

A Communication from the Policy Information Exchange

Slice of Pie

A Slice of Pie is an ongoing publication keeping our readers informed about important public policy issues. It is the mission of the Policy Information Exchange to **educate and inform Pennsylvanians with disabilities, their families and advocates, and the general public, regarding public policy issues and to further the exchange of policy information between the Pennsylvania Developmental Disabilities Council and federal, state and local policy makers.**

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State News

Governor's Budget

On February 8, 2022, Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf released his proposed budget for the 2022-2023 fiscal year which begins on July 1, 2022. Below we summarize some items of interest to the disability community. The budget proposal includes several spending initiatives, including addressing access to critical services through provider rate increases, a minimum wage increase to \$12.00/hour and increases in education funding. Projected spending in many programs includes replacement of federal funding received in 2021-22 for COVID-19 response.

Health & Human Services

- The governor proposes a \$606.4 million increase in state funds (33.56%) for the **Intellectual Disabilities community waivers**

to expand waiver services to an additional 832 people on the emergency waiting list; continued support for people coming out of state centers and transferring from ICF/ID settings, and an initiative that projects over \$2 million from performance-based incentives. The governor also proposes an increase of \$1.842 million in state funding in the **Autism Intervention and Services** program, or 6.7%. The proposed budget continues funding for the remaining four State Centers with an increase of \$31.4 million, which is 30.99%.

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- State funds for the **Intellectual Disabilities Community Base Program** would increase by \$2.843 million which is 1.97%.
- The governor would increase state funding for **mental health** by \$96.5 million or 11.73%, including a \$36.6 million increase in county mental health base funds to support efforts to provide critical behavioral health services. The mental health line-item funds both mental hospitals and community services. There is funding for 20 additional people out of state hospitals (**CHIPPs**).
- State funding for Medical Assistance for Workers with Disabilities (**MAWD**) would increase \$48.3 million, or 103.47%.
- **Medical Assistance Transportation** funding would increase by \$5.6 million, or 9.19%.
- **MA Community HealthChoices** proposed budget includes an increase of \$1.429 billion, or 37.02%. It includes an initiative of \$280,000 to implement Agency With Choice.
- State funding for the **LIFE** program (Living Independence for the Elderly) would be increased by \$31.59 million, or 21.55% including funds to serve 372 additional older Pennsylvanians.
- State funding for the MA Long-Term Living line item (**nursing homes plus OBRA and Act 150**) would be increased by \$1.938 million, or 1.53%.
- The Governor proposes an increase to the SSI personal care home supplementary payment funding by \$50 million, lifting the monthly payment from \$439.30 to \$1,351.80 per person per month. This is in the line-item

Supplemental Grants – Aged, Blind, and Disabled.

- **Epilepsy Support Services, Sickle Cell, Tourette’s Syndrome** and most of the other specialized health programs would be defunded. Each year, the governor defunds these programs, and every year the general assembly reinstates their funding. **Services for Children with Special Needs** would be level-funded and **Newborn Hearing Screening** would be slightly less than level-funded.
- **Early Intervention for infants and toddlers** would receive an \$11.56 million increase, or 6.81% to serve more children.
- For programs funded by Medicaid, **the federal financial participation** full year blended rate decreased slightly (52.56% to 52.17%) which requires additional state funds to fill this gap
- The Governor proposes a number of state **supplemental appropriations for Human Services which adjust the current year’s budget** (2021-22) to reflect actual expected spending. The net total of over \$1.1 million less funding needed compared to the enacted budget includes an adjustment of \$372 million less for Community Health Choices.

Aging

- PENNCARE Lottery funds would be increased \$855,000, and an initiative of \$667,000 would provide resources for protective services.

Labor & Industry

- All of the line items within the Vocational Rehabilitation program, including **Transfer to VR, Supported Employment, Centers**

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for Independent Living and the two **Assistive Technology** programs would receive the same amount of funding as last year.

Education

- State funding **for K-12 special education** would be increased \$200 million or 16.17%
- **Pre-school early intervention** would be level funded.
- Funding for **chartered schools** for those who are deaf and blind would be increased \$3.55 million or 5.7 % and special education in **approved private school** funding would be increased \$6.5 million, or 5.27%

Governor Signs Proclamation Marking March Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month

Governor Wolf's office recently signed an official proclamation establishing March 2022 as Developmental Disability Awareness Month in Pennsylvania. The Commonwealth's commitment to serving individuals with intellectual disabilities and autism is relayed through the proclamation in which Governor Wolf outlines specific ODP initiatives. Some of the initiatives included in the proclamation are racial equity, supporting families, and competitive integrated employment.

Read the proclamation [HERE](#).

Governor Wolf Announces New Acting PA Secretary of State

Governor Tom Wolf announced his intention to name Leigh M. Chapman to serve as Acting Secretary of the Commonwealth. Chapman will replace Acting Secretary

Veronica Degraffenreid, who will be elevated to serve in the Administration as a special advisor to the governor. Chapman will serve as Acting Secretary beginning Saturday, January 8, 2022.

Read the press release [HERE](#).

PA Legislative Reapportionment Commission Adopts 2021 Final Plans for State House and Senate Legislative Districts

On February 4, 2022, the 2021 PA Legislative Reapportionment Commission approved the final reapportionment plan for the PA House of Representatives and PA Senate in a vote of 4-1.

- [Download Final Plan for the House](#)
- [Download Final Plan for the Senate](#)

To view more information, visit the [Commission's website](#).

PA Supreme Court Picks New Congressional Map

The Pennsylvania Supreme Court has selected a new congressional map that closely resembles the current one, a ruling unlikely to dramatically change the partisan makeup of the state's delegation. This redraw of the PA Congressional Map is in response to the results of the 2020 Census, which indicated Pennsylvania's loss in population would take the Congressional delegation from 18 districts to 17 districts.

The ruling also announced that it will not move the date of the May 17th Primary, opting instead to adjust some of the earlier deadlines for candidates.

Read more [HERE](#).

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ODP Announces Proposed Increases to ID/A Waiver Cap Limits

ODP has increased the limits on the maximum dollar amount of Waiver services in Appendix C-4 as follows effective January 1, 2022:

- The current limit of \$70,000 per person per fiscal year for Community Living Waiver services will be increased to \$85,000. Supports Coordination services will continue to be excluded from this limit.
- The current limit of \$33,000 per person per fiscal year for P/FDS Waiver services will be increased to \$41,000. Supports Coordination and Supports Broker services will continue to be excluded from this limit. The limit can continue to be exceeded by \$15,000 for Advanced Supported Employment or Supported Employment services.

The proposed increases will ensure that the proposed changes to the Fee Schedule Rates do not result in a reduction or loss of Waiver services for individuals.

Wolf Administration Announces New Support for Long-Term Care Facilities

The Wolf Administration announced a new initiative to help long-term care facilities respond to COVID-19 and improve resiliency.

The Long-Term Care Resiliency, Infrastructure Supports, and Empowerment program ([LTC RISE](#)) gives long-term care facilities the support they need to battle COVID-19, recover, and rebuild.

Read more [HERE](#).

ISAC Annual Report 2021

Members of the Information Sharing and Advisory Committee (ISAC), working with the PA Office of Developmental Programs (ODP), developed a series of recommendations and strategies to support achievement of the vision in Everyday Lives. This publication provides 2021 updates related to those recommendations and strategies. Stakeholders are encouraged to use the information contained in this report in their work supporting people with disabilities.

- Access the 2021 ISAC Annual Report by clicking [HERE](#).
- Access the ISAC Recommendations and Strategies supplemental document from inside the ISAC Annual Report or by clicking [HERE](#).

Both documents can also be found by visiting [MyODP](#) and following this path: Everyday Lives > Everyday Lives Publications > Recommendations, Strategies, and Performance Measures.

OCDEL Receives Recognition For Equitable, Data-Driven Investing In Quality Early Learning Programs

The Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL), a collaborative effort between the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) and the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (DHS), was included in Pennsylvania's Honor Roll designation by the Results for America's **Invest in What Works State Standard of Excellence**. The recognition highlighted OCDEL's Keystone STARS use of equitable and data-based investments in early education.

Read more [HERE](#).

