

United Jewish Communities
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LONG-TERM SERVICES & SUPPORTS

UJC is the umbrella organization uniting 157 Jewish Federations and 400 independent communities across North America. Our interest in health and long-term services and supports stems from Jewish teachings that inform us that the life and health of all community members are of infinite value.

UJC is greatly encouraged by the leadership exhibited in both Congress and the Administration regarding health reform. The Federation system has long supported enhanced access to healthcare for the uninsured. We look forward to working with leaders to further strengthen and secure our healthcare safety net and explore paths that will lead to universal access to those who are in need of it. However, **for enhanced health care access to be a true success, long-term supports and services must be incorporated in these reform efforts.**

Long-term supports and services refers to the whole array of necessary health and social services provided to older adults or those with disabilities in institutions or in home and community-based setting. These services can include housing, medical care, transportation, nutritional guidance and spiritual counseling. UJC believes that any long-term care reform needs to incorporate the delivery of high quality, affordable and accessible long-term supports and services, whether provided in institutional or in home and community-based settings.

In furtherance of these objectives, UJC urges legislators to **sponsor the Community Living Assistance Services and Supports (CLASS) Act**, (S.697, HR. 1721) which would create a voluntary disability insurance program for adults with long-term care needs and alleviate some of the pressure currently on the Medicaid program. The bi-partisan legislation will help establish a comprehensive continuum of care in preparation for the influx of the Baby Boom generation who will likely need these types of supportive services as they age.

- The CLASS Act is a sensible blend of public sector oversight built upon a foundation of personal responsibility. This combination will prove to be crucial as the nation grapples with the retirement of 78 million Boomers by the year 2030.
- The CLASS Act will provide individuals who are participating in this program with enhanced options for meeting their long-term services and supports regardless of whether their care is provided in home, community-based, or institutional settings.

Strengthening the nation's long-term care safety net is an issue of paramount importance to Jewish Americans as we comprise the fastest aging population segment in the United States due to low birth rates and overall longevity. Responding to demographic imperatives, it is our hope that long-term services and supports will be incorporated into national healthcare reform efforts.

For more information, please contact Jonathan Westin, UJC/Jewish Federations of North America Assistant Director of Legislative Affairs, at (202) 736-5860 or jonathan.westin@ujc.org