

## *May 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. **Please take 10 minutes to complete the Current Procedural Terminology coding survey developed by the **ATRA CPT Work Group**.** This Work Group is exploring the current use and knowledge of recreational therapists on CPT codes and billing practices. The survey will inform the work of this group as we explore the need for recreational therapy specific coding.
2. **Pease use the Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) tracker to document the impact of changes to HCBS.** It is important to contribute to this tracker especially if your clients are experiencing a negative impact so that advocacy efforts can provide examples of what is happening.
3. In case you missed it in April, 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.

### **Advocacy Activities**

| Letter to CMS regarding Hospice request for comments. Link to the [Federal Register proposed changes for Hospice FY2027](#).

| Letter to CMS regarding Inpatient Psychiatric Facilities (IPF) request for comments. Link to the [Federal Register proposed changes for IPFs FY2027](#).

| Letter to CMS regarding Inpatient Rehabilitation Facilities (IRF) request for comments. Link to the [Federal Register proposed changes for IRFs FY2027](#).

| Letter to CMS regarding Skilled Nursing Facilities (SNF) request for comments. Link to the [Federal Register proposed changes for SNFs FY2027](#).

| Postings on [ATRA Connect](#) Advocacy & Legislative page on Home and Community-Based Services grievance process, Department of Education guidance to support expectant parents of children with disabilities, coalition development of a HCBS services tracker, CMS announcement regarding nationwide fraud crackdown on home health agencies and hospice, and federal agencies reconsidering a rule barring discrimination in healthcare based on disability.

| Postings on [ATRA Connect Older Adult Special Interest Group](#) on the role of Medicaid in PACE for dual eligible older adults, community care hubs and SAMSHA advisory promoting the integration of physical and behavioral healthcare



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## Advocacy Activities Cont.

- | Postings on ATRA Connect [Behavioral Health Special Interest Group](#) on HHS launching “Make America Healthy Again” action plan to curb psychiatric medication overprescribing, link to state organizations responsible for mental health, substance use disorders, and intellectual and development disabilities from a 2025 study, and a link to an RTI study finding increased spending in the US on mental health and substance use treatment.
- | Postings on ATRA Connect [Higher Education](#) on the final rule on graduate and professional student loan limits.

## Meetings

- | ATRA Current Procedural Terminology (CPT) Work Group Meeting
- | Consortium for Constituents with Disabilities Autism and Development Disabilities Task Force Meeting
- | National Listening session on new HCBS option proposed for 2028

## What We Are Watching

- | Funding cut proposals for university disability centers
- | Federal budget proposals that significantly cut domestic programs
- | Section 504 Rehabilitation Act lawsuit
- | 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](#)
- | Social Prescribing
- | Graduate education student loans
- | Response to ATRA’s comments on Medicare Prospective Payment Systems’ request for comments on hospice, inpatient psychiatric facilities (IPF), inpatient rehabilitation facilities (IRF), and skilled nursing facilities (SNF).

## Sign On Letters During May

- | Independence Through Enhancement of Medicare and Medicaid (ITEM) Coalition letter regarding complex rehabilitation technology, wheelchair maintenance and repairs under Medicare Advantage plans
- | Disability & Rehabilitation Research Coalition (DRRC) letter urging the chairs and ranking members for the House and Senate Appropriations Committees to provide appropriate and robust [funding for National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research \(NIDILRR\) and National Center for Medical Rehabilitation Research \(NCMRR\)](#).
- | DRRC letter urging the chairs and ranking members for the House and Senate Appropriations Committees to [appropriate fund for NIH, NIDILRR, and NCMRR](#)
- | Coalition to Preserve Rehabilitation (CPR) letter to Senate supporting [S. 4384, the Medicare Advantage Improvement Plan](#)



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### Sign On Letters During May Cont.

- | Consortium for Constituents with Disabilities (CCD) letter to Chair McConnell to fund the CDMRP's Orthotics and Prosthetics Outcomes Research Program
- | CPR letter on IRF PPS proposed rules
- | CCD letter supporting the Lifespan Respite Care Program and National Family Caregiver Program funding
- | CCD letter on changes to Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part B State Performance Plan (SPP) and Annual Performance Report (APR)
- | CCD letter on changes to Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part C State Performance Plan (SPP) and Annual Performance Report (APR)

### Thank you

Thank you 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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818 18th St. NW, Suite 810 #7369 | Washington, DC 20006 | Tel. (301) 683-8583 | [info@atra-online.com](mailto:info@atra-online.com)

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