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ODP Announces 2022 Virtual Everyday Lives Conference

The Pennsylvania Office of Developmental Programs invites you to save the date for the 2022 Virtual Everyday Lives Conference! The Everyday Lives Conference seeks to provide valuable information to Individuals with an intellectual disability and/or autism, their families, and support professionals to help empower individuals to live their ideal everyday lives.

This year's theme is "An Everyday Life in a Changing World: A Focus on Wellness and Resilience".

Sessions will run from May 17 - June 16, 2022.

COVID-19 Information & Resources

Department of Health

The Pennsylvania Department of Health continues to monitor the ongoing situation with Coronavirus (COVID-19). To get the most accurate and up-to-date information including PA vaccine distribution plan, recommendations, closures, and statistics, visit: the [Department of Health's website](#).

Pennsylvania Departments of Health and Human Services would like to share resources surrounding COVID-19 vaccine information for individuals that have limited or no internet access. The following services are available to learn more about the COVID-19 vaccine, including locating a healthcare provider, by phone:

- If an individual does not have a direct support professional (DSP) that can provide them with the appropriate COVID-19 vaccine and healthcare provider information, they can call the PA

Health Hotline at 1-877-724-3258.

- Persevere PA is a COVID-19 crisis hotline designed to link callers with counselors to assist with the mental health impacts of COVID-19. They can also assist a caller in finding a healthcare provider to administer the vaccine when their corresponding phase arrives. Call Persevere PA at 1-855-284-2494.
- When arranging for an individual who is deaf or hard of hearing to receive information via telephone, PA Relay Services are available by dialing 711.

Biden Administration Announces New Initiatives to Make COVID-19 Tests Accessible

The White House announced new initiatives aimed at making COVID-19 tests, including at-home tests, accessible to people with disabilities.

After a request for information from the Department of Health and Human Services, the National Institutes of Health will work with national organizations that represent communities in need of accessible tests and test manufacturers to develop more accessible at-home tests for people who are blind or visually impaired; individuals with physical, cognitive, or other disabilities; and individuals who need non-English language or literacy support.

More information can be found [HERE](#).

White House Unveils COVID Plan Focused on People with Disabilities

"Following criticism from disability advocates, the Biden administration is taking new steps to better address the needs of people with disabilities during the ongoing COVID-19

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pandemic. The White House said it is rolling out efforts to make testing more accessible to people with disabilities, to get masks to those who are unable to leave their homes and to ensure that vulnerable students can learn safely in person.”

Read full article [HERE](#).

Rollout of Free At-Home COVID-19 Tests

Residential households in the U.S. can order one set of 4 free at-home tests from USPS.com. Here’s what you need to know about your order:

- Limit of one order per residential address
- One order includes 4 individual rapid antigen COVID-19 tests
- Orders will ship free starting in late January

To order tests online, click [HERE](#).

Department of Health Releases Vaccination Dashboard By Legislative District

Governor Tom Wolf announced the availability of COVID-19 vaccination rates by legislative district on the commonwealth’s [open data portal](#), in addition to the zip code, county-level and statewide vaccination data already available. The vaccination data by legislative district excludes those districts fully or partially located in Philadelphia County which is a separate CDC-designated vaccine jurisdiction. The legislative district dashboard will be updated monthly.

Access PA’s COVID-19 Dashboard [HERE](#).

Disability Rights Pennsylvania Vaccine Hotline Center

Disability Rights Pennsylvania is operating a

Vaccine Hotline to assist Pennsylvanians with disabilities who are interested in getting the COVID-19 vaccine Monday – Friday 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. at 1 (833) 377-2829 or vaccine@disabilityrightspa.org.

DHS Announces Operation Expanded Testing (OpET)

COVID-19 testing is an essential activity that increases safety for congregate care settings as part of a comprehensive mitigation strategy. **Operation Expanded Testing (OET)** is a federal testing resource that may be a useful to your organization. Providers wishing to use OET as a resource should coordinate directly with Eurofins.

If you wish to enroll or have questions related to Operation Expanded Testing please contact Eurofins:

- Email:
OperationET@Clinicalenterprise.com
- Call: 833-742-0862

Questions related to this communication should be directed to RA-PWODPEMRGN-CYRSPRQ@pa.gov.

CDC Updates Guidance on Boosters

CDC has updated its [guidance for extra doses and boosters](#) of the COVID-19 vaccine for people who are moderately or severely immunocompromised.

Read more [HERE](#).

Resources

- [COVID-19 Materials for People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities and Care Providers](#) – CDC Resources for People with IDD

Go to our digital version of Slice at <https://www.paddc.org/publications/slice-of-pie/> to access the links.

- Jefferson Health Study – Individuals with ID at Great Risk from COVID-19 - an analysis from a national study confirming that those with intellectual disabilities (ID) are at greatest risk of death from COVID-19 after those of older age/elderly.
- Vaccinations: Unpaid Caregivers Attestation Information - a letter to verify eligibility for the vaccination.
- Article: Examining How Crisis Standards of Care May Lead to Intersectional Medical Discrimination Against COVID-19 Patients
- Article: New COVID-19 Response Legislation Finally Recognizes Urgent Needs of People with Disabilities
- Article: ADA Concerns Raised Over COVID-19 Vaccine Rollout - Disability Scoop
- PA COVID-19 Resources
- Multilingual Resources from PA Departments.
- Mental Health Information and Support.
- Plain Language Guides/Videos on the COVID-19 Pandemic
- Disability Rights Pennsylvania – COVID-19 Vaccination FAQ
- COVID-19 Pandemic Impact on the PA ID/A Workforce Crisis Report
- Article: Study Among Vaccinated, Those With Down Syndrome Face Highest Risk From COVID-19

Bills of Interest

Below we summarize some bills of interest to the disability community from the 2021-2022 Session. For more information about these bills or any other state legislative activity, go to <https://www.legis.state.pa.us/>.

HB 25. Introduced by Representative Michael J. Puskaric (R-Allegheny). This bill would repeal the mail-in voting provisions contained in Act 77 of 2019. Abolishing the No Excuse **Mail in Vote**. Referred to State Government, Jan. 11, 2021.

Impact: Would remove the ability for individuals with disabilities to enroll in mail-in voting. This would not remove the ability to apply for an absentee ballot.

HB 44. Introduced by Representative Seth M. Grove (R-York). This bill would further provide for establishment of value-based models relating to the **Managed Care Organization Outcomes Program** and for managed care organization Medicaid contracts. Referred to Health, Jan. 11, 2021.

Impact: Would provide incentives for hospitals and MCO's to improve healthcare outcomes under Medicaid and establishes cost reduction targets for the Department of Human Services.

HB 45. Introduced by Representative Francis X. Ryan (R-Lebanon). This bill would **merge eight existing state agencies into four new state agencies**. These new agencies would be the Commonwealth Office of Management and Budget (OMB), the Department of Business, Tourism and Workforce Development (DBTWD), the Department of Local Government and Community Affairs (DLGCA) and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). Each merger in the legis-

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lation will require the adoption of a strategic plan detailing how the agencies described in the legislation are to be combined. To provide adequate time to prepare for the mergers, the legislation gives seven months following the effective date to develop the strategic plan. Referred to State Government, Jan. 11, 2021.

Impact: Would merge the Department of Labor & Industry with functions from the Department of Community & Economic Development and the Department of State. It ensures economic development programs are under one department.

HB 47. Introduced by Representative Matthew D. Dowling (R-Fayette). This bill would **merge eight existing state agencies into four new state agencies**. These new agencies would be the Commonwealth Office of Management and Budget (OMB), the Department of Business, Tourism and Workforce Development (DBTWD), the Department of Local Government and Community Affairs (DLGCA) and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). Each merger in the legislation will require the adoption of a strategic plan detailing how the agencies described in the legislation are to be combined. To provide adequate time to prepare for the mergers, the legislation gives seven months following the effective date to develop the strategic plan. Referred to State Government, Jan. 11, 2021. Reported as amended, Jan. 27, 2021. First consideration, Jan. 27, 2021. Laid on the table, Jan. 27, 2021.

Impact: Create the Department of Local Government and Community Affairs (DLGCA) to address local community needs and concerns.

HB 49. Introduced by Representative Paul Schemel (R-Franklin). This bill would **merge**

eight existing state agencies into four new state agencies. These new agencies would be the Commonwealth Office of Management and Budget (OMB), the Department of Business, Tourism and Workforce Development (DBTWD), the Department of Local Government and Community Affairs (DLGCA) and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). Each merger in the legislation will require the adoption of a strategic plan detailing how the agencies described in the legislation are to be combined. To provide adequate time to prepare for the mergers, the legislation gives seven months following the effective date to develop the strategic plan. Referred to State Government, Jan. 11, 2021.

