
VOR is the only national organization advocating for a full range of residential and support options for people with mental retardation, including Medicaid-certified Intermediate Care Facilities for the Mentally Retarded (ICFs/MR) and home and community-based care. VOR supports choice.

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VOR Weekly E-Mail Update January 19, 2007

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Coming Up: Kentucky: Deaths largely not investigated - Critics see gaping hole in care of state's mentally disabled

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- 1. VOR's 2007 Annual Meeting and Washington Initiative: Please Join Us!!!
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Another year is upon us, which means planning for the 2007 VOR Annual Meeting and Washington Initiative is well underway. I hope you will consider joining us.

The connection between what happens in Washington, D.C. and your state is very real. With your participation, you can count on making a difference at the federal and state level. You will carry home powerful advocacy tools gleaned from VOR programs and networking with others across the country. In addition, with your help, our success impacting policy from Washington, D.C. in June and year round, directly impacts law and policy in your own state.

Not convinced? Please review the information below about the state and federal connection, especially as it pertains to Medicaid, as well as the final article of this update which gives information about recent federal grants to 17 states to carry out "Money Follows the Person" plans - designed to transfer people from institutions to the community. MFP, like Medicaid, comes straight from Washington, D.C., to be administered by your state.

By participating in VOR's Annual Meeting and Washington Initiative, you can help ensure that federal policymakers keep the needs of your loved ones in mind when making policy and law that WILL impact your state.

Full details, including a registration form and hotel information, are available at: <http://www.vor.netVORAnnualMeeting2007.htm>. An Overview, plus a summary of the agenda for the Annual Meeting and the Washington Initiative follow. If you have any questions, you are encouraged to contact Tamie at Tamie327@hotmail.com (I'd love to hear from anyone planning to attend - even letting me know you plan to attend in advance of formally registering helps my planning tremendously). OVERVIEW OF THE EVENT

As last year, events get kicked off with an Friday Night State Report Forum (June 8). The Annual Meeting, complete with great speakers and presentations, is scheduled for Saturday, June 9. The Washington Initiative begins with a Legislative Briefing on Sunday, June 10, with Capitol Hill visits to begin June 11.

ANNUAL MEETING, JUNE 9, 2007

The theme for the 2007 Annual Meeting is "Policymaking from Governors to Congress: A focus on the issues and the role of advocates." Speakers include Matt Salo, Director of the National Governors Association Health and Human Services Committee; a panel of Congressional Committee staff who deal with health care policy (from both sides of the aisle); and Ron Pollack (invited), Executive Director of Families USA.

LEGISLATIVE BRIEFING, JUNE 10, 2007

The Legislative Briefing is the official kick-off of VOR's Washington Initiative. Participants will hear from a speaker who works on Capitol Hill, to get an "insiders" perspective regarding how to effectively carry VOR's message to Capitol Hill. Participants will also be fully briefed on VOR's issues and receive presentation folders to leave with every office they will visit. By the end of the week, VOR will have covered Congress with our information, hand-carried by dedicated VOR volunteers - primarily family members of persons with profound mental retardation.

2. Sponsorship Opportunities: We welcome your referrals and suggestions

Sponsorship opportunities are also available for the VOR 2007 Annual Meeting and Washington Initiative. Corporations, small businesses, organizations, family groups and individuals have all been sponsors of VOR's annual meetings in Washington, D.C. in the past. Perhaps you know of someone that would like to help financially support this important event. Full sponsorship details can be found at <http://www.vor.net/2007Sponsorship.htm>.

3. Calling all organizations! Consider sponsoring a participant to attend VOR's Annual Meeting and Washington Initiative

State and Facility Family Associations often sponsor participants to attend VOR's Annual Meeting. This is a great way to contribute to VOR. This year, VOR will be making an effort to

honor those organizations that support VOR in this way. If your group is planning to sponsor a participant, please let Tamie know at 605-399-1624; or Tamie327@hotmail.com. We want to include your organization on VOR's "Honor Roll."

4. The Federal and State Connection: Why your participation in VOR is critical

VOR is a national organization that advocates for a full array of residential services and supports for the full continuum of people with mental retardation, through all stages of life. We advocate for the provision of services based on choice and need, with full family involvement in the decisionmaking.

While your statewide family/guardian organization and your local facility-based family associations play crucial roles, these organizations are not dedicated to tracking on a regular basis what is happening at the national level, especially with regard to Medicaid.

