

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

### Voting & 2022 General Election

The General Election will be held on Tuesday, **November 8, 2022**. In Pennsylvania, the deadline to register to vote in the 2022 General Election is **October 24, 2022**. The deadline to Request a Mail-In or Absentee Ballot is **November 1, 2022** by 5:00 PM ET.

All individuals should create a voting plan whether they are voting in person or by a mail-in or absentee ballot. You want to check your voter registration. Plan if you need assistance with voting tasks. And if you do need assistance, have multiple people ready and able to help you with your voting tasks.

### Register to Vote

You can register to vote online, by mail, or at a

number of government agencies, including PA Department of Transportation (PennDOT). For more information on how to register to vote, click [here](#).

### Mail-In and Absentee Ballots

For individuals planning to vote by mail-in ballots, you must apply for a mail in ballot either online, in-person at a county election office, or request a paper application and apply by mail. Voted mail-in or absentee ballots must be received by

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your county election office by 8:00 PM on Election Day— a postmark is not enough. [\*\*Link to Request a Mail-In or Absentee Ballot Online.\*\*](#)

### **Designated Agent**

Individuals with disabilities are able to use a “designated agent” to pick up or drop off their mail-in ballot or absentee ballot. In order to designate an agent, a person needs to complete the designated agent form which is provided by the Department of State. Keep a copy of your designated agent form.

The designated agent needs to bring the completed form along with them, either when they’re picking up or dropping off a person’s mail-in or absentee ballot.

Anyone can be a designated agent, but an agent cannot assist more than one voter unless voters share a “household”. The Department of State says that a “household” does not include long-term care facilities or intermediate care facilities. While community homes such as group homes are NOT specifically addressed in the Department of State Guidance, it is recommended to be cautious and only have one designated agent per voter living in a group home. [\*\*Link to Designated Agent Form\*\*](#)

### **Voting in Person**

For individuals planning to vote in person, get ready and confirm your polling place. You can look up your polling place online. [\*\*Link to Finding Your Polling Place.\*\*](#) You can find out what polling places are accessible and have accessible voting machines. [\*\*Link to Accessible Voting Information.\*\*](#) If you arrive at your polling location and it is inaccessible, ask for the judge of elections. If the judge of elections is unable to help, they can contact the county board of elections.

If you have an emergency and are unable to vote in person as you planned, you may still

be able to get a ballot after the deadline which is called an emergency ballot. [\*\*Link to learn more about an Emergency Ballot.\*\*](#)

### **Wolf Administration Expands Access to Voter Registration Forms**

Pennsylvania will now offer voter registration forms at libraries, state park offices, and state-run veterans homes, among other locations, as part of an enhanced effort to reach about 1.7 million people eligible to vote, but who are not registered.

The order, signed Sept. 7 by Gov. Tom Wolf, expands on an existing federal law that requires certain state agencies, including the departments of Health and Human Services, to provide clients the opportunity to register to vote.

Learn more [\*\*here.\*\*](#)

### **Important Voting Resources**

- [\*\*Register to Vote Online\*\*](#)
- [\*\*FAQ About Pennsylvania Elections\*\*](#)
- [\*\*Voting in PA Information\*\*](#)
- [\*\*Accessible Voting Information\*\*](#)
- [\*\*The Arc of Pennsylvania Voting Resources\*\*](#)
- [\*\*Disability Rights Pennsylvania Voting Guides\*\*](#)

### **Wolf Administration Announced \$14 Million Grant to Support More People with Disabilities in Competitive Integrated Employment**

The Department of Labor & Industry (L&I) Secretary Jennifer Berrier and Department of Human Services (DHS) Acting Secretary Meg Snead announced the Wolf Administration’s

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goal of using a \$14 million federal grant to help Pennsylvanians with disabilities earning subminimum wage transition to competitive, integrated employment.

Read full press release [here](#).

### **Wolf Administration Releases Behavioral Health Commission Report, Outlines Recommendations For Allocation Of \$100 Million To Support Behavioral Health Needs**

The Wolf Administration released a report outlining recommendations from the Behavioral Health Commission for Adult Behavioral Health. Established by Act 54 of 2022, the multi-disciplinary commission was charged with making recommendations to the General Assembly for the allocation of \$100 million in one-time American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding included to support adult behavioral health needs in the 2022-23 Fiscal Code.

Read full press release [here](#).

### **PA DHS Mass Care Public Facing Website Goes Live**

The Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (PADHS) coordinates the Commonwealth's response to disaster-caused human services needs. This includes food, shelter, and disability-related needs as well as emergency behavioral health services. PA DHS manages Disaster Operational/Planning Task Forces and maintains Mass Care supplies, equipment, and specially trained staff available to support local communities in times of disaster.

Learn more [here](#).

### **Department Of Human Services Receives Federal Funding To Support Medicaid Beneficiaries Receiving Care Services In Their Community**

The Department of Human Services (DHS) announced that Pennsylvania has received an estimated \$12 million in federal reimbursement funding from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) for the Money Follows the Person (MFP) Program to continue to support new and existing activities that meet the criteria for MFP funding.

Read full press release [here](#).

### **Labor & Industry Ends Waitlist For Individuals With Disabilities, Opening Services For All**

“For the first time since 1994, the Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry (L&I) will reopen the order of selection (OOS) to significantly disabled (SD) and non-significantly disabled (NSD) individuals, terminating the waitlist for all SD and NSD applicants seeking vocational rehabilitation services.” The change went into effect on August 8, 2022.

Read the press release [here](#).

### **Launch of Pennsylvania American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Reporting Portal**

The Department of Human Services (DHS), Office of Long-Term Living (OLTL) launched the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) Funding Reporting portal. The online portal was made available on September 30, 2022, for OLTL providers to submit costs associated with ARPA funding distributed in 2021 in order to comply with DHS' reporting requirements.

