax incentives for private employers and a Medicaid bonus program for state and local government employers to encourage them to offer long-term care insurance as a benefit; and (3) encourage and provide incentives to employers to offer long-term care insurance, as a condition of receiving federal benefits, such as business tax credits;

Administration for Community Living

NCSL applauds the reorganizational effort within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) that provides supportive services to seniors and persons with disabilities into the Administration for Community Living. NCSL looks forward to continuing to work with HHS to improve community living services and supports for all who need them.

~~The Administration has consolidated the agencies within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) that provide supportive services to seniors and people with~~

[BACK TO THE TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

~~disabilities into a new, Administration for Community Living.~~ The purpose of this consolidation is to: (1) reduce the fragmentation among federal programs that address the community living service and support needs of seniors and people with disabilities; (2) enhance access to quality health care and long-term services and supports for all individuals;(3) to promote consistency in community living policy across other areas of the federal government; and (4) complement the community infrastructure, as supported by both Medicaid and other federal programs, in an effort to better respond to the full spectrum of needs of seniors and people with disabilities. In addition to programs authorized by the Older Americans Act, the new entity includes the State Councils on Developmental Disabilities, the State Protection and Advocacy Systems and the Help American Vote Act program that provides grants to make polling places accessible to voters with disabilities. ~~NCSL applauds this reorganizational effort and looks forward to continuing to work with HHS to improve community living services and supports for all who need them.~~

Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders

NCSL supports continued federal funding for research that will: (1) lead to the development of new drug treatments; (2) assist in disease management; and (3) improve the early diagnosis of these conditions.

~~**The Administration on Aging**—The Administration on Aging administers some of the most critical support services to seniors including; (1) home and community-based support services; (2) nutrition programs ---congregate and home-delivered meals and nutrition services; (3) caregiver services and supports; (4) protection for vulnerable adults, including the long term care ombudsman program; (5) consumer information, access and outreach services, including the State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP); and (6) the National Clearinghouse for Long Term Care Information. NCSL supports these critical programs and services and urges the Congress and the Administration to adequately fund them.~~

[BACK TO THE TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

National Plan to Address Alzheimer's Disease- The Plan proposes to: (1) ~~promote~~
prevent and effectively treat Alzheimer's Disease by 2025; (2) optimize care quality and
efficiency; (3) expand supports for people with Alzheimer's Disease and their families;
(4) enhance public awareness and engagement; and (5) track progress and drive
improvement. The plan specifically calls for working with state, tribal and local
governments to improve coordination and to identify model initiatives to advance
Alzheimer's Disease awareness and readiness across all levels of government. The
plan directs the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to convene a meeting
of state, tribal and local government leaders to develop a more concrete agenda. NCSL
looks forward to assisting in this effort.

[BACK TO THE TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

COMMITTEE: HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

**POLICY: NCSL SUPPORTS NATIONAL HEALTH IT WEEK
2018**

TYPE: MEMORIAL RESOLUTION

National Health IT Week will take place October 8-12, 2018. Key public and private healthcare constituents – representing the full spectrum of healthcare interests – will convene in Washington, DC and around the country to address implications for ongoing healthcare reform initiatives and promote understanding. Initiated in 2006 by The Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society (HIMSS), National Health IT Week has emerged as a landmark occasion for bringing together diverse national healthcare stakeholders, who partner in developing neutral, common ground for the advancement of health IT adoption with "One Voice, One Vision." This October, nearly 400 public and private sector organizations throughout the nation will participate in the Tenth Annual National Health IT Week. The National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) has worked closely with HIMSS and other stakeholder organizations to promote understanding among state policymakers of the contributions of health IT to improving the quality and safety of healthcare delivery and containing healthcare costs. National Health IT Week presents an opportunity for NCSL and other stakeholders to recognize the value of information technology and management systems to transform the United States healthcare system, improving the quality and cost efficiency for all Americans. NCSL encourages its members to ~~observe~~ **participate in** "National Health IT Week 2018" in appropriate ways in their respective state capitals as well as in the Nation's Capital. NCSL also encourages its members to urge their respective delegations to the United States Congress to join in recognizing the benefits of health information technology as they act to improve health care for all citizens during National Health Information Technology Week.

[BACK TO THE TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

[BACK TO THE TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