Impact: Would merge the Department of Health and the Department of Human Services into one agency.

HB 50. Introduced by Representative Seth M. Grove (R-York). This bill would introduce a proposed constitutional amendment to require any **supplemental spending** to be approved in a standalone bill by the General Assembly. Referred to Appropriations, Jan. 11, 2021.

Impact: Would set forth a constitutional amendment process to require any supplemental spending to be approved in a standalone bill by the General Assembly.

HB 51. Introduced by Representative Timothy J. O'Neal (R-Washington). This bill is part of a **Financial Reform Package**. Referred to State Government, Jan. 11, 2021.

Impact: Would require any surplus funds to be deposited into the state's Rainy-Day Fund. Deposits into the Rainy-Day Fund would continue until the state has saved an equivalent to 20% of the commonwealth's

total revenue collections.

HB 52. Introduced by Representative Andrew Lewis (R-Dauphin). This bill is part of a **Financial Reform Package**. Referred to State Government, Jan. 11, 2021.

Impact: Would establish a State Council on Finances which would consist of 12 members. These members would be the following individuals: Secretary of Revenue; Budget Secretary; The Auditor General; State Treasurer; Director of the Independent Fiscal office; The Minority Chairperson of the Senate Appropriation Committee; The Majority Chairperson of the Senate Appropriation Committee; The Minority Chairperson of the House Appropriation Committee; The Majority Chairperson of the Senate Appropriation Committee; An individual with a background in private or public finance appointed by the governor; An individual with a background in private or public finance appointed by the President Pro-Tempore of the Senate; An individual with a background in private or public finance appointed by the Speaker of the House.

HB 53. Introduced by Representative Dawn W. Keefer (R-York). This bill is part of a **Financial Reform Package**. Referred to Appropriations, Jan. 11, 2021.

Impact: Would amend the Commonwealth's Constitution to prevent the creation or use of special funds except for the following reasons: Motor License Fund; Unemployment Compensation Fund; Workers Compensation Fund; State Pension system; ABLE Accounts; TAP Accounts; Any fund paid into by a specific industry for a specific industry.

HB 71. Introduced by Representative Ryan Warner (R-Fayette). This bill would establish **spending limits** that the Commonwealth must abide by each fiscal year. The proposed

constitutional amendment would limit the amount the Commonwealth's spending may increase, based on a three-year average of the Commonwealth's inflation and population growth. Referred to State Government, Jan. 11, 2021. Laid on the table, Jan. 13, 2021.

Impact: Would amend the Pennsylvania Constitution to establish spending limits that the Commonwealth must abide by each fiscal year.

HB 85. Introduced by Representative Dan L. Miller (D-Allegheny). This bill would provide for **students with disabilities** at institutions of higher education. Referred to Education, Jan. 11, 2021.

Impact: Would improve the transition to post-secondary schools for students with disabilities by incorporating parts of Senator Bob Casey's federal RISE (Respond, Innovate, Succeed and Empower) Act.

HB 87. Introduced by Representative Dan L. Miller (D-Allegheny). This bill would provide for legislative findings and declarations, for definitions, for **Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC)**, for powers and duties, for State plan, for grants and funding and for compliance with standards; repealing provisions relating to assurances of centers for independent living; further providing for allocation of funds by designated State agencies; and making an appropriation. Referred to Human Services, Jan. 11, 2021.

Impact: Would institute updates and changes to Act 139 of 1994 that will modernize its language to be in lockstep with the Federal Workforce Investment Opportunity Act (WIOA). These changes include updated guidance on Pennsylvania Statewide Independent Living Council (PA SILC) board composition, the role of the DSE with PA SILC

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and CILs, addition of the 5th core services for CILS of transition (youth, institutional settings), federally funded CILs already are required to do this service per WIOA) and a new base level for funding of (\$350,000).

HB 89. Introduced by Representative Dan L. Miller (D-Allegheny). This bill would require pharmacies to make **accessible prescription drug container labels** available to individuals who are deafblind and visually-impaired when requested. These labels will be available, at no cost to the consumer, in audio, braille, and large font formats. This measure is modeled off of the best practices released by the United States Access Board in 2013, and will enable individuals with visual impairments to manage their medications securely, independently, and privately. Referred to Health, Jan. 11, 2021.

Impact: Would require pharmacies to make accessible prescription drug container labels available to individuals who are deafblind and visually-impaired when requested. These labels will be available, at no cost to the consumer, in audio, braille, and large font formats.

HB 92. Introduced by Representative Dan L. Miller (D-Allegheny). This bill would provide for **intellectual disability and autism** fee schedule rates. Referred to Human Services, Jan. 11, 2021.

Impact: Would amend the Human Services Code requiring that rates for Direct Support Professionals annually be set based on a national market consumer index.

HB 94. Introduced by Representative Dan L. Miller (D-Allegheny). This bill would provide for definitions and for **medical excuses from attending school**. Referred to Education, Jan. 11, 2021.

Impact: Would allow for valid medical excuses submitted in a timely manner to not be considered an unexcused absence and lead to medical truancy.

HB 102. Introduced by Representative Dan L. Miller (D-Allegheny). This bill would provide access to trained, professional **support services** in every school district across the Commonwealth. Referred to Education, Jan. 11, 2021.

Impact: Would require school districts to evaluate their needs based on school population and requires a necessary complement of school counselors, psychologists, social workers, and nurses to ensure that access to help is not a problem and that case load management is not an issue.

HB 108. Introduced by Representative Valerie S. Gaydos (R-Allegheny). This bill would reform state government operations including **Medicaid**. This package will codify the grand jury recommendations along with enacting statutes which mirror federal law to allow the commonwealth to combat fraud in Medicaid and the rest of state government while recouping state tax dollars. Referred to State Government, Jan. 11, 2021.

Third consideration and final passage, Jan. 27, 2021. Referred to State Government, Jan. 28, 2021 [Senate].

Impact: Would require agencies to review their programs and expenditures and assess whether they are highly, moderately or unlikely to be susceptible to an improper payment.

HB 109. Introduced by Representative Clint Owlett (R-Tioga). This bill would reform state government operations including **Medicaid**. This package will codify the grand jury

recommendations along with enacting statutes which mirror federal law to allow the commonwealth to combat fraud in Medicaid and the rest of state government while recouping state tax dollars. Referred to Human Services, Jan. 11, 2021.

Impact: Would increase the penalties for making a false claim against the commonwealth's Medicaid Program under Section 1407 of the Human Services Code. Under this bill the penalty for knowing or causing a fraudulent claim to be submitted would commit a felony of the second degree if the fraudulent claim is \$100,000 or more. If the claim is between \$2,000 and \$100,000 the penalty for the fraudulent claim would be a third-degree felony. If the claim is \$2,000 or less the penalty would be a third-degree misdemeanor.

HB 114. Introduced by Representative Dan L. Miller (D-Allegheny). This bill would adopt a **streamlined hiring and promotion process** for qualified individuals with significant disabilities whose physical or mental impairments impact their ability to participate in the competitive hiring and promotion process. Referred to Labor and Industry, Jan. 11, 2021.

Impact: Would amend Part III of Title 71 of the Pennsylvania Code (Civil Service Reform), an appointing authority may noncompetitively appoint an individual with a significant disability to a temporary position when it is necessary to observe an applicant on the job to establish that the applicant is able or ready to perform the duties of the position (trial work period).

HB 184. Introduced by Representative Dawn Keefer (R-York). This bill would implement a sentence enhancement for any individual found guilty of causing or aiding **suicide**

when the victim is under 18 years of age or has an intellectual disability. Referred to Judiciary, Jan. 21, 2021. Final Passage, April 7, 2021. Referred to Senate Judiciary, April 9, 2021. Amended and Final Passage in the Senate, June 25, 2021. Concurrence Vote in House, Sept. 21, 2021. Approved by Governor on Sept. 30, 2021 becoming **Act No. 71**.

Impact: Would create a sentencing enhancement in cases where an individual is convicted of causing or aiding suicide of a person who is under the age of 18 or has an intellectual disability.