Access the portal link [here](#).

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## **PennDOT Expands Online Services For People With Disabilities**

“In an effort to help provide its customers with improved service and increased convenience, the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) announced today that customers who have a Person with Disabilities Parking Placard can now have the option to renew, receive a replacement or update their address on their permanent Persons with Disabilities Parking Placard online from the comfort of their home.”

Read more [here](#).

## **Changes Coming to Pennsylvania’s Medical Assistance Program for the HealthChoices Physical Health Plans**

Pennsylvania’s Department of Human Services (DHS) is changing which Physical Health Managed Care Organizations (PH plans) are available for Medical Assistance (MA) consumers. This was a competitive process that allowed DHS to improve access to care and the quality of care for MA consumers. The PH plan changes were effective September 1, 2022. MA Consumers needed to select a new PH plan if they were currently enrolled in:

- Aetna Better Health statewide
- Highmark Wholecare (formerly Gateway Health Plan) in the Northwest zone
- United Healthcare in the Southwest and Lehigh/Capital zones.

If a consumer who needed to choose a new PH plan did not do so by August 16, DHS auto-assigned them to a PH plan. MA consumers will not lose health coverage if they do not select a PH plan. Coverage will automatically continue under the PH plan they are auto-assigned.

More information is available at [dhs.pa.gov/PlanSelection](https://dhs.pa.gov/PlanSelection). Those interested in sharing this information can access resources in the [stakeholder’s toolkit](#).

## **ODP Announces 2nd Annual Publication of the Resource Guide for Supporting Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing Individuals**

The Office of Developmental Programs (ODP) announced the second annual publication of the Resource Guide for Supporting Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing Individuals. The purpose of this guide is to offer resources in one central location for those who support or care for someone who is Deaf, Hard of Hearing, or DeafBlind and receives supports from ODP.

The Guide provides some of the most frequently accessed resources to assist in addressing the unique needs of these populations, such as information about American Sign Language (ASL) courses, apps, home modifications, assistive technology, a foundational organizations directory, and so much more!

Development of this guide included input from individuals within the Deaf, DeafBlind, hard of hearing, and hearing communities and will be revised annually by ODP’s Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing Advisory Committee.

Access the guide [here](#).

## **Governor Wolf Recognized Direct Support Professional Recognition Week in PA**

In September, Governor Wolf signed a proclamation to announce that September 11-17, 2022 was Direct Support Professional Recognition Week in Pennsylvania. This week was set aside to honor DSPs for the important work they do supporting individuals with Intellectual Disability and Autism (ID/A).

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Read the proclamation [here](#).

## Acting Secretary Meg Snead Acknowledged Direct Support Recognition Week

Pennsylvania's Acting Secretary of the Department of Human Services had a special message in celebration of Direct Support Professionals Recognition Week back in September.

Watch video [here](#).

## ODP Family Satisfaction Survey Highlights

The Office of Developmental Programs (ODP) would like to thank those who took the time to complete the Family Survey about their satisfaction with the support their loved one receives from Supports Coordinators (SC) so they can live the life they want to live. 512 family members took the survey. We sincerely appreciate the honest feedback as we work to improve our services and supports for people and their families moving forward to help them achieve their vision of a fulfilling Everyday Life.

Access some of the survey highlights [here](#).

## PA ABLE Surpasses \$75 Million Savings Milestone

“Treasurer Stacy Garrity announced that the PA ABLE Savings Program has surpassed \$75 million in assets for the first time. PA ABLE (Achieving a Better Life Experience) is a tax-free way for Pennsylvanians with qualifying disabilities and their families to save without affecting eligibility for government disability benefits. Funds are easy to access and may be used for a wide range of disability-related expenses.”

Read article [here](#).

## PA Developmental Disabilities Council Seeking Nominations for Council Members

PADDC is seeking nominations for Council members who are:

- Individuals with developmental disabilities
- Parents of children with developmental disabilities
- Family members of adults with developmental disabilities

The PA Developmental Disabilities Council (PADDC) empowers individuals with developmental disabilities and their families to help shape policies that impact them. We have reopened our application process and are looking for people from diverse backgrounds to apply. Pennsylvania is a state with great diversity in race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, military/veteran status, disability, location, and lived experience, and we desire a Council that reflects that diversity. We believe that our differences make us stronger, and we encourage people from different backgrounds who believe they have something to contribute to the Council to apply.

You can nominate yourself, a family member or friend, or a leader in the community who is willing to serve. Please see our [page with frequently asked questions \(FAQ\)](#) to learn more about what it means to be a Council member and how the Council works. [Nomination Forms](#) are also available on the [page](#).

## COVID-19 Information & Resources

### Department of Health

The Pennsylvania Department of Health continues to monitor the ongoing situation with

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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.

### **COVID-19 Vaccine Available for Children Under Five**

In June, the CDC issued guidance about the COVID-19 vaccine for children ages five and younger. The **Public Health Communications Collaborative** updated their **COVID-19 toolkit**

with resources about vaccination for young children, including **answers to tough questions**. **Your Local Epidemiologist**, informed by data from the **FDA external advisory committee**, details the safety and effectiveness of the two approved COVID-19 vaccines, Moderna and Pfizer, for young children.

### **COVID.gov**

The **covid.gov** website helps people access vaccines, tests, treatments, and high-quality masks. COVID.gov is available in English, Spanish, and Simplified Chinese and is accessible for those using assistive technologies.

For individuals with disabilities who may need additional support, the **Disability Information and Access Line** (DIAL) is also available to help at 1-888-677-1199 or via email at **DIAL@usaginganddisability.org**.

