



## ATRA in Action: Advocacy and Legislative Update

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### HOME AND COMMUNITY BASED SERVICES AND THE IMPACT ON PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

**[Washington, DC, April 2026) – Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) are being threatened as cuts to Medicaid and federal appropriations are being planned.**

**What is the issue?** Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) are defined by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) as long-term care services provided in a person's home or community rather than in an institutional setting such as a nursing home or residential program. Under CMS' definition, HCBS support people with disabilities, chronic conditions, and age-related issues to live, work, and participate in their communities with supports that provide an alternative to institutionalized care. Person-centered care, autonomy, self-determination, and community integration are key aspects of HCBS in the CMS Final Rule

What's at stake is that HCBS are primarily funded by Medicaid, with funding provided by the federal and state government. 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.

**What does this mean?** Cuts to HCBS will reduce home and community services for people with disabilities and chronic conditions, as well as older adults. Reducing or eliminating HCBS will significantly and negatively impact people with disabilities and older adults, removing choice and forcing individuals into institutional care without the needed support to continue living in their homes and communities. CMS established HCBS to promote community integration, choice, independence, and living in one's preferred home/community.

**What can/should I do?** Contact your state and federal legislators through email and phone calls to express concerns about cuts to and the potential termination of HCBS for people with disabilities, chronic conditions and older adults. A sample email is provided on the next page of this alert. To find your legislators go to: <https://www.atra-online.com/advocacy> or [How to Find Your Legislator](#) (state or federal).

**What's next?** ATRA is monitoring the political and legislative environment. We are working with coalition partners to advocate for HCBS for older adults, and people with disabilities or chronic conditions. We will reach out to key federal legislators and Congressional committees to express our concerns, share the negative impact, and advocate for people with disabilities.

## Sample Email

Dear Representative/Senator **Last Name**,

I am writing as a constituent to express my concern about proposed or potential cuts to Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS). I am also a recreational therapist who serves people with disabilities, chronic conditions, and age-related issues; many of whom will be impacted by changes to HCBS. HCBS are essential for people with disabilities, older adults, and their families. Any reduction or elimination of funding or access to HCBS would have seriously negative and lasting consequences.

HCBS allow individuals to live with dignity in their homes and communities rather than being forced into institutional settings. These services support independence, community participation, and overall quality of life. For many, these services are not optional—they are the difference between living a meaningful, self-directed life and facing unnecessary institutionalization.

Cuts to HCBS would have negative effects including increased strain on families and caregivers; reduced access to supports such as personal care, employment services, and therapies that help a person stay living in their home; and increased long term costs shifting care to more expensive institutional settings which are less desirable for most people. Beyond the financial implications, this is an issue of civil rights and equity for people with disabilities and older adults, who deserve to live, work, and participate fully in their communities.

I urge you to oppose any cuts to HCBS funding, support policies that strengthen and expand access to community-based services over institutional options, and invest in direct care works to ensure sustainable, high quality support to keep people living in their homes and communities. Your leadership on this issue is critical to protecting the health, independence, and dignity of some of our most vulnerable community members.

Thank you for your time and your service. I welcome the opportunity to discuss this with you further.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

[Your Address]

[City, State, ZIP Code]

[Email Address]

[Phone Number]