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White House Hosts Celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the Developmental Disabilities Act

On Friday, November 15, the White House hosted an observance of the 50th Anniversary of the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act, signed into law by President Kennedy in 1963. At the event, a series of panel discussions among leaders of the intellectual and developmental disability community was convened to celebrate the accomplishments of the past, examine current challenges, and look ahead to the future of disability policy. Speakers included notables from the Administration as well as several disability organizations.

Video from the event is expected to be posted on whitehouse.gov; ACL will post links to the video on our Facebook and Twitter pages as soon it is available. Like us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/#!/aclgov> and follow us on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/ACLgov>.

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Senate Aging Committee Launches Anti-Fraud Hotline and Web Form for Older Adults

The U.S. Senate Special Committee on Aging has set up a new, toll-free hotline (1-855-303-9470) to help older adults who suspect fraud or a scam may be occurring.

The hotline will make it easier for older Americans to report suspected fraud and find assistance for themselves or for someone they know. A team of investigators will help figure out what steps to take to combat possible

investment scams, identity theft, bogus sweepstakes and lottery schemes, Medicare and Social Security fraud, and a variety of other consumer issues.

Anyone with information about suspected fraud should reach out to an investigator by telephone (9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. EST) or through a [web form that will send an email](#) to the investigative team. [Read more](#) here.

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Administration Issues Final Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Parity Rule

Last week, the U.S. Departments of Health and Human Services, Labor, and Treasury jointly issued a final rule that increases parity between mental health/substance use disorder benefits and medical/surgical benefits in both group and individual health plans.

The rule implements the [Paul Wellstone and Pete Domenici Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act](#) and ensures that health plan features, such as co-pays, deductibles, and visit limits, are generally not more restrictive for mental health/substance use disorder benefits than they are for medical/surgical benefits. The rule also includes other consumer protections, such as ensuring that parity applies to intermediate levels of care received in residential treatment or intensive outpatient settings, and eliminating the provision that allowed insurance companies to make an exception to parity requirements for certain benefits based on “clinically appropriate standards of care,” which clinical experts advised was not necessary, was confusing, and opened a door to potential abuse. [Read the entire rule in the Federal Register](#).

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Affordable Care Act/Health Insurance Marketplace

Marketplace Consumer Experience Survey Instrument Now Open for Public Comment

The Affordable Care Act requires a satisfaction survey system that assesses consumers’ experiences with the qualified health plans now offered through the Marketplace. It also requires enrollee satisfaction information to be available to the public so consumers can easily compare satisfaction levels between comparable plans.

Two survey instruments are now posted for public comment. Please note that this is not a request for comments about the plans or the Marketplace; rather it is a request for comments about the tools that will be used to evaluate the plans and the Marketplace.

Comment period on both survey instruments closes December 2, 2013.

[Click here](#) for more information on the surveys, including instructions for submitting feedback to CMS.

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Marketplace Toolkit for Behavioral Health Organizations

The [Getting Ready for the Health Insurance Marketplace Toolkit](#), provided by the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, helps behavioral health organizations prepare to guide their constituents through the insurance selection process.

The toolkit is a web-based, automated, narrated presentation. It explains the Affordable Healthcare Act and how it helps people with mental and substance use disorders; outlines how to use the Health Insurance Marketplace; and provides materials to help organizations reach out to uninsured individuals.

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New Consumer Web Portal Explains Insurance Coverage Options for People Living with HIV/AIDS

The Kaiser Family Foundation recently launched [Obamacare and You](#), a new Greater Than AIDS consumer web portal designed to help people living with HIV/AIDS learn about new insurance options under the Affordable Care Act. The portal offers several tailored resources, including specific information for each state and the District of Columbia. Also included is a guide to the law's essential health benefits and responses to frequently asked questions.

