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**Washington
Bulletin**



A SPECIAL
REPORT for
MEMBERS

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In This Issue

- 2017: A Look Ahead

NANASP

National Voice. Local Action.

Strengthening Policies and Programs that Nourish Seniors

NANASP's Vision *is to reshape the future of nutrition and healthy aging.*

NANASP's Mission *is to strengthen, through advocacy and education, those who help older Americans.*

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The purpose of the Washington Bulletin is to provide members with the most current legislative information in the field of

SPECIAL BULLETIN 2017: A Look Ahead

As NANASP members are aware, January marks the start of a new era in Washington, DC with the election of Donald Trump as President. The 115th Congress remains essentially the same in terms of leadership, the exception being Sen. Charles Schumer (D-NY) becoming the new Democratic leader in the Senate.

The questions on the minds of many aging advocacy groups: what can we expect in 2017 and how do we engage?

We must recognize two things. First, virtually everyone starts with a clean slate with the new President, meaning no prior history of engagement. Second, there is a great fear of the unknown as we enter 2017.

Since the election, we have been closely monitoring developments in Washington. The first significant date will be January 3 when the 115th Congress officially convenes. Between January 3 and January 20, when the new President takes office, there could be important activity. This could include confirmation hearings and votes on some of those nominated for the Cabinet by the President-elect.

NANASP has been requested to provide and has provided questions for the confirmation hearing for Rep. Tom Price (R-GA) to be the next Secretary of Health and Human Services, which will likely be held in early January. We would hope to do the same in hearings for the next Secretaries of Labor, Agriculture, Transportation and Housing and Urban Development (HUD) as well as the person tapped to take over the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). NANASP will do this work both on its own and as a key member of the Leadership Council of Aging Organizations. One note—we have heard from members asking when a new Administrator for the Administration for Community Living will be named. We don't expect that to occur until later in the first quarter of 2017.

Another possible pre-inaugural Congressional activity could come with

aging, community-based services, and nutrition and the elderly.

Resources



[Click Here](#) for ACL's "Did You Know?" informal document which presents general information about the OAA nutrition program

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respect to the Affordable Care Act. It is expected that major changes will be proposed to the ACA as part of an action to repeal large sections of the seven-year-old law. NANASP has a strong interest in what is offered as a replacement bill. We want to ensure that important preventive benefits are continued without cost sharing and to see the donut hole completely closed for those with Medicare Part D prescription drug coverage. We also support the repeal of the Independent Payment Advisory Board (IPAB).

It should be noted that actions on the ACA and later possible action on Medicaid (discussed later) can occur under a process called reconciliation which only requires a simple majority to pass in the House and Senate. It may take more than one reconciliation bill to do this work.

Also expected early in the new Administration is the introduction of a major infrastructure bill. NANASP is hopeful that a sufficiently broad definition of what is included in "infrastructure" will allow for investments in key programs helping older adults.

An area of some concern to NANASP relates to funding for the rest of Fiscal Year 2017. In December, Congress passed a second Continuing Resolution (CR) to ensure funding is continued at current levels through April 28, 2017. The concern relates to what follows this CR and what funding levels will be through September 30 and for the fiscal year that begins on October 1. NANASP working with Meals on Wheels America and other organizations is seeking the highest possible levels of funding for nutrition programs for older adults. Yet we also realize that a new larger budget agreement needs to be reached to avoid any return to sequestration. NANASP intends to be very involved in opposing any return to sequestration.

NANASP will also closely monitor any proposed changes to Medicaid that might be offered in 2017. One proposal being discussed would convert Medicaid into a block grant, which would be most troubling because of the power it would vest in states to run Medicaid, which could create inconsistencies in the way Medicaid is administered among the states. A block grant would also likely be accompanied by cuts in the federal share of funding which would be difficult for many states, especially those that have expanded Medicaid in recent years.

On the surface, it appears that the Older Americans Act will have a quiet year. The primary activity will be to further implement the 2016 reauthorization and to ensure adequate funding for its programs. The short extension of the OAA (three years) could lead to other activities, but it is too early to tell.

NANASP expects to be involved in work leading up to the consideration of the Farm Bill in 2018. This critical law provides funding for important nutrition programs, including the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP), the Temporary Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), and the Senior Farmers Market Program. We would note that we are also watching actions

that could occur in 2017 to cut funding for SNAP, which we would strongly oppose.

NANASP as a charter member of the Defeat Malnutrition Today coalition will be working on several fronts to better address the issue of malnutrition and older adults, including the following:

- advancing quality care for malnourished and at-risk older adults
- releasing a malnutrition policy blueprint in early February
- achieving recognition by the CDC and others of malnutrition as a key indicator of older adult health
- having specific malnutrition language included in the Healthy People 2030 initiative
- creating a broader malnutrition prevention/awareness campaign as a public-private partnership, including the greater use of malnutrition education in health departments and nutrition programs and senior centers

Finally, as a member of the Elder Justice Coalition, NANASP will work on behalf of all efforts to help in the fight against elder abuse. This will include preserving funding for the Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) and working to improve our data collection capacities at the local, state and national levels.

NANASP wants our members to know we are planning for a busy, eventful and challenging 2017. Our value will continue to be how you, our members, engage in local, state and national advocacy on behalf of issues. We ask you to use the national **Take Action** tools on our website and to contact your local and state lawmakers; this year, it's more important than ever.

Happy New Year from all of us at NANASP!

—Bob Blancato and Meredith Ponder Whitmire

**Save the Dates & Plan to Join Us at the
Hyatt Lodge in Oak Brook, IL
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Hyatt Lodge Room Rate: \$169+tax
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