



Health Care Reform Priorities

The following is an overview on the status of Alzheimer's Association priorities in health care reform

1. Care Coordination

- Two care coordination bills were recently introduced that specifically include people with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias. One is the *Reaching Elders with Assessment and Chronic Care Management and Coordination Act (RE-Aligning Care Act)* (S. 1004/H.R. 2307), which was introduced in the Senate by Senators Lincoln (D-AR) and Collins (R-ME) and by Rep. Gene Green (D-TX) in the House. This bill would provide Medicare beneficiaries with access to geriatric assessments and chronic care management and coordination services. The bill includes specific language on family caregivers, which was recommended by the Association.
- The second is the *Independence at Home Act of 2009* (S. 1131/H.R. 2560), sponsored by Senator Wyden (D-OR) and Rep. Markey (D-MA) in the House. This bill would provide certain high cost Medicare beneficiaries suffering from multiple chronic conditions, including Alzheimer's, with access to coordinated, primary care medical services in lower cost treatment settings, such as their residences, under a plan of care developed by a team of qualified and experienced health care professionals.

2. Improved Access to Health Coverage for People with Alzheimer's

- *The Ending the Medicare Disability Waiting Period Act of 2009* (S. 700/H.R. 1708), sponsored by Senator Bingaman (D-NM) in the Senate and Rep. Gene Green (D-TX) in the House, aims to improve access to health coverage for individuals under age 65 with disabilities. It would phase out the 24-month waiting period for disabled individuals to become eligible for Medicare benefits and eliminate the waiting period for individuals with life-threatening conditions. The House bill has 92 cosponsors and the Senate has 18.

3. Long-term Services and Supports

- Four long-term care bills that the Association supports are being considered as part of health reform. One is the *Community Living Assistance Services and Supports Act (CLASS Act)* (S. 697/H.R. 1721), sponsored by Senator Kennedy (D-MA) in the Senate and Rep. Pallone (D-NJ) in the House. This bill would create a nationwide voluntary insurance program to help people get coverage for long-term services and supports. It was included in the House health care bills and in the Senate Health Education Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee version. The Association supports this legislation because it would benefit people with dementia and their caregivers.
- A second bill is the *Empowered at Home Act of 2009*, (S. 434/H.R.2688), sponsored by Senators Kerry (D-MA) and Grassley (R-IA) in the Senate and Rep. Pallone(D-NJ) in the House. This bill would improve the State plan amendment option for providing home and community-based services under the Medicaid program. Cognitive impairment is specifically mentioned in the bill.
- The third is the *Caring for an Aging America Act of 2009* (S. 750), sponsored by Senator Boxer (D-CA), which would also benefit people with cognitive impairments in the long-term care system. The purpose of this bill is to attract and retain trained health care professionals and direct care workers dedicated to providing quality care to the growing population of older Americans.
- The fourth is the *Retooling the Health Care Workforce for an Aging America Act of 2009* (S. 245/H.R. 468), sponsored by Senator Kohl (D-WI) in the Senate and Rep. Schakowsky (D-IL). This bill would expand, train, and support all sectors of the health care workforce to care for the growing population of older individuals in the United States. Health care workers would receive dementia training.