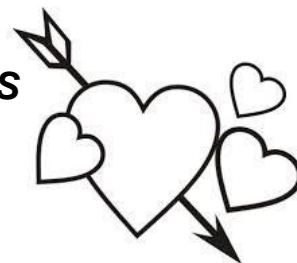


**PARENTS ASSOCIATION  
BELLEFONTAINE HABILITATION CENTER  
10695 BELLEFONTAINE ROAD  
ST. LOUIS, MO 63137**

PHONE 314-264-9100 BHC Switchboard

**HAPPY VALENTINES  
DAY**

WEBSITE [www.parentsassociationbhc.com](http://www.parentsassociationbhc.com)



**NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY 2025**

**PARENTS ASSOCIATION MEETING**

All Parent Association members, friends and staff are invited. Keep up with the latest news about Bellefontaine Habilitation Center. Bring your talents and expertise for our advocacy efforts. With everyone's involvement, the lives of the residents at BHC will be the best possible. All are encouraged to stay informed and take some action. Attend a parents meeting, talk with other families, share your concerns and ideas, write a letter, or make a phone call to help provide a safe, healthy, and supportive environment for the residents of BHC and others. They have no voice but ours, so we must continually speak up for them.

**MEETING DATE: SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2025**

**MEETING TIME: 2:00 P.M.**

**MEETING PLACE: ADMINISTRATION BUILDING**

**2025 MEETING DATES**

**FEBRUARY 9    MAY 18    AUGUST 10    NOVEMBER 9**

**If weather is bad**, please call the switchboard before coming to make sure the weather conditions have not changed the meeting plans. 314-264-9101

**The switchboard phone number** for Bellefontaine Habilitation Center is 314-264-9101.

**Our Parent Newsletter is online** at [parentsassociationbhc.com](http://parentsassociationbhc.com). Pass it along to others.

**Thank you to staff who fought the weather** to be on campus to care for BHC residents.

**2025 brings a new legislative session on the state and federal level.** There are always many issues that affect individuals with an intellectual disability. Three important concerns are possible Medicaid cuts, addressing staff shortages, and keeping sheltered workshops open.

**Governor Mile Kehoe** was sworn in on January 13.

**Jessica Bax, recent Director of Developmental Disabilities** has been appointed by Governor Kehoe to the position of Director of Missouri Department of Social Services. The Director of Developmental Disabilities position is being filled on an interim basis as of this newsletter. A search is being conducted for a permanent replacement.

**To find your legislators**, call the Missouri Capitol Switchboard at 1-573-751-2000 or go to [www.mo.gov](http://www.mo.gov).

**Want to listen to live debates or follow bills?** Go to [www.mo.gov](http://www.mo.gov), choose Government, then Legislative.

**Keep informed. Take action.**

Mary A. Vitale, President, Bellefontaine Parents Association

**2025 BELLEFONTAINE HABILITATION CENTER  
PARENTS ASSOCIATION BOARD MEMBERS**  
10695 BELLEFONTAINE ROAD ST. LOUIS, MO 63137  
314-340-6002 Thrift Shop  
314-264-9100 or 9101 BHC Switchboard  
www.parentsassociationbhc.com

**OFFICERS**

PRESIDENT Mary Vitale  
VICE PRESIDENT Patrick Wells  
TREASURER Thomasine Branneky  
CORRESPONDING SECRETARY Patrick Wells

**DIRECTORS**

Kathleen Berkley  
Michael Brophy  
Fred Brueggemann  
Jeanette Craig  
Darlene Desroches

Members of the Parents Association of the Bellefontaine Habilitation Center enhance the lives of the residents. Examples of resident support by the Parents Association include:

- BIRTHDAY CAKES AND GIFTS
- CHRISTMAS GIFTS
- HOLIDAY PARTIES
- HOLIDAY DECORATIONS
- HOME FURNISHINGS
- SPECIAL PROGRAM FUNDS
- PICNIC FUNDS
- DANCE BANDS
- CAMP FUNDS
- STAFF APPRECIATION

A Parents Association Newsletter is published 4 times a year, and can be accessed on our website, [www.parentsassociationbhc.com](http://www.parentsassociationbhc.com).

For questions about the Parents Association, call the switchboard: 314-264-9101

Do you have a relative, friend, or community leader that would be interested in the Parents Association? Pass along the membership form in this newsletter issue.

2025 MEMBERSHIP DUES ARE \$5.00 annually.

**PARENTS ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP DUES FOR YEAR 2025**

Dues are \$5.00 a year. Make checks payable to "BHC Parents Association".

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

STREET ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY, STATE, ZIP CODE \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_

NEW MEMBER  yes  no \_\_\_\_\_

If you are a new member, please let us know for mailing the newsletter.

Mail to: PARENTS ASSOCIATION 10695 BELLEFONTAINE ROAD ST. LOUIS, MO 63137

**TRIBUTE FUND**

Celebrate a birthday or anniversary, offer get well wishes or congratulations, remember a loved one by sending in a tribute - support the residents at Bellefontaine Habilitation Center. A few examples of the use of funds are: annual picnic, Christmas gifts and decorations, birthday cakes and presents, holiday decorations, treats and dances, household items, and special programs. The tribute form is on the last page of the newsletter.