What Congress and the Administration do to Medicaid will impact the services your family member receives, for better or worse. Nationally, the FEDERAL government pays between 50 and 76% of every Medicaid bill, depending on what state you live in (see below for how much your state receives from the federal government for Medicaid).

Without FEDERAL funds, Medicaid programs would not exist in any state. When FEDERAL funds are cut, or when the FEDERAL government changes the rules as to how federal Medicaid funds can be spent, the result is felt by Medicaid beneficiaries all across the country, including your family members.

VOR reliably lets its members know when Medicaid faces a cut or is poised for reform. We directly communicate with Members of Congress and officials within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. We also call upon our members to contact their elected officials by fax, phone, e-mail and mail. Help from VOR's members is what ultimately has the most significant impact after all, elected officials will be thinking about votes, and numbers count.

VOR needs your membership support. We also encourage you to consider participating in VOR's Annual Meeting and Washington Initiative (see <http://www.vor.netVORAnnualMeeting2007.htm> for details). An ever growing membership, plus participation in the Washington Initiative, ensures our collective strength and continued success. Financial contributions also help VOR grow and enhance all of our programs aiming to enhance choice and empower families, including our Congressional advocacy in Washington, D.C.

VOR has its role at the national level. Your state organization has its role at the state level. Facility-Based Family Associations have their role at the local levels. We are all interconnected and mutually dependent on one another to achieve success.

Please help complete the circle. Support VOR today and be assured your national voice will be represented and heard.

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Federal Medicaid Percentage Match, by State (2006)

AL (69.51%)
AK (50.16)
AZ (66.98)
AR (73.77)
CA (50.00)
CO (50.00)
CT (50.00)
DE (50.09)
DC (70.00)
FL (58.89)
GA (60.60)
HI (58.81)
ID (69.91)
IL (50.00)
IN (62.98)
IA (63.61)
KS (60.41)
KY (69.26)
LA (69.79)
ME (62.90)
MD (50.00)
MA (50.00)
MI (56.59)
MN (50.00)
MS (76.00)
MO (61.93)
MT (70.54)
NE (59.68)
NV (54.76)
NH (50.00)
NJ (50.00)
NM (71.15)
NY (50.00)
NC (63.49)
ND (65.85)
OH (59.88)
OK (67.91)
OR (61.57)
PA (55.05)
RI (54.45)
SC (69.32)
SD (65.07)

TN (63.99)
TX (60.66)
UT (70.76)
VT (58.49)
VA (50.00)
WA (50.00)
WV (72.99)
WI (57.65)
WY (54.23)

5. CMS Awards Demonstration Grants to 17 states for alternatives to institutional care

IMPORTANT NOTE TO VOR MEMBERS: 17 states have been awarded Money Follows the Person grants. Those states, plus the amount they are slated to receive, are listed below. Before these states can receive their grant monies, they must develop and submit to CMS for approval a "Demonstration Operation Protocol" (DOP). This DOP must ". . . formally engage all needed stakeholders . . .". This is your opportunity to proactively demand a seat at the table (source: ADAPT, Jan. 11, 2007). Contact your state's Medicaid office to determine what process will be used to develop the DOP and get involved. As for the 22 states that applied but were not awarded a grant, they will reportedly be given a second chance. CMS will be sending a letter to these states telling them that they have to revise their proposal (and how) and return it to CMS in 30 days. A second round of awards will, reportedly, be sent in March for those states that do the revisions requested (Source: ADAPT, Jan. 11, 2007). This is another real opportunity for choice advocates - get informed and involved.

For Immediate Release: Friday, January 12, 2007 Contact: CMS Office of Public Affairs

Seventeen states will receive more than \$23 million in grants for FY 07 and up to \$900 million over 5 years for demonstration programs that will help build Medicaid long-term care programs to keep people in the community and out of institutions.

Today's awards, announced by Leslie Norwalk, acting administrator for the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), are the first round of grants that will total \$1.75 billion over five years (2007-2011) to help states shift Medicaid's traditional emphasis on institutional care to a system offering greater choices for individuals and a full range of home- and community-based services. This Money Follows the Person (MFP) "rebalancing" initiative was included in the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 (DRA) currently being implemented by CMS.

