

April 2026 Advocacy & Legislative Update

Introduction

ATRA's advocacy activities are focused on bills, actions, or issues that directly impact the profession of recreational therapy or people with disabilities. ATRA responds to issues in a non-partisan manner to advocate and protect the recreational therapy profession and people served by recreational therapists.

Action Alerts - Please Take Action!

1. Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) are being threatened as cuts to Medicaid and federal appropriations are being planned. Proposed federal funding cuts and state-level budget constraints are directly threatening HCBS. As states are looking to cut spending, HCBS are currently in jeopardy of being reduced or eliminated. The Action Alert encourages you to contact your state and federal legislators and provides a sample email to send.
2. In case you missed it the last few months, there is a revised lawsuit about Section 504 of the Rehab Act. Nine states (Alaska, Florida, Indiana, Kansas, Louisiana, Missouri, Montana, South Dakota, and Texas) are seeking to block key aspects of Section 504 as unconstitutional. Texas vs. Kennedy states that aspects of Section 504 related to community living and community integration for people with disabilities are unconstitutional.
 - o At stake is the integration mandate that codifies the right of disabled people to live in their community with needed supports. Individuals within the disability community are concerned about the implications of this lawsuit if these aspects of Section 504 are found to be unconstitutional, as it relates to institutionalization of people with disabilities.

Advocacy Activities

| Postings on ATRA Connect A&L page on Resources on Rural Health, Patient Empowerment, information on Medicaid & Home and Community-Based Services, link to book chapter on Disabled People's Experiences with Discrimination in Healthcare, Older Americans Month, webinar on ADA Title II Web Accessibility Rules

| Postings on ATRA Connect Older Adult Special Interest Group on Older Americans Month, webinars on Reframing Dementia Support and Education and Addressing Cognitive Impairment and Dementia Among Older Adults Experiencing Housing Insecurity and Homelessness

| Postings on ATRA Connect Behavioral Health Special Interest Group on SAMHSA resources for Mental Health Providers, Comprehensive Health Integration Framework presentation

| Postings on ATRA Connect Special Interest Group page on Resources on Persons with IDD and Disability Research and Medicare/Medicaid resources

Meetings

| ATRA Current Procedural Terminology (CPT) Work Group Meeting including the development of a survey for recreational therapists on their current use of CPT codes

| Consortium for Constituents with Disabilities Autism and Development Disabilities Task Force Meeting

| CCD Education Task Force Meeting



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What We Are Watching

- | Impact of Executive Order approving accelerated approval of psychedelic drugs for mental health treatment
- | Proposals to cut funding to university disability centers
- | Federal budget proposals that significantly cut domestic programs
- | Section 504 Rehabilitation Act lawsuit
- | Healthcare affordability, including ACA tax credits and marketplace changes with specific attention on the impact on people with disabilities
- | Medicaid changes at the state level
- | The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA) support for community-based mental health and substance abuse programs
- | Skilled Nursing Facility inclusion of Recreational Therapy in MDS
- | Social Prescribing

Sign On Letters During April

- | Consortium for Constituents with Disabilities (CCD) letter to Congressional leadership on Disability and Aging Opposing Further Medicaid Cuts during Budget Reconciliation
- | CCD letter regarding autonomous vehicle exemption to accessible transportation
- | CCD letter regarding Education Appropriations for FY2027

Thank You

Thank you and shout out to **Lizzie Terry** (CCD) for representing ATRA at coalition meetings.

Stay Connected

- | Follow ATRA on Social Media (Instagram, Facebook, and LinkedIn) @ATRAinAction
- | Join the conversation and stay current on timely advocacy and legislative issues on our ATRA Connect Advocacy & Legislative page
- | Visit the Advocacy page on ATRA's website for official ATRA communications and advocacy resources

ATRA Advocates for You

ATRA is the only national organization representing the specific needs and interests of all recreational therapists. ATRA envisions a world where all people have access to recreational therapy. To make that vision a reality, it is essential for recreational therapists to be recognized and valued in federal, state, and local governments. ATRA is devoted to promoting and supporting the recreational therapy profession through our strategic advocacy efforts, which ensure that lawmakers and other influential organizations are aware of recreational therapy's vital services.

You are ATRA and this is ATRA in Action.

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