



# Home & Community-Based Services Report

April 1, 2009

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## Advocacy

### [President Obama Signs Omnibus Spending Bill for Fiscal Year 2009](#)

On March 11, 2009, President Obama signed a \$410 billion Fiscal Year 2009 omnibus spending package. The legislation includes Social Service Block Grants (SSBG) funded at \$1.7 billion, senior nutrition programs funded at \$810 million (a 6.4 percent increase over 2008), and a total budget for the Administration on Aging (AoA) of \$1,491,343,000 (about a 5.1 percent increase over 2008). There is also \$5.5 million for a medication screening/prevention program under the Title II Aging Services Programs and \$2.5 million for the Lifespan Respite Act program.

### [Update on Fiscal Year 2010 Appropriations](#)

So far there is not a lot of detailed information from President Obama's 2010 budget. However, the budget proposes cuts totaling \$13.1 billion over 10 years, which would funnel \$37 billion into a health care reform reserve fund. The budget also would align home health funding with costs, which could mean a 5.5 percent cut in prospective payment system (PPS) rates. We are looking out for details as to how HCBS providers would fare under the 2010 budget.

### [Co-Sponsors Needed for the Community Choice Act](#)

The Community Choice Act would allow older adults and people with disabilities who need an institutional level of care the choice of receiving their services and supports in their own communities, rather than in an institution. Please [Contact Congress](#) and urge your legislators to co-sponsors this important measure, which would help us grow HCBS. Contact: [Morgan Gable](#), (202) 508-9427.

### [Help Move the CLASS Act Forward](#)

Although the Community Living Assistance Services and Supports (CLASS) Act has been introduced, we need to continue building momentum to get its provisions included in health care reform. If you didn't get a chance to participate in our March 25 call to action, please [Contact Congress](#) today and tell your legislators to co-sponsor the bill. Contact: [Marsha Greenfield](#), (202) 508-9488.

### [Advocate for 12 Percent Increase for Older Americans Act Programs](#)

The Older American's Act (OAA) has been continually under-funded and is in drastic

need of an adequate increase. AAHSA is asking for a 12-percent increase for these critical OAA programs for Fiscal Year 2010. These programs help older adults age in place and remain active members of their communities. Help us advocate for this critical increase by contacting your members of Congress. [Take Action](#).

#### [Join the HCBS Listserv](#)

The HCBS listserv is a great vehicle for asking HCBS-related questions and receiving up-to-date HCBS information from other AAHSA members. To join this listserv and to learn more about AAHSA's other online communities, please [click here](#). If you are having trouble, please contact [Morgan Gable](#), (202) 508-9427.

[Join](#) or [Post](#)

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## Medicaid and Medicare News

### [CMS on DME Competitive Bidding Program, Sen. Specter Weighs In](#)

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) announced it would stay the effective date of the competitive bidding program for the durable medical equipment (DME) Interim Final Rule (IFR) until April 18, 2009, after President Obama requested a delay. However, CMS also has stated that it will move forward with the bidding program this year. Sen. Arlen Specter (R-Pa.) recently asked the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to rescind the competitive bidding interim final rule.

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## Adult Day Services

### [Resolution Introduced Promoting Inclusion of Long-Term Services and Supports into Healthcare Reform](#)

AAHSA applauds Rep. Alcee Hastings (D-Fla.) for the introduction of H. Res. 271, which calls for the development of a rational long-term care strategy and its integration into health care reform. The resolution emphasizes the particular need for greater access to HCBS and for funding of senior housing and Older Americans Act programs.

### [AAHSA Implements Listserv for Adult Day Service Members](#)

If you operate an adult day service program and have a question about staffing, policies and procedures, marketing, etc., try AAHSA's newly established adult day listserv. The listserv can help you share your questions, concerns and innovations with other AAHSA adult day service members. To join the adult day service listserv, please [click here](#).

