

ATRA in Action – June 2025

Advocacy and 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.

Advocacy Success!

- A huge **WIN** for June is that the Recreational and Creative Arts Therapists positions for the Veterans Administration (VA) have been included on the VA Approved Exempt from Hiring Freeze list. Thank you to all who wrote letters, made calls, or reached out to your legislators to advocate for recreational therapy at the VA! This is amazing and shows how we as a profession can work together to make a difference for the populations we serve and for recreational therapists.

Legislative Update

- In June, legislative activity in Washington, DC focused on the Budget Reconciliation bill (the Big Beautiful Bill) as it worked its way through the U.S. House of Representatives and then the U.S. Senate; in early July, it went back to the House, where it was passed and signed by President Trump into law.

ACTION ALERTS – Please take action!

- None right now – Stay tuned to your email and ATRA Connect

Advocacy Activities

- Comments submitted regarding Request for Comments for Fiscal Year 2026 (FY2026) for Medicare-covered inpatient settings
 - [Hospice](#)
 - [Inpatient Psychiatric Facilities \(IPF\)](#)
 - [Inpatient Rehabilitation Facilities \(IRF\)](#)
 - [Skilled Nursing Facilities \(SNF\)](#)
- Nomination of **Dr. Bryan McCormick** to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Advisory Committee to the Director

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- Action Alert issued related to [Department of Energy changes on elimination of accessibility protections under Section 504 of the Rehab Act](#) for new federally funded buildings
- Action Alert issued for both [House](#) and Senate Budget Reconciliation on Medicaid cuts for people with disabilities and older adults
- Updates on budget reconciliation and other legislative activities on [ATRA Connect](#)

Meetings

- CCD Task Force meeting with Lizzie Terry

What We Are Watching:

- Lawsuit to reinstate sign language interpreters at White House press meetings
- Impact and timeframes for implementation of cuts in the Budget Reconciliation Act
- Disability regulations for airlines that were passed, but which federal officials said they will not enforce
- Potential Medicaid waiver changes in Indiana and ways to support recreational therapists in the state
- Licensure of Recreational Therapy in Pennsylvania
- Recreational therapy Medicaid waivers in Indiana

Sign On Letters During June

- CPR comments for the FY2026 IRF PPS Proposed Rule
- CCD Education letter to Senate to reject HR 1
- [CCD sign-on to the Senate opposing the House budget reconciliation bill](#)
- [DRRC sign-on to the Senate supporting funding for medical rehabilitation and disability research](#) at the National Institutes of Health (NIH)
- [Sign on to support funding through the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research](#) (NIDILRR)
- [Senate Aging and Disability letter](#) on Lifespan Respite Care Program and National Family/Native American Caregiver Support Program
- CPR sign-on Support for The Improving Seniors' Timely Access to Care Act
- [CCD Comments to the Secretary of the Department of Education](#) regarding education priorities
- [HAB/CPR letter to Senate Finance Committee on Medicaid](#)
- [CCD letter of concern regarding cuts to University Centers of Excellence in Developmental Disabilities](#) (UCEDD)

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Coming Soon

Celebrate the 35th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act on July 26. Visit the [ADA National Network](#) for more info.

Advocacy Shout Outs

- **Kaitlin Mueller** and **Lacey Speert** for assistance with the [SNF FY2026 comments](#)
- **Lizzie Terry** for her continued representation of ATRA on the CCD and advocacy of recreational therapy through demonstration of relaxation techniques as a break during the meeting
- **Heather Porter** for working on crafting the social prescribing position statement
- **Morgan Brown at PVA, veterans, and other PVA staff** who met with legislators to advocate for recreational therapists at the VA

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