



On April 16, 2012, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) introduced the Administration for Community Living (ACL), a tripartite merger of the Administration on Aging, the Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities and the Office on Disability. Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius emphasized that reorganizing the three entities into one single structure will allow for consistent and coordinated federal policy while maintaining key programmatic services specific to the needs of seniors and individuals with disabilities. ACL's creation and mission is part of the Obama Administration's larger Community Living Initiative "to ensure the fullest inclusion of all people in the life of our nation."

At a Senate Aging Committee briefing on the ACL, we learned about this merger's effect on populations serviced by JFNA, AJFCA and our partners. ACL's cross-cutting approach will reduce fragmentation and overlap in existing federal programs and services for both the aging and disability populations by coordinating and complementing existing infrastructure. For example, existing programs designed to serve both communities, such as the Lifespan Respite Care program and the National Clearinghouse for Long Term Care Information, will gain from this integrated partnership, while individualized operations oriented specifically to the needs of seniors or individuals with disabilities will retain their distinct features.

The new agency has been structured into the following five components:

- Office of the Administrator
- Administration on Aging (AoA)
- Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AIDD)
- Center for Disability and Aging Policy (CDAP)
- Center for Management and Budget (CMB)

Kathy Greenlee, the Assistant Secretary for Aging, will also serve as the Administrator of the Administration for Community Living. Henry Claypool, previously the Director of the Office on Disability, will serve as Principal Deputy Administrator of the ACL and principal advisor to the Secretary on disability policy. As such, the disability community will continue to have direct access to the Secretary. Moreover, as the principal agency designed to implement aging and disability programs, ACL will continue to meet regularly with community-based organizations and Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) to develop, refine, strengthen and promote independent living among all populations.

Given JFNA's leading role as advocates for the aging and disability communities, we maintain excellent working relationships with the leadership of this new agency. Following the Senate Aging Committee briefing, JFNA and AJFCA staff met with Henry Claypool to discuss the structure of the new agency. Mr. Claypool expressed that there would be no cuts or changes to staffing of the agency as a result of the merger, and that this move was made as a direct response to the growing trend amongst social service providers in local communities that are increasingly integrating services and policies in a comprehensive manner to serve both the aging and disability communities. There will also be no changes in funding, and grants funneled through agencies remain a function of the appropriations process on Capitol Hill.

JFNA is one of only a few national organizations representing the interests of both the aging and disability communities. As such, ACL holds JFNA's unique skills and resources in high regard, and expressed a strong desire to work with JFNA on a range of policy issues at the top of their agenda. We look forward to further developing this relationship to ensure the needs of Federations, their partner agencies, and the people they serve are represented as Congress and the Administration makes decisions about programs that impact their work and lives.

If you have any questions, please contact David Feinman or Shelley Rood at (202) 785-5900.