### [Grants Available for Start-Up of Dementia Day Programs and FREE Dementia Publications](#)

The Brookdale Foundation Group (BFG) announced that they have grants available for the start-up of dementia day programs. BFG issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for start-up social model Group Respite or Early Memory Loss programs for Alzheimer's patients and their families. The proposals are due July 1, and 40 seed grants (\$7500 for the first year and possibly \$3000 for a second year) will be distributed in November. Award announcements will be made in September.

### [VA Regulations Update on Adult Day Guidelines](#)

The Veteran's Administration (VA) anticipates that the new VA Adult Day Services Guidelines will be accessible to providers by the end of April 2009. The VA

acknowledged that some medical centers are already using the new guidelines, and apologized for the lengthy process of getting them distributed. We will update AAHSA members as soon as they are available.

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## Home Health Care

### [Join the Home Health Listserv](#)

A forum intended for home health agencies facilitating member-to-member questions and discussions and to disseminate information on Medicare policy and regulations.

[Join](#) or [Post](#)

### [OASIS-C Updated Again, Still Set for 2010 Implementation](#)

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) released a "tentative" final version of the OASIS-C to the Federal Register on March 9, 2009. Ways and Means Committee Holds Hearing on Possible Home Health Cuts At a March 17, 2009, House Ways and Means Health Subcommittee hearing, there was a discussion of the possibility of a 5.5 percent cut to home health agencies' rates for 2010, an idea suggested by MedPAC. During the hearing, Reps. Pete Stark (D-Calif.) and Wally Herger (R-Calif.) harshly criticized home health agencies, quoting often the 16.5 percent profit margins that many have seen since 2002.

### [GAO Releases Report to Senate Finance Committee on Improper Home Health Payments](#)

A Government Accountability Office (GAO) report states that fraud and abuse helped boost Medicare spending on home health services 44 percent over five years, as some providers exaggerated patients' medical conditions and others billed for unnecessary services or care they did not provide. The GAO reviewed home care payments from 2002 to 2006, when spending reached \$13 billion. The number of Medicare enrollees using in-home services rose 17 percent during that period to 2.8 million.

### [Home Monitoring System Helps Meridian Health Patients Stay at Home](#)

A home monitoring system used by Meridian Health, a CAST member, is helping older people with chronic conditions stay in their own homes. The system uses a small, in-home device to record and send information about an older person's vital signs and physical symptoms to a Meridian Health nurse, who makes daily calls to all 18 program participants. The system also uses cell phones to make sure that older people in the program are taking their medications.

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## Hospice/End of Life Care

### [NEW! Join the Hospice Listserv](#)

AAHSA's new hospice listserv is a great new way to connect with other AAHSA members who provide hospice services. Post your questions, best practices, and better advocate for better hospice regulations, reimbursement, and share any other hospice-related information.

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## News from the States

### **[Maine: Advocates Push for Bill to Increase HCBS Funding](#)**

The Maine Legislature is considering a LD-400, a bill that would increase funding for HCBS and would create a unified budget for long-term services and supports for older adults and adults with a disability.

### **[New Jersey: Budget Includes 19 Percent Cut in Adult Day Center Reimbursement](#)**

The proposed budget of New Jersey Gov. John Corzine (D) includes a 19-percent reduction in the rate paid to providers of medical adult day services. The cut would mean that medical adult day service providers would receive \$70 per day in reimbursements, down from \$86, to yield \$18 million in savings for the state.

### **[Ohio: Millions Could Be Saved with More HCBS](#)**

Two-thirds of Ohio's Medicaid money is spent on nursing homes (ranking 44th in the United States in amount of money spent on home and community-based care). State officials are now looking at diverting some of that money into HCBS in order to save dwindling state Medicaid dollars. According to a recent analysis completed by the Ohio Council for Home Care, the state could save as much as \$140 million a year if it invested more into home and community-based care.