### **Direct Support Workforce and COVID-19 National Report: 12-Month Follow-up**

“The aim of this study was to gather evidence about the experiences of the direct support workforce during the COVID-19 pandemic and to inform efforts to better prepare for future waves of this pandemic. This is a twelve-month follow-up to the **initial report** published in fall of 2020.”

Access study **here**.

### **Department of Health Releases Vaccination Dashboard By Legislative District**

Pennsylvanians can access 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

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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\*\*](mailto:vaccine@disabilityrightspa.org).

### **COVID-19 Regulatory Suspension Extended**

Pursuant to Act 30 of 2022, the suspension of various Pennsylvanian regulatory provisions under the state disaster emergency declaration that are currently in effect and which were set to expire on June 30, 2022, are now extended until October 31, 2022.

A list of the regulations that were suspended in whole or in part and their current status is available [\*\*here\*\*](#).

### **End of COVID PHE Unwinding Process - DHS Helper Portal**

The Department of Human Services (DHS) is preparing for the eventual end of the Public Health Emergency (PHE). Under the federal COVID-19 PHE declaration, Pennsylvania has continued Medical Assistance (MA) coverage for most people unless they moved out-of-state, passed away, or asked to end their MA. When the federal PHE ends, DHS must determine if people are still eligible for MA. MA recipients will have to complete a renewal to maintain their MA coverage.

DHS and our partners at Pennie® (Pennsylvania's official health insurance marketplace) are working

hard to make sure that Pennsylvanians can get coverage either through MA, the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), or affordable coverage available through [\*\*pennie.com\*\*](http://pennie.com).

DHS is seeking trusted partners to assist them in this PHE unwinding process through your means of connection to individuals that will need to renew MA benefits. DHS has launched an email newsletter called the DHS Helper Portal (link below). They will use this to send regular communications on the status of the PHE and how to help individuals to stay covered after the requirement to keep MA open ends.

Sign up to become a helper today at [\*\*Helpers \(pa.gov\)\*\*](http://Helpers.pa.gov)

### **Resources**

- [\*\*The Arc of Pennsylvania's COVID-19 Health Care Barriers Among People with Disabilities Report\*\*](#)
- Article: [\*\*New Research Finds COVID-19 was the Leading Killer of People with Developmental Disabilities\*\*](#)
- [\*\*COVID-19 Materials for People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities and Care Providers\*\*](#) – CDC Resources for People with IDD
- [\*\*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.

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- 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. Any bill that has not been signed into law by December 31, 2022 will need to start the legislative process again, when the General Assembly returns for the 2023-2024 Legislative Session in January.

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 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 Labor & Industry with functions from the Department of Community & Economic Development and the Department of State. It ensures economic

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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

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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 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.

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**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]. Re-referred to Appropriations, June 9, 2021.

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. Re-committed to Rules, June 21, 2022.

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

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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 185.** Introduced by Representative Jim Struzzi (R-Indiana). This bill would amend the Crimes Code to **increase the penalty** for those who knowingly commit bodily injury to a person with a physical or intellectual disability. Referred to Judiciary, Janu. 21, 2021. Final Passage [House], March 16, 2021. Amended in Senate Judiciary, September 20, 2022.

Impact: Would amend the crimes code to provide that any individual that intentionally causes bodily injury to a person with a physical or intellectual disability is guilty of aggravated assault, a felony of the second degree.

**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.

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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

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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 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

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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. Note: This legislative language was included as part of the 2022-2023 PA State Budget.

**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.

**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

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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 975.** Introduced by Representative Carrie Lewis DelRosso (R-Allegheny). This bill expands the crime of institutional **sexual assault** to cover elders, people with disabilities, and other care-dependent persons by those who have the responsibility of providing care. Referred to Judiciary, March 18, 2021. Final Passage [House], June 16, 2021. Final Passage with amendments [Senate], July 6, 2022. House Concurrence on Amendments, July 7, 2022. Approved by Governor, July 11, 2022, becoming **Act No. 61 of 2022**.

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.

**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 1420.** Introduced by Representative Wendi Thomas (R-Bucks). This bill provides **fiscal code language** for expenditures approved in the FY 2022-2023 PA State budget. Referred to Human Services, May 14, 2021. Final Passage [House], June 14, 2021. Final

Passage with Amendments [Senate], July 7, 2022. House Concurrence of Amendments, July 7, 2022. Vetoed by the Governor, July 8, 2022, becoming **Veto No. 6 of 2022**.

Impact: Stipulates that the Office of Long Term Living (OLTL) cannot utilize a single financial management system for 12 months following the passage of the bill.

**HB 1421.** Introduced by Representative Wendi Thomas (R-Bucks). This bill provides **fiscal code language** for expenditures approved in the FY 2022-2023 PA State budget. Referred to Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness, May 14, 2021. Final Passage [House], June 9, 2021. Final Passage with Amendments [Senate], June 20, 2022. House Concurrence of Senate Amendments as Amended by House Amendments, July 8, 2022. Approved by the Governor, July 11, 2022, becoming **Act No. 54 of 2022**.

Impact: Stipulates funding for Department of Human Services, including the creation of the Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) Augmentation Fund, in which the savings from the closure of PA's remaining state centers go to fund Direct Support Professional (DSP) wages, housing, and the Waiting List.

**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. Approved by the Governor, June 30, 2021, becoming **Act No. 48 of 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.

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**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. Approved by the Governor, June 30, 2021, becoming **Act No. 49 of 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 1561.** Introduced by Representative Frank A. Farry (R-Bucks). This bill would amend the

act of April 14, 1972 (P.L.221, No.63), known as the Pennsylvania **Drug and Alcohol Abuse Control Act**, further providing for definitions and for confidentiality of records. Referred to Human Services, June 7, 2021. Third consideration and final passage, Nov. 9, 2021. Referred to Senate Health and Human Services, Nov. 10, 2021. Third consideration and final passage, June 30, 2022. Approved by the Governor, July 7, 2022, becoming **Act No. 32 of 2022**.

