

Talking points Document

Congress is on the fast track to repeal the Affordable Care Act (ACA). There are many, many advocates fighting to preserve the insurance provisions of the ACA – known as Obama Care, but virtually no one is talking about the disability-specific aspects of the law. Here are four important provisions in the ACA that are critical for the Disability Community.

Highlighted (in bold) below are the four disability-specific provisions included in the ACA that we are calling on Congress to preserve and protect!

Under each provision is suggested dialogue for you to use when speaking with the media about this issue. We also include additional bulleted suggestions to prepare and include in the discussion as well.

1. The ACA prohibited discrimination against people with pre-existing conditions by insurance companies.

People with disabilities fall into the category of having “preexisting conditions” which categorize us as a high-risk population. Just as it was before the implementation of the ACA, a repeal of the preexisting condition protections will result in many disabled individuals being denied coverage on the basis of risk.

Additional suggestion to prepare and talk about:

- Because of the ACA pre-existing condition ban, I am able to afford health insurance coverage. This has made a difference in my life.

2. The ACA extended Money Follows the Person, a Republican New Freedom initiative that is liberating thousands of disabled people from institutions, but that program is ending because of Congressional inaction.

Gridlock in the last Congress allowed the expiration of Money Follows the Person, a vital initiative to transition disabled people from institutions into community settings. This program was created by the Bush Administration and extended through ACA. It should be preserved and again extended in order to ensure that there is a viable mechanism to transition disabled people out of expensive institutional settings into houses and apartments where we want to live just like everybody else.

Additional suggestion to prepare and talk about:

- Money Follows the Person has helped me OR someone I know to move out of an institution and live in the community.
- Talk about the difference between being forced into an institution and living in the community.

3. The ACA established the Community First Choice Option a Medicaid option that incentivizes states to FREE OUR PEOPLE from nursing facilities and institutions.

The Community First Choice Option (CFCO) was established as a stand-alone program passed along with the Affordable Care Act (ACA), which incentivizes community-based services, enabling disabled people to enjoy the Constitutional promise of Liberty. If passed, repeal of the ACA will eliminate CFCO, stripping disabled people of the services we need to live in freedom.

Additional suggestions to prepare and talk about:

- How do community-based services help you live in freedom?
- Do you know anybody who acquired a disability and was able to keep living in the community because of community based services?
- What it is like to be forced into an institution as opposed to living in the community.

4. The ACA authorized accessibility standards for Diagnostic Medical Equipment so people with disabilities could get access to preventative healthcare screenings and appropriate diagnostic testing.

Repeal of ACA will have a widespread impact upon the accessibility of health care providers' offices, too. ACA accessibility standards for Medical Diagnostic Equipment ensure that women with disabilities, who face diseases such as breast cancer at a much higher rate than the nondisabled population, have access to early detection and diagnostic equipment that is pivotal to our survival.

Additional suggestions to prepare and talk about:

- Accessible MDE saved my life or the life of someone I know because my body does not fit into inaccessible diagnostic equipment.
- I know someone who died because they could not get access to diagnostic equipment.