HB 217. Introduced by Representative Stanley Saylor (R-York). This bill would provide for **additional appropriations** from the General Fund for the expenses of the Executive Department for the fiscal year July 1, 2021, to June 30, 2022. Referred to Appropriations, Jan. 22, 2021. Re-committed to Appropriations, Jan. 27, 2021.

Impact: Would appropriate General Funds for the fiscal year July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022.

HB 218. Introduced by Representative Stanley Saylor (R-York). This bill would provide for **additional appropriations** from the General Fund for the expenses of the Executive Department for the fiscal year July 1, 2020, to June 30, 2021. Referred to Appropriations, Jan. 22, 2021.

Impact: Would appropriate General Funds for the fiscal year July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022.

HB 250. Introduced by Representative Dan L. Miller (D-Allegheny). This bill would amend the **Public School Code** to add curriculum requirements for Health classes across Pennsylvania to educate students in

an age-appropriate manner about mental health, physical disabilities, and developmental disabilities. Referred to Education, Jan. 25, 2021.

Impact: Would require the Department of Education to create curriculum for Health classes that will educate students in an age-appropriate manner about mental health, physical disabilities, and developmental disabilities.

HB 404. Introduced by Representative John T. Galloway (D-Bucks). This bill would provide for Statewide **children's mental health ombudsman**. Referred to Human Services, Feb. 4, 2021.

Impact: This legislation would designate an official be tasked with the following responsibilities: will have the authority to advocate on behalf of children with mental disorders; identify barriers to effective mental health treatment; monitor compliance with laws pertaining to children's behavioral health services; and investigate and attempt to resolve complaints regarding violations by an entity regulated by the State which have an adverse effect upon children.

HB 407. Introduced by Representative John T. Galloway (D-Bucks). This bill would establish the **School Student Mental Health Assistance** Augmentation Account and provide grants to support school-linked mental health services. Referred to Education, Feb. 4, 2021.

Impact: This legislation would provide for grants to be established to support school-aligned mental health services. These grants can be used by school entities to identify and diagnose mental health conditions among students, fund transportation for children receiving school-linked mental health

services when school is out of session, and cover costs associated with delivering telemedicine to school children.

HB 409. Introduced by Representative John T. Galloway (D-Bucks). This bill would establish a mental health care services clearinghouse. This clearinghouse will serve as a publicly accessible registry of **mental health care resources** available across the Commonwealth and will accordingly assist school personnel in connecting families to community mental health resources. Referred to Human Services, Feb. 4, 2021. Final passage, June 14, 2021. Referred to Senate Health and Human Services June 14, 2021.

Impact: Streamlines and makes a publicly accessible site for information on mental health care services that are available in Pennsylvania. This clearinghouse would increase coordination efforts among schools, communities, and mental health providers.

HB 411. Introduced by Representative Dan L. Miller (D-Allegheny). This bill would require state-owned buildings and certain places of public accommodation, including auditoriums, convention centers, sports arenas, and amusement parks with a maximum occupancy of 2,000 or more people, to install and maintain at least one **adult changing station**. Referred to Labor and Industry Committee, Feb. 4, 2021.

Impact: Would require state-owned buildings and certain places of public accommodation, including auditoriums, convention centers, sports arenas and amusement parks with a maximum occupancy of 2,000 or more people, to install and maintain at least one adult changing station.

HB 464. Introduced by Representative Karen

Boback (R-Columbia). This bill would provide for a primary **caregiver support** program and caregivers of individuals with disabilities. Referred to House Aging and Older Adult Services, Feb. 9, 2021. Final passage, April 6, 2021. Referred to Senate Aging and Youth, April 9, 2021. Final passage, June 8, 2021. Approved by the Governor, June 11, 2021 becoming **Act No. 20**.

Impact: Expands the Family Caregiver Support Program to include caregivers for individuals with disabilities to be eligible for respite and caregiving related service supplies.

HB 493. Introduced by Representative Liz Hanbidge (D-Montgomery). This bill would require health insurance policies to provide coverage for **hearing aids** and a resolution that would urge Congress to expand Medicare coverage to include hearing aids. Referred to Insurance, Feb. 10, 2021.

Impact: Would require health insurance policies to provide coverage for hearing aids and a resolution that would urge Congress to expand Medicare coverage to include hearing aids.

HB 540. Introduced by Representative Karen Boback (R-Columbia). This bill would provide for youth suicide awareness and prevention and providing for violence prevention and **social inclusion**. Referred to Education, Feb. 16, 2021.

Impact: Would require schools to implement at least one hour or a standard class period per year of suicide prevention & training, violence prevention training and social inclusion training to students in grades six through twelve.

HB 543. Introduced by Representative Karen

Boback (R-Columbia). This bill would amend the Unemployment Compensation (UC) Law to allow for **reasonable accommodations** to be made for individuals with a disability who are required to take the reemployment class. Referred to Labor and Industry, Feb. 16, 2021.

Impact: Would amend the Unemployment Compensation (UC) Law to allow for reasonable accommodations to be made for individuals with a disability who are required to take the reemployment class.

HB 547. Introduced by Representative Dan L. Miller (D-Allegheny). This bill would create the Department of Accessibility & Inclusion. Referred to State Government, March 2, 2021.

Impact: Would consolidate several existing programs under a new Department of Accessibility and Inclusion and create a secretary position to serve on the governor's cabinet.

HB 611. Introduced by Representative Austin A. Davis (D-Allegheny). This bill would establish the **Direct Care Worker Wage Advisory Board** and provides for its powers and duties; providing for minimum wage for direct care workers and for a direct care worker registry; and imposing penalties. Referred to Labor and Industry, Feb. 24, 2021.

Impact: Would direct the state's Secretary of Human Services to create a Direct Care Worker Wage Board. This board would meet to set a minimum wage for direct care workers, examine ways to grow this field, hear complaints from workers, and create a registry of direct care workers in the state.

HB 621. Introduced by Representative Brandon Markosek (D-Allegheny). This bill would provide special **absentee ballots**

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printed in Braille to qualified voters who submit a written request for a special ballot. Referred to State Government, Feb. 24, 2021.

Impact: Would require the Department of State to provide special absentee ballots printed in braille to qualified voters who submit a written request for a special ballot.

HB 640. Introduced by Representative Daniel Miller (D-Allegheny) and Representative Patty Kim (D-Dauphin). This bill would allow students who were enrolled in school with an active IEP when the COVID-19 state of emergency was declared by Governor to continue to be eligible services under Section 1301 of the School Code until twelve months after the expiration of the emergency declaration. Referred to Education Committee, March 11, 2021.

Impact: Would allow parents to decide if their child who is aging out of special education services participates in an additional year to address the loss of supports and transition services during COVID-19.

HB 649. Introduced by Representative Kathy L. Rapp (R-Warren). This bill would provide for access to long-term care facilities for **essential caregivers**, for additional safety requirements for residents of long-term care facilities, for suspension of access for essential caregivers and for personal protective equipment for essential caregivers. Referred to House Aging and Older Adult Services, Feb. 24, 2021. Final passage, March 24, 2021. Referred to Senate Aging and Youth, March 25, 2021. Final passage, June 16, 2021. Approved by Governor, July 1, 2021. **Act No.67.**

Impact: Would allow a designated essential caregiver to be named for each resident of a long-term care facility.

HB 694. Introduced by Representative Carol Hill-Evans (R-York). This bill would address the overall needs, including **mental health**, of students to prevent school dropouts. Referred to Education, Feb. 26, 2021.

Impact: Would assist public schools in procuring the services of non-profit organizations that provide evidence-based student support services to help students remove barriers to learning. Specifically, it will create a program that would allocate grants to schools to be used solely for services addressing the overall needs, including mental health, of students to prevent school dropouts.

HB 726. Introduced by Representative Jason Ortity (R-Washington) and Representative Joseph Hohenstein (D-Philadelphia). This bill would establish the **Disability Inclusive Curriculum Pilot Program** for K-12 students. Referred to Education, Oct. 5, 2021.

Impact: Would implement a pilot program for schools to introduce a disability inclusive curriculum that recognizes the political, economic and social contributions of individuals with disabilities.

HB 784. Introduced by Representative Tim Briggs (D-Montgomery). This bill would require the addition of **mental health education** into existing health and wellness curricula for all primary and secondary schools under the jurisdiction of the Department of Education. Mental health education will be taught in order to establish parity between physical and mental health. Referred to Education, March 8, 2021.