Impact: Would amend the MHPA to align with HIPAA standards in order to permit providers, facilities and health plans to more easily share patient mental health and substance use disorder-related information.

**HB 1563.** Introduced by Representative Bryan Cutler (R-Lancaster). This bill would amend the act of July 9, 1976 (P.L.817, No.143), known as the **Mental Health Procedures Act**, in general provisions, further providing for definitions and for confidentiality of records. Referred to Human Services, June 7, 2021. Third consideration and final passage, Nov. 9, 2021. Referred to Senate Health and Human Services, Nov. 10, 2021. Third consideration and final passage, June 30, 2022. Approved by the Governor, July 7, 2022, becoming **Act No. 33 of 2022**.

Impact: Amends the DAACA to align with HIPAA standards in order to permit providers, facilities and health plans to more easily share patient mental health and substance use disorder-related information.

**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 **deafblind** for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2021. Referred to

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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 deafblind.

**HB 1642.** Introduced by Representative Martina White (R-Philadelphia). This bill provides educational **fiscal code language** for education expenditures approved in the FY 2022-2023 PA State budget. Referred to Education, June 16, 2021. Final Passage [House], Oct. 5, 2021. Final Passage with Amendments [Senate], Dec. 14, 2021. House Concurrence of Senate Amendments as Amended by House Amendments, July 7, 2022. Senate Concurrence of House Amendments, July 7, 2022. Approved by the Governor, July 8, 2022, becoming **Act No. 55 of 2022**.

Impact: Stipulates how education funding approved in the budget will be utilized. Including: allowing students with disabilities set to graduate during the 2021-2022 school year or aging out of special education between the 2021-2022 school year and the 2022-2023 school year, the ability to opt in to repeat a year due to lose of educational supports during COVID-19; and the creation of the Disability Inclusive Curriculum Pilot Program.

**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. Referred to Senate Health and Human Services, June 1, 2022.

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.

**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

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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 2022.** Introduced by Representative Aaron D. Kaufer (R-Luzerne). This bill would allow a public school to place a behavioral health representative in a school who may communicate and interact with students to provide social and **mental health support** assistance. Referred to Education, March 9, 2022. Removed from table, June 8, 2022.

Impact: Would establish a grant pilot program for school districts to access funds to address mental health concerns and fund mental health services in schools.

**HB 2023.** Introduced by Representative Aaron D. Kaufer (R-Luzerne). This bill would require the PA Department of Education (PDE) to develop a model curriculum to assist school entities in providing **behavioral health education**. Referred to Education, March 9, 2022. Laid on the table, April 25, 2022. Removed from table, June 8, 2022.

Impact: Would require the PA Department of Education, in consultation with at least one organization addressing behavioral health, to develop model behavioral health curriculum to be made available for use by school entities. Additionally, each school entity may provide four hours of training on behavioral health awareness to professional educators. The four hours of training may be applied to a professional educator's continuing professional education requirements.

**HB 2024.** Introduced by Representative Aaron D. Kaufer (R-Luzerne). This bill would commission a Mental Health Instruction Study to determine the extent to which schools are currently providing mental health instruction in their curriculum. Data collected from this study will serve as the basis for recommendations for the **improvement of mental health instruction** in our Commonwealth's schools, including

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recommending future legislation. Referred to Education, March 9, 2022. Re-committed to Appropriations, June 13, 2022.

Impact: Would utilize the data collected from this study to serve as the basis for recommendations for the improvement of mental health instruction in our Commonwealth's schools, including recommending future legislation.

**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 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 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 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.

**HB 2293.** Introduced by Representative Timothy R. Bonner (R-Mercer). This bill would require Contract **Health Care Service Agencies** who provide temporary employment in nursing homes, assisted living residences and personal care homes to register with the Department of Human Services (DHS) as a condition of their operations in Pennsylvania. Referred to Health, Jan. 27, 2022. Third consideration and final passage, July 1, 2022. Referred to Health and Human Services, July 5, 2022 [Senate].

Impact: Would ensure that Pennsylvania has oversight of supplemental health care service agencies who operate within the Commonwealth and offer temporary employment staff to those in long-term nursing facilities.

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**HB 2337.** Introduced by Representative Jason Silvis (R-Westmoreland). This bill would create an online application and renewal process for **persons with disability placards**. Upon completion of an online application or renewal, the applicant will be provided a printable temporary placard to display in their vehicle until they receive the physical placard in the mail from the department. Referred to Transportation, Feb. 11, 2022. Third consideration and final passage, June 15, 2022. Referred to Senate Transportation, June 15, 2022.

Impact: Would allow for a disability placard registration and renewal to occur online.

**HB 2425.** Introduced by Representative Ann Flood (R-Northampton). This bill would provide for communication duties between the Department of Health and the Department of Human Services with certain agencies and the Department of Aging relating to **abuse** of adults and older adults. Referred to Aging and Older Adult Services, March 29, 2022. Final passage, Sept. 21, 2022. Referred to Aging and Youth, Sept. 21, 2022 [Senate].

Impact: Would ensure the coordination between the Department of Health, Department of Human Services, and Department of Aging to ensure that abuse of older adults is correctly reported and the information is shared between agencies to keep individuals safer.

**HB 2530.** Introduced by Representative Jason Silvis (R-Indiana). This bill would permanently suspend the practice of **prudent pay** in the Office of Developmental Programs (ODP). Referred to Human Services, April 21, 2022. Final Passage, May 25, 2022. Referred to Health and Human Services [Senate], June 1, 2022.

