Special Needs Alliance:

Public Policy News You Can Use

November 10, 2025

SNAP Cuts Disproportionately Harm People with Disabilities

For more than a month, the fate of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), also referred to as food stamps, has been in legal limbo. On October 24th, weeks into the government shutdown, the Trump administration informed states that it would not provide any federal funds for SNAP, refusing to pull from the 5 billion dollar reserve fund during the shutdown. In response, almost two dozen states sued the Trump administration, requesting the Department of Agriculture restart SNAP funding to avoid benefits cuts in November. Two days after, a coalition of cities, religious groups, and non-profit organizations also sued the Trump administration to release SNAP funds. In late October and early November, federal court judges issued a series of rulings ordering President Trump to tap into the SNAP emergency funds to ensure full or partial SNAP payments were made; however, President Trump threatened to defy the court orders until the government shutdown ended. Responding to his threat, federal court judges including Supreme Court Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson issued a variety of orders aiming to ensure SNAP funding is issued without delay.

As the legal saga continues, states and Americans who rely on SNAP have been left behind. States have been confused with the legal back-and-forth and have been doing their best to provide benefits to residents. Unfortunately, some states have had to delay plans to provide full benefits, causing some recipients to experience difficulty purchasing groceries. Most discussions of SNAP fail to acknowledge the disproportionate impact on disabled individuals. About 25 percent of SNAP recipients, more than twice the share of the general population, have at least one type of disability. The Center for Economic and Policy Research's (CEPR) survey notes that these individuals with disabilities represent both individuals who are formally recognized by federal institutions like Social Security and individuals living with disabilities who do not have a formal designation by a governmental entity. CEPR and other disability rights advocates argue that disabled individuals cannot achieve economic stability without access to basic necessities like food.

Government Shutdown Becomes Longest in US History

On November 5th, the government shutdown entered its 36th day, breaking the record for the longest shutdown in modern U.S. history. Despite the record setting gridlock in Congress, there is newfound interest in the Senate for finding an off-ramp. Many have attributed the interest from Senate Democrats to the party's across-the-board victories last week in the gubernatorial races in New Jersey and Virginia, the mayoral election in New York City, and California voter's approval of a new U.S. House map for the 2026 elections. Some Democrats in the Senate view the recent wins as approval from their bases to find an off-ramp from the government shutdown. However, House Democrats have reportedly conveyed caution around striking a deal on government funding after such a successful victory last night – particularly if the agreement does not extend the Affordable Care Act subsidies beyond 2025.

To identify an off-ramp, a coalition of centrist Senate Democrats held a meeting to develop the contours of a deal to end the month-long shutdown. The Senate is set to recess tomorrow for Veterans Day, then return for one week before breaking again for Thanksgiving. These November recesses leave lawmakers with only a few working days to reach a deal before the shutdown extends into December – assuming leadership sticks to the current schedule.

Our full analysis of the government shutdown and its potential consequences is available here.

CMS Announced New Medicaid Drug Payment Model

On November 6th, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) announced a new payment initiative called the GENErating cost Reductions for U.S. (GENEROUS) Medicaid Model, which is aimed at reducing prescription drug costs and improving access to critical medications for vulnerable populations. The model, set to launch in 2026, allows participating state Medicaid programs to purchase select drugs at prices comparable to those paid in other countries, promoting fairer and more competitive pricing. According to CMS, Medicaid prescription drug spending exceeded $100 billion in 2024 highlighting the urgent need to curb rising costs.

The GENEROUS model is designed to create more predictable and transparent drug coverage by establishing uniform criteria across participating states. It will also involve collaboration with drug manufacturers, who can apply to take part through a Request for Applications (RFA). States will be invited to submit letters of intent to join the initiative. CMS aims to strengthen Medicaid's overall sustainability and ensure that beneficiaries can obtain vital medications at lower costs. The agency emphasized that the model's success will depend on voluntary participation from both states and manufacturers.

What's on Tap

The Senate took a major step towards ending the government shutdown late Sunday night, after advancing a continuing resolution (CR) by a vote of 60-40. The CR would fund a variety of agencies and programs – including the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) – through the remainder of the fiscal year, and all other federal functions through January 30. The funding measure also reinstates the hospital at home program and the Medicare telehealth flexibilities that lapsed during the shutdown. In return for the eight Senators' support of the CR, Democrats received commitments from the Trump Administration to rehire federal workers who were fired during the shutdown and the promise of a Senate floor vote in December on the expiring Affordable Care Act (ACA) tax subsides – due to expire at year's end. The bill will require a final vote to advance out of the upper chamber and to the House, which could be delayed by progressive Senators who remain in opposition to the deal struck last night.

Despite the likely pushback from progressive Senators, the funding package is expected to advance to the House this week. Several House Democrats remain in staunch opposition to the deal struck in the upper chamber, with House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries (D-NY) calling any deal that does not extend ACA subsidies insufficient. Jeffries comments on the deal are representative of a coalition of House Democrats who are expected to continue to oppose the CR, but a group of centrist House Democrats are expected to vote with most Republicans to reopen the government. The group of centrists will likely have the necessary votes to make up for any shortfall on the House GOP side of the aisle, although President Trump's expected support of the deal reached in the upper chamber will likely push rank and file House Republicans to support the CR. Speaker Johnson has indicated he is waiting to see what developments occur in the Senate before ordering the House back to session. He has put the chamber on a 36-hour notice to return to Washington and indicated the government could be reopened later this week.

In parallel to the progress made on Capitol Hill, the Trump Administration continued its court battle against the mandated disbursement of SNAP benefits. Several Democratic attorneys generals won favorable rulings last week that led to the release of SNAP benefits to millions in various states after suing the Trump Administration to maintain the program amid the ongoing shutdown. In response, the Supreme Court issued a temporary stay on the rulings late Friday while an appeals court considers the administration's request to halt payments to the program. The stay led the Department of Agriculture to order states to undo full SNAP benefits paid out in recent days, noting to state SNAP directors that the Department is viewing full payments made under prior rulings as unauthorized. The directive issued on Saturday warns states that have paid out benefits of potential penalties if they do not comply, arguing they moved too quickly and erroneously released full SNAP benefits following the court rulings.

Upcoming Events

Senate

- In session: November 10th – 14th

House

- Return to session contingent upon Senate developments

Congressional bandwidth is expected to be largely taken up by ongoing negotiations to end the government shutdown.