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News from HHS

Medicare Open Enrollment: Four Ways for Beneficiaries to Protect Identity and Information

Medicare Open Enrollment, which continues through December 7, 2013, is a great time for beneficiaries to review and compare their Medicare choices and to make sure they have the coverage that fits their needs. Unfortunately, it's also a popular time for Medicare fraud schemes; [click here](#) for information about how individuals can protect their identity.

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New Reports from the HHS Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality

The following reports were recently released by the HHS Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality.

[*Overview of Hospital Stays in the United States, 2011*](#) is a statistical brief that provides the most recent data on characteristics of stays in community hospitals in the United States and compares results from previous years.

[*Findings and Lessons from the Improving Management of Individuals with Complex Health Care Needs Through Health IT Grant Initiative*](#) documents more than 10 research projects that investigated how health IT applications can support shared decision-making, communication during care transitions, and secure exchange of information across multiple settings of care. Multiple studies showed positive impacts on process, intermediate, health, and economic outcomes.

The 2013 [*Atlas of Integrated Behavioral Health Care Quality Measures*](#) helps primary care organizations and researchers identify and assess quality measures for integrating behavioral health care.

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Webinar

Alzheimer's Disease Webinar: Solutions for Caregivers

Wednesday, November 20, 2013 at 10:00 a.m. PT

Caregivers for people with Alzheimer's face a number of challenges, such as engaging those with memory problems in activities and defusing difficult behaviors. Sometimes caregivers neglect to take care of themselves. This webinar will show ways to use memories to comfort the person with Alzheimer's, as well as how to maintain safety using the PREVENT method. Easy, sensible suggestions for caregiver self-care will also be covered.

This webinar is a part of the American Society on Aging's Family Caregiver Support Series. [Register here](#).

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Tools & Information

New Procedures for Consumers to File Complaints about the Accessibility of Communications Technologies

The Federal Communications Commission recently released a [Public Notice](#) that announces new procedures for consumers to file requests for dispute assistance and informal complaints about accessibility to new communication technologies, such as smartphones, tablets, and desktop and laptop computers. The new procedures were mandated by the Twenty-First Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act, which President Obama signed into law in October 2010. [Click here](#) to read an overview of the new procedures.

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What's on *Your Plate*? Smart Food Choices for Healthy Aging

The National Institute on Aging released an updated, easy-to-navigate online resource on older adult nutrition. "[What's on Your Plate? Smart Food Choices for Healthy Aging](#)" explores healthy lifestyles, plans for healthy eating, food safety, nutrients to know, shopping tips, and common questions.

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New Spanish *AgePage* Helps Older People in Mourning

When a spouse or partner dies, a person's whole world can change. It may take time to overcome feelings of loss and adapt to a new way of life.

[El duelo por la muerte de un cónyuge](#) (*Mourning the Death of a Spouse*), is a newly translated *AgePage* fact sheet from the National Institute on Aging.

This free fact sheet, available in English and Spanish, discusses the impact of grief on an individual's health, offers coping tips, and explains how to deal with the paperwork and practical matters that follow a death.

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November Observances

National Alzheimer's Disease Awareness Month

[Presidential Proclamation](#)

Resource: [ACL Alzheimer's Disease Supportive Services Program](#)

National Diabetes Month

[Presidential Proclamation](#)

Resource: [HHS National Diabetes Education Program](#)

National Epilepsy Awareness Month
[Statement by Dr. Howard Koh, Assistant Secretary for Health](#)

National Family Caregivers Month
Theme: Family Caregivers – Now More Than Ever!
[Presidential Proclamation](#)
[Blog by ACL Administrator Greenlee](#)
Resource: [ACL National Family Caregiver Support Program](#)

Native American Heritage Month
[Presidential Proclamation](#)
[Statement by HHS Secretary Sebelius](#)
Resource: [ACL Services for Native Americans](#)

Week

18th-24th: Get Smart About Antibiotics Week

Day

28th: Family Health History Day – Resource: [CDC Information Sheet](#)

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