Impact: Would permanently end the practice of prudent pay, which is where reimbursement

submitted by providers to the Office of Developmental Programs is held for 21 days. The practice of prudent pay has been suspended since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

**HB 2539.** Introduced by Representative Johnathan D. Hershey (R-Juniata). This bill would clarify the Constitution's provisions on **absentee voting**, to allow Pennsylvania's electors to decide whether we should return to a system where most voters participate by voting at their polling place on Election Day. Referred to State Government, April 25, 2022.

Impact: Would set up a PA constitutional amendment vote to determine if mail-in voting can continue in Pennsylvania.

**HB 2636.** Introduced by Representative Darisha K. Parker (D-Philadelphia). This bill would strengthen Pennsylvania's **guardianship** laws and is supported by both the Pennsylvania Bar Association and Disability Rights PA. Referred to Judiciary, June 1, 2022.

Impact: Would reform guardianship practice procedures in Pennsylvania by: 1.) Appointing counsel for alleged incapacitated persons when none has already been retained; 2.) Certifying professional guardians; 3.) Ensuring the courts first explore alternatives to guardianship; and 4.) Requiring that petitions for guardianship demonstrate that less restrictive alternatives were considered and why they are insufficient.

**HB 2665.** Introduced by Representative Kurt A. Masser (R-Northumberland). This bill would provide additional funding to PHARE; enabling more seniors, families of low and moderate income, and people with special **housing** needs to receive much-needed assistance. Referred to Urban Affairs, June 9, 2022. Re-committed to Appropriations, June 20, 2022.

Impact: Would enable PHARE to address the increased demand for this program which creates and preserves affordable rental

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housing unites for seniors, families of low and moderate income, and people with disabilities.

**HB 2674.** Introduced by Representative Jason Ortity (R-Westmoreland). This bill would provide for extended **special education** enrollment due to COVID-19. Referred to Education, June 14, 2022.

Impact: Would extend Act 66 of 2021 and allow students with disabilities who turned 21 during the 2021-2022 school year the ability to stay through their 22nd birthday and attend the 2022-2023 school year. Note: Was incorporated in the 2022-2023 Fiscal Year Budget package that was signed into law on July 8, 2022.

**HB 2779.** Introduced by Representative Ed Neilson (D-Philadelphia). This bill would establish the Long-Term Services and Supports Commission, the Long-Term Services and Supports Council and the **Long-Term Services and Supports Trust Fund**, imposing duties on the Department of Human Services and the Department of Revenue and imposing a payroll premium. Referred to Aging and Older Adult Services, Aug. 22, 2022.

Impact: Established a fund to provide up to \$36,500 in lifetime benefits to eligible beneficiaries for long term care services, such as respite care, in-home caregiving, time in a nursing home/assisted living facility, or home modifications.

**HB 2824.** Introduced by Representative Pamela A. DeLissio (D-Philadelphia). This bill would re-introduce **Pennsylvania Health Care Plan** (PHCP). The PHCP uses a single payer plan to provide universal health coverage (UHC). Referred to Health, Sept. 16, 2022.

Impact: Would establish a system in which the Pennsylvania Health Care Agency administers a plan that ensures the cost-effective delivery of covered services that range from catastrophic care to wellness and preventative care. This

system preserves the private practice of medicine and the right of patients to choose their healthcare providers.

**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.

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. Scavullo (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.

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**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 **Caregiver Support Program (CSP)** to enhance the services provided to families and caregivers.

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.

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**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 617.** Introduced by Christine M. Tartaglione (D-Philadelphia). This bill would extend rights of the federal **Family and Medical Leave Act** (FMLA) to siblings, grandparents and grandchildren in certain, specific cases. Referred to Labor and Industry, May 3, 2021. Third consideration and final passage, June 15, 2022. Referred to House Labor and Industry, June 16, 2022.

Impact: Would provide up to six weeks of protected, unpaid leave to an employee to care for a sibling, grandparent or grandchild with a certified terminal illness if such sibling, grandparent or grandchild has no living spouse, no child over 17 years of age or no parent under 65 years of age.

**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 of 2021**.

Impact: Would allow 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-dependent 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.

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**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, 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. First Consideration [House], June 28, 2022.

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].

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

**SB 1100.** Introduced by Senator Patrick Browne (R-Lehigh). 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. 28, 2022. Third consideration and final passage, June 14, 2022. Re-referred to House Appropriations, June 20, 2022. Final Passage [House], July 7, 2022. Senate Concurrence on House Amendments, July 8, 2022. Approved by the Governor, July 8, 2022, becoming **Act No. 1A of 2022**.

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

**SB 1135.** Introduced by Senator Nikil Saval (D-Philadelphia). This bill would provide for funding to address habitability concerns in owner-occupied and rental units and make units accessible for individuals with disabilities, and removing barriers to affordability of homeownership; establishing the **Whole-Home Repairs and Homeownership Affordability Program**. Referred to Urban Affairs and Housing, March 7, 2022. First consideration, June 20, 2022.

Impact: Would create a Whole Home Repairs Fund administered by the Department of Community and Economic Development. The Fund will allow providers to assess and address homes holistically by creating a one-stop shop for home repairs. DCED will solicit competitive proposals from nonprofit and public sector organizations seeking to enhance existing programs. Incorporated into the 2022-2023 Fiscal Budget Legislation that was signed into law on July 8th.

**SB 1151.** Introduced by Senator Wayne Langerholc Jr. (R-Bedford). This bill would amend the act of July 9, 1976 (P.L.817, No.143), known as the **Mental Health Procedures Act**, providing for duty to warn. Referred to Health and Human Services, March 17, 2022.

Impact: Would codify a mental health care practitioner's duty to warn of a specific and immediate threat of serious bodily injury. Will establish clear guidance as to when and who to contact when a patient communicates a propensity to harm an individual or group of individuals.

