

HABILITATION AND REHABILITATION SERVICES AND DEVICES

ACTION

Request your members of Congress to reject efforts to eliminate coverage for habilitative and rehabilitative services and devices from legislative efforts to repeal, replace, or reform the Affordable Care Act.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW?

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) requires all non-grandfathered health insurance plans offered in the small group and individual markets, both in and outside of the marketplace, to provide benefits for 10 essential health benefit (EHB) categories. Habilitative and rehabilitative services and devices is one of the EHB required categories. These services are vital in helping clients with speech, language, cognition, swallowing, and hearing/balance/tinnitus disorders to achieve, acquire, maintain, or regain skills to improve functional communication outcomes.

Current data demonstrate the low cost impact on premiums of including habilitative services in the essential health benefits (EHB) package. For example, the Council for Affordable Health Insurance estimates that habilitative service mandates cost <1% of the total premium costs in the states with habilitation mandates.

WHAT YOU NEED TO SAY?

- The State of Maryland found that expanding its habilitation mandate to individuals with congenital or genetic birth defects—regardless of age—would increase state plan expenditures by only 2%.
- Five private insurance companies reported to the State of Virginia that coverage of habilitation services would only result in an increase of between 0.2% and 1% in the total premium cost.
- Research findings also indicate that long-term health care costs for individuals with congenital and genetic disorders and developmental disabilities can be curtailed through intensive and comprehensive habilitation treatment early in life.
- Eighty percent of stroke clients with receptive and expressive language disorders achieved one or more levels of progress on a standardized measurement scale with speech and language therapy.
- Two-thirds of preschoolers with autism spectrum disorder showed gains in spoken language on a standardized measurement scale following services from a speech-language pathologist.
- Clients suffering from traumatic brain injury who received speech-language pathology services made significant gains in memory (81% of clients improved), attention (82% improved), and pragmatics (83% improved).
- Two-thirds of adults with diseases of the central nervous system (e.g., Parkinson's disease, multiple sclerosis) who were unintelligible at the outset of speech-language treatment progressed to a level of increased communicative independence.
- Children whose hearing loss are identified by three-months of age and who start intervention by six-months have the same language abilities as their peers by the time they enter kindergarten.
- Swallowing treatment provides improvements in swallowing safety (reduced aspiration), nutrition, and efficiency.
- Adults who receive group audiologic rehabilitation show benefits in terms of reduction of perceived hearing handicap, improved quality of life, better use of hearing aids, and communication strategies.

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