

DC Update

April 25, 2008

Medicaid

On Wednesday April 23, 2008 the U.S. House of Representatives passed HR 5613, Protecting the Medicaid Safety Net Act of 2008 by a vote of 349-62. Though the President has indicated he would veto such legislation, that chamber garnered enough votes to override a potential veto. The bill is now in the Senate where it faces opposition and different challenges.

In a procedural move, Senate Majority Leader, Harry Reid (D-NV) has kept the bill from moving to the committee of jurisdiction (Senate Finance) and is expected to move to a vote sometime next week. There is opposition, however, from some Senate Republicans who are circulating a letter urging colleagues to oppose attempts to move the bill in the Senate. At this time, it is unclear whether there are enough votes in the Senate to overcome the President's veto threat. NACBHDD will keep members updated.

Thank you to all who weighed in during this process. Your communication with Hill offices clearly helped pass this bill and provided enough votes to overturn a threatened veto. Please thank your Representatives for their vote.

We now ask that you contact your Senators and urge them to support the House bill and to move the legislation as quickly as possible. For more information check www.nacbhdd.org.

Section 8 Subsidized Housing Program

On Wednesday April 23, 2008 the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development and Related Agencies Subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee held an oversight hearing on project-based Section 8 subsidized housing programs. Witnesses from the National Housing Trust, National Affordable Housing Management Association and the American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging provided testimony on the challenges facing the program. Much of the discussion focused on late payments and contract renewals with the Department of Housing and Urban Development. These actions ultimately have resulted in some termination notices to tenants. The group indicated the need for additional funding of \$2.8 billion to ensure housing remains available.

The second panel included Brian Montgomery, Assistant Secretary of Housing and Urban Development. Though he acknowledged there have been challenges, he believes the agency has addressed them and has taken steps to improve processes. In response to the additional funding

request, the Mr. Montgomery believes there is sufficient funding to avoid disruptions in project based Section 8 housing assistance payments.

Veterans

The Health Subcommittee of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee held a mark up of H.R. 5554, the Veterans Substance Use Disorders Prevention and Treatment Act of 2008; the bill would expand and improve substance use disorders services for veterans from the Department of Veterans' Affairs. The bill was sent to the full committee and a mark up has not been scheduled. To view the text of the legislation and check cosponsors visit: www.thomas.gov

Childrens' Residential Programs

Thursday April 24, 2008 the U.S. House of Representatives Education and Labor Committee held a hearing child abuse and deceptive marketing practices taking place by private residential programs intended to help children and teens with behavioral, emotional, or mental health problems. The legislation, Stop Child Abuse in Residential Programs for Teens Act of 2008 would enact national standards for private residential programs, prevent deceptive marketing, hold programs accountable for violating the law, and provide grant money to states to develop their own standards. The legislation also provides funding for the Department of Health and Human Services to investigate deaths and patterns of violations.

To view more information and the text of the legislation go to:
<http://edlabor.house.gov/issues/residentialprograms.shtml#2>