



Money Follows the Person Reauthorization Possible in Lame Duck Ask Your Lawmakers to Support an Extension for MFP

November 14, 2018

This week the leaders of the House Energy & Commerce Committee held a Health Subcommittee hearing to discuss the bipartisan effort underway to reauthorize the Money Follows the Person (MFP) program. Additionally, proponents of the existing legislation are hosting an educational briefing for key Hill staff to learn more about the importance of the program and to hear from a recent beneficiary who is one of the 88,000 people nationally who have used MFP to transition from an institutional setting back to their community. There is still an opportunity to successfully reauthorize funding for MFP before the end of the year, and we hope you will continue to promote bipartisan efforts to extend this critical program!

Since 2005, the MFP program has been instrumental in helping tens of thousands of older adults and people with disabilities transition from institutional settings to the community. However, funding for the program expired in 2016, and advocates and lawmakers have been working to promote bipartisan bills in the House and the Senate to provide additional funding for states to continue rebalancing their Medicaid long-term services and supports (LTSS) programs. Ongoing funding is essential to maintain and expand upon the success of MFP.

Current Status of MFP Reauthorization

In January, Senators Rob Portman (R-OH) and Maria Cantwell (D-WA) introduced a bipartisan reauthorization bill that would extend MFP funding for five years. Representatives Brett Guthrie (R-KY) and Debbie Dingell (D-MI) followed suit in the House shortly after. In both chambers, the *Ensuring Medicaid Provides Opportunities for Widespread Equity, Resources and Care Act*, or *EMPOWER Care Act* (S. 2227 and H.R. 5306) provides funding for MFP through 2022 and would make improvements in the program, including allowing beneficiaries living in institutional facilities to access the MFP benefit sooner than they are currently allowed to.

There are also discussions underway to shorten the reauthorization timeframe from five to even one or two years due to the cost of a five-year continuation. n4a would prefer a

longer-term reauthorization, but will support any effort to continue funding and avoid letting the program lapse altogether.

Currently the [Senate bill](#) has three Democratic and one Republican cosponsors. The [House bill](#) has 17 Democratic and 12 Republican cosponsors. We are hearing that Members in the House are seeking legislative opportunities to move a reauthorization by adding it to an end-of-year, must-pass bill. However, leaders on both sides of the Hill are still asking for co-sponsors—especially Republican cosponsors—to keep this effort moving forward! Some of n4a's recent [Advocacy Alerts](#) provide additional details on the campaign to reauthorize MFP and the importance of getting it done this year!

How Can You Take Action Now?

- **Use [n4a's template letter](#) to tell your Members why MFP is so important to older adults and people with disabilities in your community!** Outreach on MFP is especially important if your Representative(s) serves on the [House Energy and Commerce Committee](#) and/or your Senator serves on the [Senate Finance Committee](#), which have jurisdiction over this issue in each chamber. Even if your Members are not on these key committees, it is still critical to reach out, and ask your Member to sign on as a co-sponsor of the EMPOWER Care Act.

Use [n4a's template letter](#) to inform your outreach, but make sure to personalize your outreach with local facts about MFP—which may not be called MFP in your state—and success stories you can share! Make sure to clarify how MFP benefits older adults and people with disabilities in your community—especially if the program is called something else in your state!

- **Make sure to say THANK YOU if your Representative/Senator has already co-sponsored these important bills!** If your Member of Congress is a [House](#) or [Senate](#) cosponsor of the EMPOWER Care Act already, please make sure to express your gratitude for their support of this vital program. Also, don't hesitate to ask if they would be willing to encourage their colleagues to co-sponsor as well!
- **Engage your community!** Please encourage your providers, advisory boards and partners, and consumers to take action by engaging your Senators and Representatives! Use the sample text below to encourage stakeholders to call and/or email their Members of Congress. U.S. Capitol Switchboard: 202.224.3121. Email: www.senate.gov and [https://www.house.gov/representatives](http://www.house.gov/representatives).

MFP gives people the right to decide where they live and receive home and community-based services and supports. It provides assistance to help older adults and people with disabilities transition out of institutional settings back to the community.

Since 2005, MFP has assisted more than 88,000 people with moving back to the community, and has helped 44 states improve access to HCBS. MFP is a program that helps everyone win: individuals regain their independence, and state and federal governments save money because it costs less to provide services and supports in the community rather than in an institution.

Congress must extend funding for MFP or states will be unable to continue this cost-effective program that promotes independence for older adults and

people with disabilities. Please consider supporting and co-sponsoring the EMPOWER Act (S. 2227 or H.R. 5306) today!

Thank you for your advocacy on this important issue!

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If you have questions or concerns about this *Advocacy Alert* or n4a's policy positions, please contact Autumn Campbell at acampbell@n4a.org and Amy Gotwals at agotwals@n4a.org.