

Able Voices



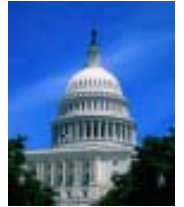
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Community Choice Act to be Reintroduced in DC

Tri-County Independent Living (TCIL) will host a **Community Choice Act** Kick-Off Event beginning at 11:00 a.m., Tuesday, March 24 at the TCIL offices (with light refreshments). This will consist of a conference call, beginning at 11:30 a.m., hosted by ADAPT, for the kick-off in Washington, D.C., which will include the bill's sponsors, Senator Tom Harkin and Rep. Danny Davis. ADAPT is a national, advocacy organization for people with disabilities.



Please attend this event if you are interested in Medicaid dollars being available to provide a real option for people to continue living at home with adequate support, as well as ending the institutional bias that too often forces people into nursing homes.

The Community Choice Act was introduced in 2007 as S. 799 and in Congress as H.R. 1621. In past sessions it was called the Medicaid Community Attendant Services and Supports Act (MiCASSA).

The **Community Choice Act** seeks to support people with disabilities and seniors so that they can continue to live at home in their communities. It would release more Medicaid money for this goal by



State to Decide on Further Cuts by April 1

The big budget question remains: will further cuts be triggered by the amount of stimulus money California receives from the Federal Government or not? According to the recent state budget agreement, a final decision on this must be made between the California Department of Finance and the State Treasurer by April 1.

State Finance Director, Michael Genest.

The target figure for triggering the cuts is \$10 billion--they will go through if the State

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providing equal access to community based attendant services and supports. It would allow Medicaid dollars to follow the recipient and let that individual, or a representative, choose where services and supports would be received. The bill is heavily opposed by the nursing home industry, including the American Health Care Association (AHCA).

Last year, California Senator Barbara Boxer was a co-sponsor of the Community Choice Act. However, Senator Dianne Feinstein and Congressman Mike Thompson **did not**. This year's co-sponsors are not yet known, but it wouldn't hurt to contact your elected officials in D.C. to let them know how you feel about Medicaid dollars being available equally for home care as for institutions.

Please call (707) 445-8404 if you plan to attend or would like more information.

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doesn't get that much money from the Feds. In fact, in a recent interview State Finance Director Mike Genest claimed: ***"It's straight forward arithmetic. Is there enough federal money to meet the test that the legislature has in place for pulling the trigger?"***

Only it is not that clear. What Genest doesn't say is that with straight arithmetic, you're given some definite numbers to add up or subtract. The State can't even decide, at this point, what those numbers are, let alone practice the straight arithmetic.

Another concern is whether or not an agreement on what that dollar figure from the Feds will be can even be reached. One may say we got over the \$10 billion and the other that we got less than the \$10 billion. No one seems to know exactly HOW the estimated \$31 billion that California will receive from the stimulus package can be applied. If the Treasurer and Finance Department **do not agree**, then the cuts are triggered anyway! Preliminary estimates from Finance say that the State will fall \$2 billion short and originally, Governor Schwarzenegger wanted to confer exclusive legal authority in calculating these funds upon his Department of Finance, but the Democrats negotiated joint authority with State Treasurer, Bill Lockyer.

On the surface, it can't help but look like a done deal given these facts.

State of CA Logic?

Simple Arithmetic: $10 - 5 = 5$

CA Share of Stimulus Package Arithmetic:

X (or Y on Tuesdays, if it's sunny, maybe) - Y (on alternate weeks, if it doesn't fall on a Federal holiday or if Mars is in proximity with Saturn) = $A \times B$ if C is equal to the number of unemployed or $A \times Z$ if an election is + or - a year away, but only if a (casino + rate of depression) is divided by the rise in oil prices when Z is = to partisan politics, but no less than a(b) the number of protests is y times the circumference of the greatest campaign contributors on the x axis of .025 of the tax rate on a rabbit pulled from a hat on any day but Easter. Simple, huh?

Local Happenings

Tri-County Independent Living's **6th Annual Respect for Abilities Day**, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Friday, July 24, 2009, Vickers (Home Economics) Building, Redwood Acres, Eureka.

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