Impact: Would require the addition of mental health education into existing health and wellness curricula for all primary and secondary schools under the jurisdiction of the Department of Education.

ment of Education.

HB 806. Introduced by Representative Joe Ciresi (D-Montgomery). This bill would create an **Education Reform** Commission. The commission will conduct a comprehensive study and make concrete recommendations on various educational topics including equal access to education for all students. Referred to Education, March 8, 2021.

Impact: Would create an Education Reform Commission tasked with performing an in-depth study of the current educational needs in Pennsylvania, projecting out those needs over the next 25 years, and determining what can and should be done to help reform the current education system and prepare Pennsylvania for the future.

HB 816. Introduced by Representative P. Michael Sturla (D-Lancaster). This bill would include **trauma** as a factor in the school funding formula and removing significant barriers to learning. Referred to Education, March 8, 2021.

Impact: Would include chronic absenteeism, homelessness, and students living in foster care, definitive proxies of trauma that school districts are already mandated to measure, in the school funding formula based on the recommendations of the 2015 Basic Education Funding Commission Report.

HB 841. Introduced by Representative Anthony M. DeLuca (D-Allegheny). This bill would further provide **rights** and remedies of persons in mental health treatment. Referred to Human Services, March 9, 2021.

Impact: Would codify that mental health patients have the right to be free from abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

HB 893. Introduced by Representative Liz Hanbidge (D-Montgomery). This bill would allow an election official to bring a paper ballot – or portable **voting** machine when available – to any voter outside the physical polling place who has a physical, emotional, intellectual, developmental disability or short-term inability that would preclude them from easily accessing voting machines. Referred to State Government, March 15, 2021.

Impact: Would allow an election official to bring a paper ballot – or portable voting machine when available – to any voter outside the physical polling place who has a physical, emotional, intellectual, developmental disability, or short-term inability that would preclude them from easily accessing a voting machine.

HB 909. Introduced by Representative Melissa Shusterman (D-Chester) and Representative Jessica Benham (D-Allegheny). This bill would allow parents of students with IEPs to repeat a school year or students who are aging out of services to opt-in for an additional year due to loss of learning during COVID-19. Referred to Education Committee, March 15, 2021.

Impact: Would allow parents to decide if their child with an IEP repeats the school year to address the loss of educational supports and services during COVID-19.

HB 1012. Introduced by Representative Timothy J. O’Neal (R-Washington). This bill intends to preserve access to **ventilator care** in Pennsylvania by dedicating additional Medicaid funding to those facilities already demonstrating a significant commitment to caring for these Pennsylvanians. Referred to House Human Services March 25, 2021. Final passage, June 8, 2021. Referred to Senate Human Services June 9, 2021. Companion

Bill **SB 959**, introduced by Senator Camera Bartolotta (R-Beaver).

Impact: Provides increased Medicaid funding to facilities that offer ventilator care in the Commonwealth to address an access to care crisis and incentives for facilities to expand geographic access. This will expand the ability for these care facilities to assist more individuals throughout the state.

HB 1016. Introduced by Representative Anthony M. DeLuca (D-Allegheny). This bill would provide for departmental powers and duties as to small **personal care homes**. Referred to Health, March 29, 2021.

Impact: Would extend two provisions of current regulations to small personal care homes to provide the Department of Human Services to inspect such facilities at least once annually unannounced, and those responsible for the small personal care home will be required to submit to a criminal background check. All small personal care homes will be registered.

HB 1115. Introduced by Representative Kate A. Klunk (R-York). This bill would provide for definitions and for medical assistance benefits for **workers with disabilities** and workers with medically improved disabilities. Referred to Health, April 7, 2021. Companion bill **SB 156**.

Impact: Would create a new category under MAWD that would allow for a higher earning level for an individual with disabilities who has participated in the MAWD program for the previous 12 consecutive months. Under this new category, individuals would contribute a larger percentage towards their medical assistance benefits and still be able to retain access to their benefits.

HB 1313. Introduced by Representative Michael J. Driscoll (D-Philadelphia). This bill would require wheelchairs and other **electrical mobility devices** to have red reflectors that will make them more visible to drivers. Referred to Transportation, April 30, 2021.

Impact: Would require wheelchairs and other electrical mobility devices to have red reflectors that will make them more visible to drivers in order to minimize tragic accidents.

HB 1329. Introduced by Representative Jason Ortity (R-Allegheny). This bill would require employers receiving tax credits, outside of educational tax credits, to implement a **hiring program** for individuals with disabilities. Referred to Finance, May 5, 2021.

Impact: Would require employers receiving tax credits, outside of educational tax credits, to implement a hiring program for individuals with disabilities.

HB 1356. Introduced by Representative Gary Day (R-Chester). This bill would raise the **rate of reimbursement for guardians**. Referred to Aging and Older Adult Services, May 7, 2021.

Impact: Would amend the Human Services Code to increase the reimbursement rate for guardians of older adults from \$100 to \$300. This increase would still require federal approval under the state plan.

HB 1429. Introduced by Representative Lynda Schlegel Culver (R-Northumberland). This bill would provide for the offense of financial exploitation of an older adult or **care-dependent person**. Referred to House Aging and Older Adult Services, May 17, 2021. Final passage, June 15, 2021. Referred to Senate

Judiciary, June 17, 2021. Presented to the Governor, June 28, 2021.

Impact: Would give the Attorney General's office concurrent jurisdiction to investigate individuals who use their position of trust to financially exploit older adults and care-dependent people.

HB 1431. Introduced by Representative Kate A. Klunk (R-York). This bill would provide for the offense of **abuse of care-dependent person**. Referred to House Aging and Older Adult Services, May 17, 2021. Final passage, June 15, 2021. Referred to Senate Judiciary, June 17, 2021. Presented to the Governor, June 28, 2021.

Impact: Would establish abuse of social media by employees who post pictures of care dependent individuals without permission and categorize the crime as a misdemeanor

HB 1446. Introduced by Representative Curtis G. Sonney (R-Erie). This bill would allow an additional year of school for students who are aging out of **Special Education**. Referred to Education, May 20, 2021. Laid on the table, Nov. 10, 2021.

Impact: Would allow a students aging out of the special education system during the 2020-2021 school year the ability to attend the 2021-2022 school year to address loss of transition services during COVID-19.

HB 1500. Introduced by Representative Kate Klunk (R-York). This bill would amend the **Abortion Control Act** to prohibit the abortion of any child solely due to a diagnosis of possible Down Syndrome. Referred to House Health, May 19, 2021. Final Passage, June 8, 2021. Referred to Senate Health and Human Services, June 9, 2021. First Consideration,

June 21, 2021.

Impact: Would expand the current law to include the exception that a woman can obtain an abortion prior to 24 weeks gestational age for any reason if a physician deems it is necessary, except if the decision is due to a prenatal diagnosis that the unborn child has Down Syndrome.

HB 1566. Introduced by Representative Dan L. Miller (D-Allegheny). This bill would make an appropriation from the General Fund to the Department of Labor and Industry, Office for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, for the purpose of a Statewide program to facilitate communication for individuals who are **deaf-blind** for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2021. Referred to Appropriations, June 25, 2021.

Impact: Would appropriate money from the General Fund during the 2021-2022 fiscal year for Office for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, a statewide program to facilitate communication for individuals who are deaf-blind.

HB 1644. Introduced by Representative James B. Struzzi II (R-Indiana). This bill would direct the Department of Human Services to develop a statewide process to place patients, enrolled in Medicaid, with **behavioral health or other long-term care needs** in appropriate care settings in a timely matter. Referred to Health, June 16, 2021. Re-referred to Human Services, Nov. 16, 2021.

Impact: Would seek to address delays in the healthcare system by implementing solutions that provide better access to care and would develop a standardized process for the hospitals in referrals to treatment.

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HB 1749. Introduced by Representative Rosemary Brown (R-Monroe). This bill would apply the **Special Education Funding Formula** to Cyber & Charter Schools. Referred to Education, July 20, 2021.

Impact: Would take the suggestion of the Special Education Funding Commission and apply the same special education funding principles used to distribute state special education funding to school districts, in the calculation used to determine a school district's tuition payment for a special education student enrolled in a charter school.

