



WASHINGTON UPDATE

JUNE 2014

SAVE THE DATE

September 19, 2014

Eighth Annual
Katz Policy Lecture

Peter Kemper, PhD, Professor Emeritus at Pennsylvania State University presents the Eighth Annual Katz Policy Lecture at the Conference Center at Benjamin Rose. Dr. Kemper will discuss culture change in long-term care.

For information on this and other upcoming events, visit www.benrose.org/education

Contact Us

We welcome your feedback!
Please share questions, suggestions or concerns.

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Congressional Update

Elder Justice Funding Inches Forward

On June 10, the Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Subcommittee of the Senate Appropriations Committee passed a proposed bill which includes \$10 million for Elder Justice activities.

Readers will recall that the Elder Justice Coalition (EJC) had been requesting \$25 million from members of the legislature.

Richard Browdie, Benjamin Rose President and CEO, had this to say: "Benjamin Rose, a long time EJC member, is disappointed that a larger amount cannot be made available for this crucial issue of national significance. At the same time, advocates for older people know that will it take a long time to address Elder Justice issues nationally, and elder abuse prevention and intervention at the state level. Ohio is poised to make some real progress for the first time in many years with the \$10 million proposed appropriation in the budget recently sent to Governor Kasich, and we have been fighting for years to lift this issue up nationally to the point that any action would be taken. All efforts now must turn to the full committee to assure that the amount for Elder Justice is not reduced any further. It may not be the first step we wanted, but it is a first step nonetheless."

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day is June 15

This year marks the eighth annual World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD). Observed on June 15, the day is a time to raise awareness about the issue of elder abuse, neglect and exploitation. The Administration for Community Living's (ACL) theme for WEAAD this year is "one person, one action, one nation united against elder abuse." The ACL WEAAD site has links to sample Facebook and Twitter posts, sample press releases, fact sheets, public service announcements and other tools to help you tell your community about the importance of this issue. It also contains links to events across the country, including several in Ohio and other states in the Midwest.

State Penalties as a Result of HealthCare.gov Issues?
A new challenge for states as a result of the Affordable Care Act surfaced through a May 21 letter signed by top Republican House and Senate members. Sens. Orrin Hatch (R-UT), Lamar Alexander (R-TN) and Rep. Fred Upton (R-MI) are critical of a suggestion made by outgoing HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius that HHS may start penalizing states for Medicaid application delays. The letter, as well as statements made by the National Association of Medicaid Directors, suggests that the backlogs are a result of states not being able to electronically process most Medicaid application information received from HealthCare.gov, which forces states to input the information by hand. "We believe it would be inappropriate for CMS to reduce payments to states that may be experiencing a backlog of applications due to the troubles with HealthCare.gov," they wrote. "Such an approach would violate the very nature of a federal-state partnership."

Sign up for the email version of this newsletter at www.benrose.org/KPI

In Northeast Ohio, the Consortium Against Adult Abuse (c3a) will mark World Elder Abuse Awareness Day with its annual conference on Friday, June 13, Unraveling the Evidence: The Forensic Side of Elder Abuse. The Cuyahoga County Department of Senior and Adult Services continues the commemoration with an Elder Abuse Awareness Forum on Friday, June 27 to honor and remember all elders and adults with disabilities who are abused, neglected and financially exploited every year.

The efforts of Ohio advocates received a boost last week when a conference committee of the state legislature retained \$10 million in funding for Adult Protective Services in the Mid-Biennium Review (HB 483). The bill has gone on to Governor John Kasich for action.

New Comprehensive Legislation Proposed for Veterans in Senate in the Wake of VA Scandal

After the resignation of the Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Eric Shinseki on May 30, Senate Veterans Affairs Committee Chairman Bernie Sanders (I-VT) proposed a new piece of comprehensive legislation, the Restoring Veterans' Trust Act of 2014. In a press release, Sanders said, "There must be a culture of honesty and accountability within the VA and people who have lied or manipulated data must be punished. But we also have to get to the root causes of the problems that have been exposed. The simple truth is that with 2 million more veterans coming into the system in recent years there are many facilities within the VA that do not have the doctors, nurses and other personnel that they need to provide quality care in a timely way."

The legislation would give the VA authority to immediately remove senior executives based on poor job performance while preventing political firings. It would provide veterans the option of going to community health centers, military hospitals or private doctors. It would authorize the VA to lease 27 new health facilities in 18 states as well as authorize emergency funding to hire new doctors, nurses and other providers in order to address system-wide health care provider shortages. The bill would also authorize the National Health Service Corps to award scholarships to medical school students and to forgive college loans for doctors and nurses who work for the VA.

A hearing on this legislation scheduled for June 5 was postponed. On June 9, Sanders and Sen. John McCain (R-AZ) introduced a new bill, The Veterans' Access to Care through Choice, Accountability and Transparency Act of 2014, with co-sponsors Sens. Jeff Merkley (D-OR), Tim Kaine (D-VA) and Richard Burr (R-NC).