

Dear Advocates,

As many of you know, the House of Representatives passed a historic health care overhaul package late Sunday that marks one of the biggest victories in the history of the Brain Injury Association and for people affected by brain injury across the country. BIAA advocated tirelessly for more than a year to ensure that people with brain injury gain access to the care that they need. Specifically, the measure:

Coverage

- Prohibits private health insurance exclusions for pre-existing conditions.
- Eliminates annual and lifetime insurance limits or "caps" in private insurance policies.
- Restricts the consideration of health status in setting premiums.

Benefits

- Ensures that minimum covered benefits include products and services that enable people with brain injury to maintain and improve function, such as rehabilitation and habilitative services and devices. *BIAA, along with our Business and Professional Council, and assisted by Powers, Pyles, Sutter & Verville, PC was the driving force in ensuring that rehabilitation was listed as a minimum benefit in this bill. Originally, when the bill was made public, rehabilitation was not listed as a minimum benefit.*

Long Term Services and Supports

The Community Living Assistance Services and Supports (CLASS) Act creates a national long term services insurance program which assists eligible individuals and their families to meet long term needs with a cash benefit and without forcing them into poverty to receive Medicaid benefits.

The Community First Choice Option helps to eliminate institutional bias by encouraging states to cover personal attendant services under the state's optional service plan instead of through the waiver system by offering a 6% increase in the federal share of Medicaid for these services.

It is also important to note that, as part of the debate, Congressman Bill Pascrell, Jr., co-chairman of the Congressional Brain Injury Task Force, submitted a [statement](#) for the record detailing his understanding of the intent of the bill with regards to coverage of the treatment continuum for people with brain injury. BIAA thanks him for his hard work and dedication to this important issue.

Along with passing the Senate bill, House Democrats also approved a reconciliation bill that reflects negotiations reached by congressional Democrats and the White House to modify the version earlier passed by the Senate. This would be a "fix" that would eliminate the special deals given to certain states in return for Senate votes as the bill was passed by the Senate in December.

The Senate is expected to take up the bill as early as Tuesday under special budget reconciliation rules that will shield it from filibusters. BIAA will continue to monitor the situation closely as consideration concludes.

Finally, BIAA would like to recognize the grassroots advocates that have truly made a difference in advocating for this historic legislation. Thank you to everyone who invested so much of their time to push this forward!