

## *March 2026 Advocacy & Legislative Update*

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### **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.** In case you missed it last month, 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) in which the identified states 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.

- 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**

| Dawn DeVries presented the opening general session at the Recreation Therapists of Indiana conference on the federal public policy scene and what's happening nationally. It was a great opportunity to meet with RTI therapists to support their work in their state and to share what is happening nationally.

| Postings on [ATRA Connect](#) Advocacy & Legislative page on Colorado Disability Opportunity Office seeking input, Older Adult Month theme, CMS Grants for Lifestyle Medicine Pilots, Action Alert related to Rehab Act lawsuit, Idaho and Special Education Services

| Postings on [ATRA Connect Older Adult Special Interest Group](#) on Older Americans Month theme, webinar info on National Alzheimer's and Dementia Resource Center, webinar info on food insecurity for individuals with dementia who live alone, Program for All Inclusive Care of the Elderly 2025 review, ACL community of practice

| on ATRA Connect [Behavioral Health Special Interest Group](#) on SAMSHA grants for serious mental illness and suicide prevention

### **Meetings**

| ATRA Current Procedural Terminology (CPT) Meeting

| ATRA Social Prescribing Task Force Meeting

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

### **What We Are Watching**

| Federal budget proposals that significantly cut domestic programs

| Section 504 Rehabilitation Act lawsuit



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## What We Are Watching

- | SAVE Act and potential impact on people with disabilities and older adults
- | 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 March

- | Consortium for Constituents with Disabilities (CCD) letter on the U.S. Access Board
- | CCD letters on Assistive Technology Act Program – Senate letter, House letter
- | CCD letter to Congressional leadership on Home and Community Based Services (HCBS)
- | CCD letter on Request for Information related to fraud, waste and abuse specific to HCBS – referred to as Comprehensive Regulations to Uncover Suspicious Healthcare (CRUSH) (CMS-6098-NC)
- | CCD letter to Veterans Administration opposing the VA from getting guardianship of veterans
- | CCD letter on Fiscal Year 2027 appropriations
- | Joint Coalition to Preserve Rehabilitation (CPR) and HAB Coalition comments in response to the HHS Notice of Benefit and Payment Parameters for the 2027 Proposed Rule (CMS-9883-P)

## 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.