

Supreme Court Upholds Affordable Care Act

June 28 2012, Washington - The U.S Supreme Court ruled in favor of upholding the Affordable Care Act (ACA), which according to Law Fellow at the Center for Disability Rights Center, Stephanie Woodward, is seen as a validation of the Act's opportunities for people with disabilities.

The ACA benefits people with disabilities in many ways including:

- More than 17 million children with pre-existing conditions will no longer be at risk of being denied coverage
- The law requires improvements to physical access to medical equipment and services, ensuring that people with disabilities can access these resources
- The law protects people with disabilities from dollar limits on health benefits, ensuring people with disabilities continue to receive the coverage they need
- The law further expands home and community based services
- The law furthers the promise of the 1999 U.S Supreme Court Olmstead Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act
- The law extends and enhances the Federal Money Follows the Person program
- The law created the Community First Option which incentivizes states through higher Medicaid match rates (6% increase) for community based services vs. institutional

According to the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), Kaiser Family Foundation and The National Council on Aging the ruling benefits older adults as well.

The ACA benefits adults age 60 and over in many ways, including:

- For those not yet on Medicare, as long as premiums are paid on a regular basis, insurance coverage will not be eliminated should the beneficiary become sick or disabled. Lifetime dollar limits will no longer be attributed to a beneficiary's health insurance plan
- Preventative screenings for diseases such as cancer and diabetes are provided free to the beneficiary
- Premiums will not be increased based on age and pre-existing conditions must be covered
- By 2014, individuals will have more insurance purchasing options, especially those who have been refused health insurance in the past. Individuals will be able to search for the best insurance plan for them through state-based Exchanges
- Medicare beneficiaries receive a free Annual Wellness Visit to their physician
- Discounts for Medicare Part D (prescription drug coverage) are increasing, closing the doughnut hole by 2020
- More resources will be allocated to address fraud and abuse in the Medicare program
- Hospitals will receive lower Medicare reimbursement rates for avoidable readmissions – leading to higher quality of care for patients
- Programs are being developed that provide supports and information to individuals to help them successfully transition from the hospital back to home

Sources: Center for Disability Rights. Retrieved from <http://www.cdrnys.org/wordpress/?p=863>, . AARP. Retrieved from <http://www.aarp.org/politics-society/advocacy/info-06-2012/supreme-court-upholds-affordable-care-act.html?intcmp=HPBANNER> June 28, 2012
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