**SB 1198.** Introduced by Senator Michele Brooks (R-Crawford). This bill would amend the act of June 13, 1967 (P.L.31, No.21), known as the Human Services Code, in departmental powers and duties as to licensing, providing for pre-licensure waiver of physical site requirements and further providing for regulations and for rules and regulations for **personal care home and assisted living residences**. Referred to Health and Human Services, April 26, 2022. Re-referred to Appropriations, June 8, 2022.

Impact: Would amend Act 56 of 2007's requirements for Assisted Living Residences (ALRs) to improve availability of ALRs to those who wish to access them.

**SB 1254.** Introduced by Senator Elder A. Vogel Jr. (R-Beaver). This bill would provide additional funding to PHARE; enabling more seniors, families of low and moderate income, and people with special **housing** needs to receive much-needed assistance. Referred to Urban Affairs, June 9, 2022. Re-committed to Appropriations, June 20, 2022.

Impact: Impact: Would enable PHARE to address the increased demand for this program which creates and preserves affordable rental housing unites for seniors, families of low and moderate income, and people with disabilities.

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**SB 1269.** Introduced by Senator John I. Kane (D-Chester). This bill would provide for State-wide children's **mental health** ombudsman. Referred to Aging and Youth, June 14, 2022. Companion legislation House Bill 404.

Impact: creates a statewide children's mental health ombudsman. The ombudsman would have authority and duties to: 1.) Advocate on behalf of children with mental health issues; 2.) Identify barriers to effective mental health treatment; 3.) Monitor compliance with laws pertaining to children's behavioral health services; and 4.) Receive, investigate, and attempt to resolve complaints regarding violations by regulated entities and government agencies that may have an adverse impact upon the health, safety, welfare or rights of children.

**SB 1276.** Introduced by Senator Ryan P. Aument (R-Lancaster). This bill would provide for extended **special education** enrollment due to COVID-19. Referred to Education, June 17, 2022.

Impact: Would extend Act 66 of 2021, and allow any student with disabilities between the ages of 18-21 during the 2021-2022 school year the ability to stay through their 22nd birthday due to the impact of COVID-19.

**SB 1304.** Introduced by Senator Amanda M. Cappelletti (D-Delaware). 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, July 21, 2022.

Impact: Would allow for individuals with disabilities greater dignity and privacy as well as freedom for themselves and their families to travel and be included in their local communities.

**SB 1333.** Introduced by Senator Lisa Baker (R-Luzerne). This bill would strengthen and modernize Pennsylvania **guardianship laws**. Referred to Judiciary, Sept. 13, 2022. First consideration, Sept. 20, 2022.

Impact: Would modernize Pennsylvania's guardianship laws by 1.) requiring the appointment of counsel to represent the individual being placed under guardianship; 2.) require that evidence is shown that lesser restrictive alternatives were considered and why they will not work; and 3.) the certification of individuals seeking to become guardians of 3 or more individuals.

## 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

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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.

**HR 212.** Introduced by Representative Frank A. Farry (R-Berks). A Resolution establishing a legislative task force on intellectual disabilities, developmental disabilities, and autism and directing the Joint State Government Commission to study the impact of this Commonwealth's current delivery of services to individuals with **intellectual disabilities, developmental disabilities and autism** and to report its findings and recommendations to the House of Representatives. Amended and Adopted, June 29, 2022.

**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 Senator 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.

**SR 288.** Introduced by Senator Judy Ward (R-Blair). A Resolution directing the Joint State Government Commission to conduct a study of long-term care facilities' impact relating to **Medicaid** funds in this Commonwealth. Referred to Aging and Youth, May 3, 2022. Adopted, June 21, 2022.

**SR 318.** Introduced by Senator Christine M. Tartaglione (D-Philadelphia). A Resolution designating the week of June 6 through 11, 2022, as "**Disability Pride Week**" in Pennsylvania. Referred to Rules and Executive Nominations, June 21, 2022.

**SR 339.** Introduced by Senator Christine M. Tartaglione (D-Philadelphia). A Resolution designating October 2022 as **National Disability Employment Awareness Month** in Pennsylvania. Referred to Rules and Executive Nominations, September 19, 2022.

## National News

### Federal Budget 2023

President Biden signed a Continuing Resolution (CR) on September 30, 2022, to fund the federal government through December 16, 2022. The new budget year is October 1, 2022, through September 30, 2023. The measure extends funding at the previous levels plus additional funds to help Ukraine and for Hurricane Ian recovery.

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## Department of Homeland Security Finalizes “Public Charge” Immigration Rule

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has **finalized a rule** defining the criteria it uses when determining whether a person can be denied a visa and/or legal residency because they are likely to become a “public charge.” The final rule comes on the heels of the **proposed rule**, published February 24, 2022, and is the latest chapter in a **long series** of regulatory and legal actions surrounding the public charge policy. It includes several provisions that directly affect older immigrants and immigrants with disabilities, their families and caregivers.

Read more [here](#).

## Public Comment Open on National Strategy to Support Family Caregivers

The **2022 National Strategy to Support Family Caregivers** (the strategy) is now available for public comment for a period of 60 days. The comment period will be open through November 30, 2022. Comments received from the public will be used to inform the ongoing work of two congressionally mandated caregiving advisory councils, as well as to inform future updates to the strategy.

The strategy is intended to serve as a national roadmap for better recognizing and supporting family and kinship caregivers of all ages, backgrounds, and caregiving situations. It includes nearly 350 actions the federal government will take to support family caregivers in the coming years, and more than 150 actions that can be adopted at other levels of government and across the private sector to build a system to support family caregivers.