"There is more evidence than ever that people who need long-term care prefer to remain in their own homes and communities whenever possible," Acting Administrator Norwalk said. "States will also get more for their money by giving the elderly and people with disabilities more control over how and where they get the Medicaid services they need. With these grants, the states propose to transition over 20,000 individuals from institutions and into community settings.

"Because experience shows that money following the person's own preferences improves satisfaction and can reduce Medicaid costs too, we intend to continue taking steps, such as those taken through these grants, to remove barriers, real or perceived, that prevent them from participating fully in community life."

The Medicaid program traditionally pays for care for elderly and disabled individuals living in institutions who need help with activities of daily living. Previously, in order to fund home and community-based services, states had to establish a "waiver program" apart from the approved State Medicaid plan.

To assist states in offering greater choices, the DRA made changes in Medicaid that will allow states to add home- and community-based services to their permanent array of benefits without having to go through a waiver program. Under a DRA provision separate from the MFP initiative, states now have the option to provide home and community-based services without a waiver program.

States receiving grants today under the MFP initiative (see list below) will design programs with four major objectives:

1. Eliminate barriers or mechanisms that prevent Medicaid-eligible individuals from receiving support for appropriate and necessary long-term services in the settings of their choice;
2. Increase the ability of the state Medicaid program to assure continued provision of home and community based long-term care services to eligible individuals who choose to move from an institutional to a community setting; and
3. Ensure that procedures are in place to provide quality assurance for individuals receiving Medicaid home and community-based long-term care services and to provide for continuous quality improvement in such services.

All states were eligible to apply for participation in the five-year demonstration that requires a commitment to participate in the demonstration services for at least two consecutive years. A second round of state grants may be announced later this year using 2007 grant money.

States receiving grant funds may be eligible to receive a higher percentage of federal matching dollars to help cover the costs for people moving out of institutions and into community settings. The higher matching rate will be applied to certain services provided to an individual for a one-year period after the individual moves out of an institution and into the community. The state must continue to provide community services after that period as long as the person needs community services and is Medicaid eligible.

"These demonstration grants are a clear sign of our continued commitment to expand choice to all individuals wanting to live meaningful lives in the community," acting administrator Norwalk said. "These grants will help give them the independence to live at home and be an active part of their communities."

For more details about the New Freedom Initiative, of which this demonstration is part, visit the CMS web site at: <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/newfreedom/>. 2007 MONEY FOLLOWS THE PERSON REBALANCING DEMONSTRATION AWARDS

State -- FY 2007 Award Amount

WI -- \$8,020,388
NY -- \$192,981
WA -- \$108,500
CT -- \$1,313,823
MI -- \$2,034,732
OK -- \$3,526,428
AR -- \$139,519
MD -- \$1,000,000
NE -- \$202,500
NH -- \$297,671
CA -- \$90,000
IN -- \$860,514
TX -- \$143,401
SC -- \$34,789
MO -- \$3,398,225
IA -- \$307,933
OH -- \$2,079,488
Total -- \$23,750,892

Tamie Hopp

REFERRAL/MEMBERSHIP/CONTRIBUTION FORM

THREE EASY WAYS TO SUPPORT VOR > REFER, CONTRIBUTE OR JOIN

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

TO JOIN OR CONTRIBUTE: \$25 per individual, \$150 per family organization, or \$200 per provider/professional organization. Extra donations are welcome! You may pay by credit card or check.

TO REFER SOMEONE TO VOR: Use the form below, including the additional sections for referrals.

Mail the completed form (if joining or contributing) with payment to: Voice of the Retarded
5005 Newport Drive, Suite 108 Rolling Meadows, IL 60008 847-253-6054 fax (for referrals or
credit card payments) vor@compuserve.com (for referrals or credit card payments)

FOR REFERRALS: The contact information provided is for someone I think would
consider membership with VOR.

FOR REFERRALS: You may use my name in any correspondence with this individual.

My name is _____.

Name

Address (if paying by credit card, use billing address). All forms must include complete
address including zip code)

City St Zip

Phone Fax

-Mail

Family/Professional Organization Affiliation (if applicable)

VOR now accepts Master Card and Visa. If paying by credit card, please provide the following
information:

Amount to charge to card: \$1,000 \$500 \$250 \$150 \$50 \$25
\$_____ Other amount

Master Card Visa

Card Number: _____

Expiration Date: _____