HB 1783. Introduced by Representative Stephen Kinsey (D-Philadelphia). This bill would amend the Public School Code by adding **dyslexia** to what constitutes a disability. Referred to Education, Aug. 12, 2021.

Impact: Would amend the public school code by recognizing dyslexia as a disability, which would require schools to provide students with a diagnosis to receive specially designed instruction.

HB 1828. Introduced by Representative Bridget M. Kosierowski (D-Lackawanna). This bill would establish to better enable healthcare consumers to access quality and affordable **healthcare** and health insurance. Referred to Health, Sept. 1, 2021.

Impact: Would establish the Office of Healthcare Consumer Advocate, which will coordinate amongst, provide assistance to, and collect data from patient assistance programs and consumer help centers to better enable healthcare consumers to access quality and affordable healthcare and health insurance.

HB 1890. Introduced by Representative Mark Gillen (R-Berks). This bill would require **background checks** for individuals seeking

to become guardians. Referred to Aging and Older Adult Services, Sept. 21, 2021.

Impact: Would require any individuals seeking to become a guardian to undergo a background check in order to prohibit those with a history of gross criminal behaviors to serve as guardians.

HB 1928. Introduced by Representative Gary Day (R-Chester). This bill would require the **appointment of counsel** to be mandatory in guardianship cases. Referred to Aging and Older Adult Services, Sept. 28, 2021.

Impact: Would make the appointment of counsel for the individual being placed under guardianship mandatory to ensure the individuals rights are protected during a guardianship proceeding.

HB 1955. Introduced by Representative Gerald J. Mullery (D-Luzerne). This bill would provide for a Moratorium on Closing of White Haven and Polk **State Centers**. Referred to Health, Oct. 5, 2021.

Impact: Would halt the announced closure of Polk and White Haven State Center until all individuals eligible for a waiver have received it. Once all individuals have a waiver, a task force would be convened to make a plan. Only a majority vote of the task force would move the closure forward.

HB 1999. Introduced by Representative Liz Hanbidge (D-Montgomery). This bill would prevent deceptive interrogation tactics from being used on individuals with **autism and/or intellectual disabilities**. Referred to Judiciary, Oct. 21, 2021.

Impact: Would prevent deceptive interrogation tactics from being used on individuals with autism and/or intellectual disabilities, thus

reducing the number of false convictions, and ensuring equality and dignity to all individuals.

HB 2067. Introduced by Representative Seth M. Grove (R-York). This bill would establish an independent office to handle and administer the state's **Medicaid** Program. Referred to Health, Nov. 9, 2021.

Impact: Would establish an independent office to handle and administer the state's Medicaid program by instituting the Office of Independent Medicaid Director, which would operate within the Department of Human Services with the director being nominated by the Governor and approved by the Senate.

HB 2166. Introduced by Representative Malcolm Kenyatta (D-Philadelphia). This bill would provide for emergency relief to those who previously received support through the **General Assistance (GA) program**. Referred to Health, Dec. 13, 2021.

Impact: Would re-institute the General Assistance Program which provided \$200 on average a month to those who were unable to work, those caring for loved ones who were sick or disabled, veterans, women fleeing domestic violence and adults receiving substance abuse treatment.

HB 2071. Introduced by Representative Martin T. Causer (R-Mckean). This bill will **provide broadband Internet access** to unserved and underserved residents. Referred to Consumer Affairs, Nov. 9, 2021. Approved by the Governor, Dec. 22, 2021 becoming **Act 96 of 2021**.

Impact: Establishes the PA Broadband Development Authority to provide broadband is available across the state, especially to those areas that are unserved and underserved currently.

HB 2180. Introduced by Representative Dan Miller (D-Allegheny). This bill would require schools to track the **inclusion of extracurricular activities**. Referred to Education, Jan. 27, 2022.

Impact: Would require school districts to track the inclusion of their extracurricular activities for students with disabilities from grade 6. It requires the school districts to produce a report of the findings that will be given to the PA Department of Education.

HB 2182. Introduced by Representative Dan Miller (D-Allegheny). This bill would codify the right of people with disabilities in our Commonwealth to **accessible digital content** on all **state and local government websites**.

Impact: Would ensure that state and local government website are digitally accessible for individuals with disabilities in order to ensure access to the information and services needed.

SB 40. Introduced by Senator Kristin Phillips-Hill (R-York). This bill would integrate **behavioral health and physical health services** in Pennsylvania's Medicaid program, **HealthChoices**. Referred to Health and Human Services, Jan. 20, 2021.

Impact: Would coordinate mental health, substance abuse and primary care services in an effort to produce the best outcomes and best care for people with complex health needs.

SB 44. Introduced by Senator Katie J. Muth (D-Berks). This bill would provide emergency relief to those who previously received support through **General Assistance**. Referred to Health and Human Services, March 15, 2021.

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Impact: Would establish the Emergency Relief Program, which is temporary emergency assistance for the most vulnerable populations with immediate and urgent needs. Specifically, Emergency Relief goes to people with disabilities who cannot work, people in treatment for a substance use disorder, orphaned children cared for by neighbors or friends, people fleeing domestic violence, qualified veterans or people caring for someone with a disability.

SB 94. Introduced by Senator Mario M. Scavello (R-Monroe). This bill would provide for a **loan forgiveness** program for qualified college graduates entering the mental health, intellectual disability and drug and alcohol treatment professions. Referred to Education, Jan. 22, 2021.

Impact: Would provide for a loan forgiveness program for qualified college graduates entering the mental health, intellectual disability and drug and alcohol treatment professions.

SB 108. Introduced by Senator Camera Bartolotta (R-Beaver). This bill would intend to preserve access to **ventilator care** in Pennsylvania by dedicating additional Medicaid funding to those facilities already demonstrating a significant commitment to caring for these Pennsylvanians. Referred to Health and Human Services, Jan. 22, 2021. Final passage, April 28, 2021. Referred to House Health and Human Services, April 29, 2021. Final passage, June 25, 2021. Approved by the Governor, June 30, 2021, becoming **Act No. 56**.

Impact: Provides increased Medicaid funding to facilities that offer ventilator care in the Commonwealth to address an access to care crisis and incentives for facilities to expand geographic access. This will expand the

ability for these care facilities to assist more individuals throughout the state.

SB 156. Introduced by Senator Bob Mensch (R-Berks). This bill would allow individuals with disabilities to increase earnings under a new category of MAWD, called **Workers with Job Success (WJS)**. Referred to Health and Human Services, Feb. 2, 2021. Final passage, May 11, 2021. Referred to House Health May 17, 2021. Final passage, June 25, 2021. Signed by the Governor, July 1, 2021, **Act No. 69**.

Impact: Would create a new category under MAWD that would allow for a higher earning level for an individual with disabilities who has participated in the MAWD program for the previous 12 consecutive months. Under this new category, individuals would contribute a larger percentage towards their medical assistance benefits and still be able to retain access to their benefits.

SB 195. Introduced by Senator Judy Ward (R-Blair). This bill would revise the **Care-giver Support Program (CSP)** to enhance the services provided to families and care-givers. Referred to Aging and Youth, Feb. 10, 2021.

Impact: Would update the PA Family Caregiver Support Act in the following ways: removes the statutory Caregiver Support Program (CSP) monthly care plan cost cap, allowing it to be set by the department; removes the \$300 monthly aggregate average reimbursement limit for all CSP cases; removes the CSP home modification lifetime limit, allowing it to be set by the department; and updates terminology and definitions to include caregivers of individuals with disabilities.

SB 255. Introduced by Senator Patrick Browne (R-Lehigh). **Budget** bill for fiscal

year July 1, 2021, to June 30, 2022. Referred to Appropriations, Feb. 22, 2021. Presented to the Governor, June 28, 2021. Approved by the Governor, June 30, 2021 becoming **Act No. 1A**.

Impact: Establishes the appropriation of funding from the General Fund for the 2021-2022 State Budget.

SB 367. Introduced by Christine M. Tartaglione (D-Philadelphia). This bill would create the **Office for People with Disabilities** within and to be administered by the Office of the Governor and make the office permanent by statute. Referred to State Government, March 12, 2021.

Impact: Would permanently establish the Office for People with Disabilities within and to be administered by the Office of the Governor.

SB 404. Introduced by Senator Lisa M. Boscola (D-Lehigh). This bill would provide for **voter's bill of rights**. Referred to State Government, March 11, 2021.