ACL is requesting comments on:

- The most important topics/issues for the advisory councils to focus on moving forward
- Issues that were not covered by the initial strategy that should be addressed in future updates.

Comments can be submitted via **an online form**. Respondents have the option to comment on each individual component of the strategy or provide feedback on the strategy as a whole.

Submit comments online [here](#).

## Federal Partners Release Resource Leveraging and Service Coordination to Increase Competitive Integrated Employment for Individuals with Disabilities

On August 16, 2022, along with the Department of Labor’s Office of Disability Employment Policy (**ODEP**) and partners from other federal departments, OSERS’ Rehabilitation Services Administration (**RSA**) released **Resource Leveraging and Service Coordination to Increase Competitive Integrated Employment for Individuals with Disabilities**

The resource, which comprises a **Federal Joint Communication to State and Local Governments** and a **Frequently Asked Questions** document, focus on the benefits of and support for blending, braiding, and sequencing resources to increase Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE) for people with disabilities.

**Read more about this new Resource and CIE.**

## Public Health Emergency Extended Through October

On July 15, the Department of Health & Human

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Services announced a 90-day extension of the nationwide COVID-19 public health emergency (PHE). This extends the PHE to mid-October and could be extended again. This extension allows for many added flexibilities in our nation's healthcare system.

Read more [here](#).

## **CMS Proposes Rule to Advance Health Equity, Improve Access to Care, and Promote Competition and Transparency**

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) is proposing actions to advance health equity and improve access to care in rural communities by establishing policies for Rural Emergency Hospitals (REH) and providing for payment for certain behavioral health services furnished via communications technology. Additionally, in line with President Biden's Executive Order on Promoting Competition in the American Economy, the calendar year (CY) 2023 Hospital Outpatient Prospective Payment System (OPPS) and Ambulatory Surgical Center (ASC) Payment System proposed rule includes proposed enhanced payments under the OPPS and the Inpatient Prospective Payment System (IPPS) for the additional costs of purchasing domestically made NIOSH-approved surgical N95 respirators and a comment solicitation on competition and transparency in our nation's health care system.

For a fact sheet on the CY 2023 OPPS/ASC Payment System proposed rule, please visit: <https://www.cms.gov/newsroom/fact-sheets/cy-2023-medicare-hospital-outpatient-prospective-payment-system-and-ambulatory-surgical-center>.

For a fact sheet on Rural Emergency Hospitals, please visit: <https://www.cms.gov/newsroom/fact-sheets/rural-emergency-hospitals-proposed-rulemaking>.

The OPPS/ASC Payment System proposed rule is displayed in the Federal Register with a 60-day comment period. The proposed rule can be downloaded at: <https://www.federal-register.gov/public-inspection/2022-15372/medicare-program-hospital-outpatient-prospective-payment-and-ambulatory-surgical-center-payment>

## **Casey Announces Funds for Fair Wages for Those with Disabilities**

“U.S. Sen. Bob Casey, D-Pa., announced that the U.S. Department of Education is awarding \$177 million across 14 states to begin phasing out the practice of paying people with disabilities subminimum wage and encourage the creation of inclusive jobs for people with disabilities.”

Read article [here](#).

## **Feds Seek To Remove Medicaid Barriers For Those With Disabilities**

“With a plan to overhaul the enrollment process, federal officials say they are taking steps to make it easier for people with disabilities to gain Medicaid coverage and keep it. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services is **proposing a new rule** designed to simplify the application and verification processes for people seeking coverage through Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program known as CHIP.”

Read article [here](#).

## **Virtual care: Ensuring All Patients Have Access**

“**Recently issued guidance** from the Department of Health and Human Services describes how to avoid unintentional discrimination in the use of virtual care tools. The aim is to provide a reminder that nondiscrimination laws apply,

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regardless of the setting in which care is delivered or the modality used to deliver the care.”

Read article [here](#).

## **Education Department Announces Initiative to Support Students**

On July 5, the Department of Education announced their newest initiative to support all students in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Department launched the “National Partnership for Student Success,” which will recruit 250,000 new tutors and mentors to support students.

[You can read more about the initiative here](#)

## **Lawmakers Drop Plan To Ban Electric Shock Devices For Those With IDD**

“Despite pressure from disability advocates, federal lawmakers are backing off of a proposal to ban devices used to administer electric shocks on people with developmental disabilities.”

Read article [here](#).

## **Department of Transportation Creates Airline Passengers with Disabilities Bill of Rights**

The Department of Transportation released its Airline Passengers with Disabilities Bill of Rights. This document summarizes rights provided by the Air Carriers Access Act and its implementing regulations. The rights listed include:

1. The Right to Be Treated with Dignity and Respect.
2. The Right to Receive Information About Services and Aircraft Capabilities and Limitations.
3. The Right to Receive Information in an Accessible Format.

4. The Right to Accessible Airport Facilities.
5. The Right to Assistance at Airports.
6. The Right to Assistance on the Aircraft.
7. The Right to Travel with an Assistive Device or Service Animal.
8. The Right to Receive Seating Accommodations.
9. The Right to Accessible Aircraft Features.
10. The Right to Resolution of a Disability-Related Issue.

Read more [here](#).

## **Federal Disability Employment Program Bans Subminimum Wage**

“A major federal program that facilitates jobs for people with disabilities working on government contracts will soon no longer allow them to be paid less than minimum wage.”

Under a rule finalized this month, the AbilityOne Program will prohibit payment of what’s known as subminimum wage.”

Read more [here](#).

## **Administration for Community Living and Federal Partners Announce Two New Resources to Expand Employment Opportunities for People with Disabilities**

The Administration for Community Living (ACL) and partners from across the federal government jointly developed two new resources to help expand opportunities for competitive, integrated employment (CIE) for people with disabilities. CIE – jobs alongside coworkers with and without disabilities, in integrated settings in the community, at competitive wages, and with opportunities for advancement – is a critical part of community living.

