

**Community-Based Long Term**

**Supports and Services**

The demand for community-based long term supports and services (LTSS) continues to be a critical issue in the 21st century. However, the nation has lacked a comprehensive, proactive national public-private system of delivery. The current system is a patchwork of inadequate funding, with the largest source of federal funds provided by the Medicaid program that requires most people to be impoverished to receive services. Furthermore, there is an institutional bias that directs these funds to institutional services and primarily through waivers to community services. With the first of the baby boomers retiring, the need for qualified support workers and family caregivers will exacerbate severe inequities in the ability of individuals with significant disabilities of all ages to live in integrated settings of their choice.

In order to meet this national challenge, the federal government must take the lead in developing a coordinated, comprehensive approach to LTSS. Since Medicaid has become the core of federally supported LTSS, the philosophy of the Medicaid program must be changed to reflect the preference for individualized community-based services over institutional services. In addition, the need for supports outside of the Medicaid program must be addressed. Significant progress was made with the enactment of the Community Living Assistance Services and Supports (CLASS) Act, as part of the Affordable Care Act, to establish a national long term supports insurance program. This insurance plan was designed to assist people in meeting their needs and allow many to avoid impoverishing themselves to become eligible for the Medicaid program. However, because Congress repealed the CLASS Act as part of the American Taxpayer Relief Act, its promise has yet to be realized. The needs still exist and will continue to grow.

To meet these challenges, during the 115th Congress our public policy goals are to:

* Expand, modernize, and, where appropriate, maintain national policies that provide individualized supports. Such supports should encourage individual control of services, self-sufficiency, and personal responsibility among our constituents. Such a system should avoid the need for people to impoverish themselves to qualify for services. Supports and services must be:
  + person-centered and self-directed;
  + inclusive of personal assistance services and technology appropriate for each individual;
  + designed and implemented to meet individual needs;
  + widely accessible; and
  + provided in the community in inclusive and integrated settings;
* Advocate for a quality, well compensated and sustainable workforce to ensure that community LTSS can be fulfilled;
* Promote development of legislation consistent with the goals of inclusive participation, self-determination, personal responsibility, community integration, and independence including reversing the institutional bias in Medicaid so community living is the first and preferred option;
* Ensure adequate funds for federal monitoring, enforcement, and implementation of the U.S. Supreme Court’s Olmstead decision;
* Provide incentives to community-based organizations to utilize innovative technologies to enhance delivery of supports and services, such as home monitoring and communications technologies;
* Amend federal law to allow federal employee pension and survivor benefits to be paid to a trust established for an individual with a disability to allow for the long term support of the individual; and
* Ensure full implementation of the Disabled Military Child Protection Act of 2014 which allows military pension and survivor benefits to be paid to a trust for an individual with disabilities to allow for the long term support of the individual.

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