Impact: Would create a Statement of Voter's Rights and require that the State of Voter's Rights be visible in all voter registration offices and polling places.

SB 427. Introduced by Senator John R. Gordner (R-Columbia). This bill would amend the **Pennsylvania Affordable Housing Act** to reestablish an exemption to state prevailing wage rates for certain federally funded housing grants. Referred to Urban Affairs and Housing, March 15, 2021.

Impact: Would amend the Pennsylvania Affordable Housing Act to reestablish an exemption to state prevailing wage rates for certain federally funded housing grants.

SB 474. Introduced by Senator Michele Brooks (R-Crawford). This bill would allow constituents to obtain a **disability placard** in their respective legislative district offices rather than waiting to receive them in the mail. Referred to Transportation, March 23, 2021. First Consideration, Oct. 27, 2021.

Impact: Would allow individuals to obtain handicap parking placards in their respective legislative district offices rather than receiving them in the mail from PennDOT.

SB 664. Introduced by Senator Jake Corman (R-Centre). This bill would all students aging out of the special education system during the 2020-2021 school year to receive an **additional year** and allows any K-12 student the ability to **repeat their grade level** in the 2021-2022 school year due to the impact of COVID-19. Referred to Senate Education, May 7, 2021. Final Passage, May 12, 2021. Referred to House Education, May 17, 2021. Final Passage with amendments, June 23, 2021. Senate Concurrence Vote, June 24, 2021. Signed by Governor Wolf, June 30, 2021, becoming **Act No. 66**.

Impact: Would allow a students aging out of the special education system during the 2020-2021 school year the ability to attend the 2021-2022 school year to address loss of transition services during COVID-19. Also, will enable parents to elect to have their K-12 child repeat their grade level in the 2021-2022 school year.

SB 704. Introduced by Senator Lisa Baker (R-Lackawanna). This bill expands the crime of institutional **sexual assault**. Referred to Senate Judiciary, May 21, 2021. Second Consideration, June 25, 2021.

Impact: Would expand the crime of institutional sexual assault to include those who

provide care to care-dependents individuals. Specifically, it would close the loophole for caregivers to use the defense of “consent” when they sexually assault an individual who is care-dependent and they are providing services to.

SB 705. Introduced by Senator Elder Vogel (R-Beaver). This bill would allow for the continuation of the use of **Telemedicine** in the Commonwealth. Referred to Banking & Insurance, May 21, 2021. Final Passage, Oct. 26, 2021. Referred to House Insurance, Oct. 27, 2021.

Impact: Would define telemedicine, offering guidelines outlining who can provide telemedicine services, and providing clarity around insurance company reimbursement for these services.

SB 829. Introduced by Senator John T. Yudi-chak (D-Carbon). This bill would establish the **Livable Home Tax Credit**. This legislation will benefit residents, especially senior and disabled residents, who seek to make home modifications that would improve accessibility and enable them to remain at their current residence. Referred to Finance, July 26, 2021.

Impact: Would establish the Livable Home Tax Credit, which will allow eligible homeowners may receive a tax credit up to \$2,000 for accessibility features in a new residence or 50% of the amount expended (up to \$2,000) to complete renovations to an existing residence. During the second year of the program, the maximum tax credit would increase to \$5,000. This proposal would cap the amount of credits awarded under this article at \$1 million.

SB 844. Introduced by Senator John Kane (D-Chester). This bill would establish student

Mental Health Days. Referred to Education, Aug. 27, 2021.

Impact: Would allow students to take excused absences for mental health reasons. The number of mental health days will be equal to the number of excuses for nonattendance authorized by the school district for a physical reason.

SB 878. Introduced by Senator Dave Argall (R-Schuylkill) and Senator Sharif Street (D-Philadelphia). This bill will implement recommendations for **Election Reform**. Referred to State Government, September 17, 2021.

Impact: Would implement reforms recommended following the hearings on the 2020 Election. Key issues addressed are: pre-canvassing mail-in ballots, tracking mail-in ballots, counting mail-in ballots, counting mail-in ballots, application deadlines for mail-in ballots, elimination of permanent mail-in list, real-time reporting of deceased voters, drop boxes, and training election workers.

SB 924. Introduced by Senator Michele Brooks (R-Crawford). This bill would institute a moratorium on the scheduled closing of the Polk and White Haven **State Centers**. Referred to Health and Human Services, Oct. 26, 2021. Final Passage, Dec. 15, 2021. Referred to Health [House], Dec. 22, 2021.

Impact: Would halt the announced closure of Polk and White Haven State Center for at least 5 years. Institutes a task force to review the impact of the planned closure to the residents, staff, and local economy. A closure can only move forward once a majority vote of the task force approves the closure.

SB 965. Introduced by Senator Wayne Langerholc Jr. (R-Bradford). This bill would provide for highly **automated vehicles** and evaluate improvements to accessibility and mobility for persons with disabilities. Referred to Transportation, Jan. 5, 2022. First consideration, Jan. 26, 2022.

Impact: The Advisory Committee will be tasked with producing a report that evaluates improvements to accessibility and mobility for persons with disabilities.

SB 995. Introduced by Senator Carolyn Comitta (D-Chester). This bill would apply **hate crimes protections** for individuals with intellectual and physical disabilities in Pennsylvania. Referred to Judiciary, Dec. 29, 2021.

Impact: Would expand Pennsylvania's hate crimes protections to individuals with physical and intellectual disabilities.

SB 1060. Introduced by Senator Vincent J. Hughes (D-Montgomery). An Act to provide **appropriations from the General Fund** for the expenses for the fiscal year July 1, 2022, to June 30, 2023. Referred to Appropriations, Feb. 18, 2022 [Senate].

Impact: Establishes the appropriation of funding from the General Fund for the 2022-2023 State Budget.

Resolutions

HR 47. Introduced by Representative Melissa L. Shusterman (D-Chester). This resolution would increase the fee paid to **guardians** from \$100 to \$300. Referred to Judiciary, Feb. 9, 2021.

HR 49. Introduced by Representative Francis X. Ryan (R-Lebanon). This resolution urges

Congress of the United States to fund the costs associated with **special education**. Referred to Education, Feb. 10, 2021.

HR 50. Introduced by Representative Liz Hanbidge (D-Montgomery). This resolution urges Congress to expand Medicare coverage to include **hearing aids**. Referred to Insurance, Feb. 10, 2021.

HR 54. Introduced by Representative Brian Sims (D-Philadelphia). This resolution recognizes **discrimination** against women, people of color, LGBTQ+ people, people with disabilities and other marginalized groups as a public health issue threatening the safety of Pennsylvanians. Referred to Health, Feb. 17, 2021.

HR 72. Introduced by Representative P. Michael Sturla (D-Lancaster). This resolution would conduct a comprehensive study to find an age-appropriate measuring tool that our 500 school districts can use to measure, track, and combat **trauma** with the necessary support services. Referred to Education, March 8, 2021.

HR 138. Introduced by Representative Karen Boback (R-Luzerne). This resolution directs the Joint State Government Commission to study special education lawsuits in our Commonwealth. Referred to Education, September 15, 2021.

SR 39. Introduced by Senator Scott Martin (R-Lancaster). This resolution designates March 21, 2021 as "World Down Syndrome Day" in Pennsylvania. Referred to Rules & Executive Nominations Committee, March 11, 2021.

SR 140. Introduced by Christine M. Tartaglione (D-Philadelphia). This Resolution

designates June 21 through June 30, 2021, as **Disability Pride Week** in Pennsylvania. This week is designed to change the way people think about and define “disability.” Referred to Rules and Executive Nominations, June 24, 2021.

SR 175. Introduced by Senator Christine Tartaglione (D-Philadelphia). This resolution would recognize October 2021 as Disability Employment Awareness Month in Pennsylvania. Referred to Rules and Executive Nominations Committee, September 19, 2021.

SR 235. Introduced by Senator Christine Tartaglione (D-Philadelphia). This resolution designates March 2022 as Disability Awareness Month in Pennsylvania. Referred to Rules and Executive Nominations, March 3, 2022.

National News

ACL Announces Jill Jacobs as Commissioner for the Administration on Disabilities

The Administration for Community Living announced Jill Jacobs as the Commissioner of ACL’s Administration on Disabilities. Jill brings to ACL more than two decades of professional experience managing disability services organizations, analyzing policy, and working toward improved health and disability programs and services at local, state, and federal levels. In addition, she has worked with disability justice groups, disaster relief organizations, and advocates to organize healthcare, human rights, and disaster relief initiatives in support of the most marginalized communities. Jill also brings to the role extensive lived experience, both as a person with a disability and as the mother of two disabled adults.