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- [\*\*Resource Leveraging & Service Coordination to Increase Competitive Integrated Employment for Individuals with Disabilities\*\*](#)
- [\*\*A Framework for Community Engagement – A Pathway to Competitive Integrated Employment.\*\*](#)

## **HHS Expands Home and Community-Based Services in Five New States and Territories for Older Adults and People with Disabilities**

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), through the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), awarded approximately \$25 million in planning grants to five new states and territories to expand access to home and community-based services (HCBS) through Medicaid’s Money Follows the Person (MFP) demonstration program. With these awards, 41 states and territories across the country will now participate in MFP.

For more information [here](#).

## **The Center for Law and Social Policy Releases Fact Sheet on Youth Mental Health and School-based Services**

The Center for Law and Social Policy released a fact sheet entitled Addressing the Youth Mental Health Crisis Through Equitable School-based Services. The fact sheet highlights the severity of the mental health crisis facing young people, illustrates the benefits of school-based mental health supports, and suggests important considerations for creating effective school-based resources.

Read fact sheet [here](#).

## **Bill Introduced to Remove the R-Word From Federal Law**

On September 15, Representative Mark Pocan [D-WI-2] introduced the “Words Matter Act of 2022” [[H.R.8863](#)]. Although the R-word was stripped from most federal statues more than a decade ago, there are more than two dozen instances where the term appears in U.S. code. This bipartisan bill would update these laws with the term “intellectual disability.”

## **Amicus Brief Filed in U.S. Supreme Court Case Emphasizes Harms to People with Disabilities**

Six leading disability advocacy organizations, with the support of Kellogg Hansen, have filed a [“friend-of-the-court” brief](#) in the U.S. Supreme Court in support of the estate of Gorgi Talevski, who alleges that the Health and Hospital Corporation of Marion County, Indiana (HHC) abused and neglected him while in a nursing home. The amicus brief explains why it is important that individuals, particularly those with disabilities, have the ability to sue state and local governments when their civil rights are violated under Medicaid and other public programs. The case, Health and Hospital Corporation of Marion County, Indiana v. Talevski, is scheduled to be heard on November 8, 2022.

Read more [here](#).

# **Resources**

## **HHS Delivers First National Strategy to Support Family Caregivers**

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), through its Administration for Community Living (ACL), released the **2022 National Strategy to Support Family Caregivers** . It highlights nearly 350 actions the

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federal government will take to support family caregivers in the coming year and more than 150 actions that can be adopted at other levels of government and across the private sector to build a system to support family caregivers. Family caregivers – who provide the overwhelming majority of long-term care in the United States – currently lack resources to maintain their health, wellbeing, and financial security while providing crucial support for others.

The strategy will be open for public comment for 60 days beginning on October 1, 2022. [Subscribe to ACL](#) Updates to receive a reminder and a link to the comment portal.

Access the report [here](#).

### **Final Segment of State Policy Roadmap for Family Caregivers Released**

The National Academy for State Health Policy (NASHP) just released the final component of the State Policy Roadmap for Family Caregivers.

The goal of this publication is to provide a guide for state officials to better understand the state policy landscape for supporting family caregivers, and to identify opportunities for innovation in their states.

View the [State Roadmap](#).

### **Report Highlights Disparities in Education for Black Children with Disabilities**

Bellwether and Easterseals released a joint report: Ignored, Punished, and Underserved: Understanding and Addressing Disparities in Education Experiences and Outcomes for Black Children with Disabilities . The report includes qualitative research and interviews along with quantitative analysis of data and

highlights the experiences that children of color, primarily black students with disabilities, face along their educational journeys.

Access the report [here](#).

### **Department of Education Releases Discipline Guidance**

The U.S. Department of Education released its much-anticipated updated discipline guidance package, including: a fact sheet, a Q&A, and a guide for stakeholders. The guidance stated that schools cannot use exclusionary discipline on students for behaviors that are due to their disabilities. Additionally, it reinforced that restraint and seclusion are not evidence-based strategies for behavior modification. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona stated, “The guidance we’re releasing today will help ensure that students with disabilities are treated fairly and have access to supports and services to meet their needs—including their disability-based behavior.”

Read more [here](#).

### **National Education Data: More Students with Disabilities Served over Past Decade in Public Schools**

“The percentage of public school students with disabilities has increased over the past decade, with children, teens and young adults getting help through a wide variety of programs, new federal data finds. In a report called Condition of Education 2022, data from the U.S. Department of Education found that in the 2020-21 school year, 7.2 million students with disabilities were served under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, or IDEA.”

Read article [here](#).

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## **New Guidance Helps Schools Support Students with Disabilities and Avoid Discriminatory Use of Discipline**

The U.S. Department of Education **announced the release of new guidance** from its Office for Civil Rights (OCR) and Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) to help public elementary and secondary schools fulfill their responsibilities to meet the needs of students with disabilities and avoid the discriminatory use of student discipline.

These newly released resources are the most comprehensive guidance on the civil rights of students with disabilities concerning student discipline and build on the Department's continued efforts to support students and schools through pandemic recovery.

## **National Autism Care Network Expands**

“A one-of-a-kind national network of autism centers designed to transform how care is developed and provided to those on the spectrum and their families is growing. The Autism Care Network is adding five new sites, bringing the Autism Speaks-backed collaboration to **25 locations** in the U.S. and Canada.”

Learn more **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](mailto: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](mailto: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.

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## Change of Information?

We want to be certain that you do not miss an issue of *A Slice of Pie*, so please send name or address changes either by phone 800-692-7258 or by email to [pie@thearcpcpa.org](mailto:pie@thearcpcpa.org). Thank you.

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