### **[Oklahoma: New Adult Day Program Opens, Honors AAHSA Member](#)**

On March 26, 2009, Daily Living Centers of Bethany, Okla., celebrated the grand opening of its newest building, the "Bill Weaver Center." This new building honors long-time adult day director and advocate, Bill Weaver, and is the fourth adult day center under the Daily Living Centers organization.

### **[Texas: Ending Contract with Evercare for State Care Management Program](#)**

On Mar. 18, 2009, the Texas Health and Human Services Commission announced that it will terminate a contract between the state and Evercare for the state's care management program (the termination will take place on May 31).

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## **News, Resources, Publications, and Funding Opportunities**

### **[HCBS Development Cabinet Releases Final Report](#)**

AAHSA's HCBS Development Cabinet is proud to release its final report, "In the Place They Call Home: Expanding Consumer Choice Through Home and Community-Based Services." The members of the Development Cabinet worked hard to compile this report, which is full of recommendations on how to create, improve, and expand HCBS in your organizations.

### **[MedPAC Releases March 2009 Report to Congress](#)**

MedPAC released the March 2009 Report to the *Congress: Medicare Payment Policy*. The report recommended that Medicare pay home health agencies 5.5 percent less in 2010 and recommended a new payment system that would pay relatively high payments for hospice services when a patient first begins to receive the services, then reduce payments as times goes on. Payments would rise again just before the end of life. The report includes many other recommendations of interest to home health and hospice providers.

### **[Pilot Program for At Home Caregiving for U.S. Veterans](#)**

Researchers at the Stanford University School of Medicine are recruiting participants for a pilot program aimed at improving at-home caregiving for U.S. veterans. The study will assess the effectiveness of an online workshop that provides training to at-home caregivers of veterans who suffer from traumatic brain injury, post-traumatic

stress disorder, Alzheimer's disease or other forms of dementia. Veterans who are caring for people with these disorders are also eligible. The six-week-long workshop, called "Building Better Caregivers," will train informal caregivers, such as family members and friends, how to not only provide better care, but also to manage their own emotions, stress and physical health.

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## UPCOMING MEETINGS

### [AAHSA Now Accepting Nominations for Leadership Awards](#)

The nominations period for the 2009 AAHSA Annual Awards is quickly approaching. Please submit applications by April 30, 2009. The AAHSA awards honor individuals and organizations that have made a commitment to Quality First, that embody excellence in leadership, care and service innovation, and that are making outstanding contributions to their communities and our field.

### [8th International Conference: Leadership Beyond Borders](#)

London's calling...all AAHSA members to the 8th International Conference: *Leadership Beyond Borders*. Join your national and international colleagues for three days of exciting educational and networking opportunities.

### [Host an AAHSA Homecoming Week Event in Your Community](#)

AAHSA's 2nd Annual Homecoming Week: *Leading in Quality, Changing Lives* is your chance to invite your neighbors to come into your facility and share in your story. From **May 25-29**, AAHSA members will shine a spotlight on their organization's commitment to quality service. [Click here](#) to get program ideas and tell us what you're planning. For more information, please contact [Maggie Flowers](#), (202) 508-9421.

### [AAHSA's Future of Aging Services Conference and Exposition](#)

From **April 20 to 22** at the Marriott Wardman Park Hotel in Washington, D.C., AAHSA's Future of Aging Services Conference and Exposition will feature experts from around the country joining almost 1,000 AAHSA members to share their thoughts concerning today's most critical economic challenges.

### [HCBS Educational Sessions at AAHSA's Future of Aging Services Conference](#)

**April 20 to 22, 2009 at the Marriott Wardman Park Hotel in Washington, D.C.**

**5-A Home and Community-Based Services Policy Forum** - Obtain a legislative and regulatory update on HCBS. Learn about best practices for home and community-based services in the states

**25-E Best Practices to Expand into Home and Community-Based Services** - Explore how CCRCs, nursing care facilities and senior housing are expanding into adult day services, home health, home care, PACE and other HCBS.

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