Read full announcement [HERE](#).

CDC Revises Developmental Milestones for Young Kids

A Centers for Disease Control and Prevention effort to help identify children with autism and developmental disabilities early so that they can access appropriate supports and services is getting its first-ever update.

The federal agency unveiled revised versions of its developmental milestone checklists this week. The tools are part of the agency’s “Learn the Signs. Act Early” program, a major initiative to educate families on what to expect from their children at each stage of development.”

Read article [HERE](#).

President Biden Announces Key Appointments to the President’s Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities

President Biden announces his intent to appoint the following individuals to serve as members on the President’s Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities.

Read more [HERE](#).

IRS Raises Limit for ABLE Accounts

The Internal Revenue Service said that the federal gift tax exclusion is growing from \$15,000 to \$16,000 annually. That same cap also applies to contributions to ABLE accounts, a special savings vehicle for people with disabilities.

Read the article [HERE](#).

Bill Introduced to Simplify Medicare Enrollment for Seniors and People With Disabilities

On February 18, Senator Bob Casey (D-PA) and Senator Todd Young (R-IN) introduced the

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Beneficiary Enrollment Notification and Eligibility Simplification (BENES) 2.0 Act. This legislation would simplify Medicare enrollment for older adults and people with disabilities by providing advance notices to people approaching Medicare eligibility about basic enrollment rules as part of their Social Security statements.

Learn more about the bill [HERE](#).

Senate Hearing Highlights Bipartisan Bill to Improve Health Care for People With Both Medicare and Medicaid

On February 10, the Senate Special Committee on Aging held a hearing on improving care experiences for people with both Medicare and Medicaid to examine the challenges people enrolled in both programs face in navigating the systems. Senators spoke about the Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE) Expanded Act, which provides an alternative model of care to traditional home-based care that can help people receive care in the community.

[Get more information on the hearing and legislation.](#)

Senate Hearing Held on Employment for People With Disabilities

On February 8, the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee held a hearing on “Lessons Learned from COVID-19: Highlighting Innovations, Maximizing Inclusive Practices, and Overcoming Barriers to Employment for People With Disabilities.” The hearing examined existing and new barriers to the employment for people with disabilities and noted that people with disabilities are over-represented in essential jobs and therefore face an increased risk of COVID-19. The hearing also noted that more people now identify as having a disability due to long COVID.

A recording of the hearing can be found [HERE](#).

Bill Introduced to End Waiting Periods Which Deny People with Disabilities Access to Healthcare

On February 3, U.S. Representative Lloyd Doggett (D-TX), Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA) and Senator Bob Casey (D-PA) introduced the Stop the Wait Act to end harmful waiting periods during which people with disabilities must wait 5 months to receive Social Security Disability Insurance cash benefits and an additional 2 years to receive Medicare benefits. This wait places people with disabilities at serious risk of not being able to access health care and facing financial instability. This legislation would ensure that people with disabilities can immediately access the benefits they earned without an unnecessary additional wait.

Learn more about the bill [HERE](#).

Bill Introduced to Eliminate Marriage Penalties for People With Disabilities in Accessing Benefits

On January 13, Representative Jimmy Panetta (D-CA) introduced the Marriage Equality for Disabled Adults Act, which would eliminate requirements that disabled adult children (DAC) remain unmarried in order to receive Social Security benefits and Medicare and Medicaid.

Learn more about the legislation [HERE](#).

Resources

OSERS Releases 2021 Annual Report to Congress on IDEA

The report focuses on children with disabilities being served under IDEA, Part B and

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Part C, nationally and at the state level.

Access the report [HERE](#).

OCR Releases Factsheet regarding FAPE and Compensatory Services for Students with Disabilities During the Pandemic

The U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights' (OCR) released the fact sheet: [Providing Students with Disabilities Free Appropriate Public Education \(FAPE\) During the COVID-19 Pandemic and Addressing the Need for Compensatory Services Under Section 504](#). The new OCR resource clarifies that Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (Section 504) requires schools to provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to students with disabilities which may include compensatory services.

Additionally, schools are reminded that they must convene the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team, which includes parents, to make individualized decisions regarding a student's current services and need for compensatory services. Finally, OCR clarifies that if a parent or guardian believes their child is not receiving FAPE or appropriate compensatory services, they may schedule a hearing under Section 504's due process procedures.

Read the fact sheet [HERE](#).

HHS' New Guidance for Health Care Providers on Civil Rights Protections for People with Disabilities

On Feb. 4, the HHS Office for Civil Rights (OCR) issued guidance for health care providers on civil rights protections for people with disabilities under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and Section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act. ACL collaborated with

OCR on a number of topics included in the guidance, which addresses providers' obligations to ensure people with disabilities are not discriminated against in accessing the healthcare they need during the continuing COVID-19 public health emergency.

Read more [HERE](#).

Center for Health Care Strategies (CHCS) - Supporting Family Caregivers: A Collection of Evidence, Tools, and Case Studies

The Better Care Playbook for People with Complex Needs has come out with a new collection about supporting family caregivers. Family caregivers provide care for individuals with complex health needs, including older adults, people living with dementia, and people with disabilities, and are often responsible for taking on medical tasks such as medication management, wound care, and assisting with mobility. This playbook explain what a supportive family caregiving model looks like and how organizations can implement these approaches in their work.

[Click here for more information.](#)

ODP Releases 2020-2021 Annual Data Report

The Office of Developmental Programs Annual data report provides statistical information to educate our stakeholders about the individuals ODP serves and the services they receive. This data provides an important overview of the service system ODP oversees that supports individuals with disabilities. The accompanying resource, Everyday Lives: Values in Action Information, Sharing and Advisory Committee (ISAC) Recommendations, Strategies, and Performance Measures, provides information on indicators

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of success used to gauge the effectiveness of the work of ODP.

The 2020-2021 Annual Data Report is available by using either of the following links:

- [MyODP Everyday Lives Publications Webpage](#)
- [DHS Office of Developmental Programs Webpage](#)

DHS Releases Medical Assistance Transportation Report

The Department of Human Services has released the Medical Assistance Transportation (MATP) Report. The report includes various recommendations that the Workgroup feels could improve the structure, administration, and service delivery of the MATP.

- Read the full report [HERE](#).
- Read the summary of the report [HERE](#).

Contact PIE

Contact the PIE Team with any questions, comments, suggestions, or information to share at PIE, c/o The Arc of Pennsylvania, 1007 Mumma Road, Suite 100, Lemoyne, PA 17043, by email at pie@thearcpa.org or by phone at 800-692-7258.

- o **A Slice of Pie** is available by email and contains hyperlinks for ease of accessing websites and internet documents and resources.
- o PIE Alerts, PIE Information, and PIE Job Postings are available by email to keep people informed about disability issues between newsletters.
- o Sign up for A Slice of Pie or PIE electronic messages by phone at 800-692-7258 or by emailing pie@thearcpa.org.
- o Individuals who already get A Slice of Pie and/or PIE electronic messages can make changes at any time by clicking "Update Profile/Email Address" at the end of any PIE email message.
- o A Slice of Pie is available at the Developmental Disabilities Council website www.paddc.org, by clicking on "Publications" and "Slice of Pie". Archived editions can also be found there.
- o **A Slice of Pie** is available in alternate format upon request.
- o The PIE office will download, copy, and mail information mentioned in A Slice of Pie upon request.

Overview of Benefits Counseling - Webinar

April 21, 2022 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM

The Pennsylvania Department of Human Services is offering a webinar on the topic of the Social Security Administration's Ticket to Work Benefits Counseling which provides individuals, their families, friends, and caregivers information relative to their benefits / services, and competitive integrated employment. This overview will be presented by Ms. Joy Smith, AHEDD Work Incentive Planning and Assistance, Certified Work Incentive Coordinator, Regional Manager.

Office of Long-Term Living Service Coordinators, Direct Service Providers, CHC-MCO staff and any individuals that work on employment are strongly encouraged to participate in this webinar on an overview of Benefits Counseling as it relates to the participants you serve.

Register [HERE](#).

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The PIE Team

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