**DONOR**

Patsy Christen

**RECIPIENT**

**OCCASION**

in memory Patrice Christen



**FUNDS APPROVED BY PARENTS ASSOCIATION BOARD**

\$ 521.00 Valentines party and decorations  
 \$ 419.00 Easter party and decorations



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**BHC RESIDENTS ENJOY FALL/WINTER ACTIVITIES**

Dietary instructions are observed for the residents at all activities.

Thanks to staff for helping residents prepare and participate in activities:



**ON CAMPUS**

**October**

The Halloween Dance was held in the evening for the first time since Covid. The festively decorated gym set the tone for a fun evening. The residents partied on the dance floor, listened to Halloween classics, and were given party snack bags. Refreshments included cupcakes, trail mix, pistachio mousse, and chocolate mousse and punch.

Congratulations to Home 1504 and Communications Department upon winning the pumpkin decorating contest!



**November**

For the Fall festival, residents enjoyed the Fall decorations in the gym while enjoying sweet potato pie, sweet potato mousse and punch. Music filled the air. Everyone received craft activities to enjoy.

**December**

A variety of Christmas decorations turned the gym into a winter wonderland for the Christmas Party. The residents were served with a variety of snacks including pinwheel sandwiches, pasta salad, cupcakes, cheesecake, cookies, cheesecake mousse, eggnog mousse and punch. An array of Christmas songs, old and new, set a holiday atmosphere. There were table activities and party snack bags for all the residents.



**IN THE COMMUNITY**

**Events** Sullivan Farm, St Louis Aquarium, WWE at the Enterprise Center, Kiener Plaza, AMC Theatres , Crest Bowl, Winter Wonderland

**Out to Eat** China House, Wing Stop, Golden Corral, Popeyes, McDonalds, Culvers, Lee's, Viviano's, Peach Cobbler Factory, 5 Guys

**Shopping** Spirit Halloween, Walmart, Party City, Great Clips, Hollywood Beauty, Ross, Marshalls, Family Dollar, JC Penny, Gabe's

**Stay informed. Take action.**  
**Contact Information**

**BELLEFONTAINE HABILITATION CENTER**

Rebecca Post, Superintendent  
Marcy Hargis, Assistant Superintendent  
10695 Bellefontaine Road  
St. Louis, Mo 63137  
314-264-9100 or 314-264-9101

**DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH**

Valerie Huhn, Director of Department of Mental Health  
Jessica Bax, Director-Division of Developmental Disabilities  
Sheila Wunning, Director-State Operated Services

Department of Mental Health  
1706 E. Elm Street  
Jefferson City, MO 65102  
573-751-4122  
1-800-364-9687  
[www.dmh.mo.gov](http://www.dmh.mo.gov)

**GOVERNOR MIKE KEHOE**

P.O. Box 720  
Jefferson City, MO 65102  
Phone: (573) 751-3222  
[www.mo.gov](http://www.mo.gov)

**MISSOURI STATE SENATORS AND REPRESENTATIVES**

Missouri Capitol Switchboard: 1-573-751-2000  
[www.mo.gov](http://www.mo.gov)

**U.S. SENATORS AND REPRESENTATIVES**

United States Capitol Switchboard: 1-202-224-3121  
[www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov)  
[www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov)

**U.S. PRESIDENT**

The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500  
Switchboard: 1-202-256-1414  
[www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov)

**AFSCME COUNCIL 61 (American Federation of State and County Municipal Employees)**

[www.afscme.org](http://www.afscme.org)  
[www.afscme.org/local/missouri](http://www.afscme.org/local/missouri)

**VOR**

(a national organization representing a full continuum of care for persons diagnosed with an intellectual disability, including ICFs/IID, habilitation centers in Missouri)  
1-877-399-4867  
[www.vor.net](http://www.vor.net)

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letters to the editor [letters@post-dispatch.com](mailto:letters@post-dispatch.com)



**POSSIBLE MEDICAID FUNDING CUTS ALARM DISABILITY ADVOCATES**

Medicaid has traditionally provided matching grants to states to help pay for the cost of care for anyone eligible for Medicaid, based on the needs of the individual. This funding is called the Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP). FMAP is based on a formula that considers each state's per capita income.

The Missouri FMAP effective October 1, 2024 – September 30, 2025 is 65.31% from federal funds leaving Missouri state funding for 34.69% of the cost of Medicaid services.

The U.S. Congress will be looking at ways to cut Medicaid funding. Some possible changes could include:

**Block Grants**

Under a block grant, states would receive a pre-set amount of funding for Medicaid. Currently, federal Medicaid spending matches states spending for eligible beneficiaries and services without a pre-set limit based on individual need. With a block grant, if program costs exceed the federal spending cap, states would have to increase state spending or reduce enrollment or services.

**Per Capita Cap**

Under a per capita cap, federal funding per each Medicaid recipient would be capped. Currently, individual needs are assessed and covered by Medicaid. With a per capita cap for each recipient, if costs for assessed needs are more than the cap, states would have to contribute more or services to the individual could be curtailed.

**Lowering the FMAP Rate**

Each state could have a lower assistance percentage. Again, states would have to cover the lost funds or discontinue some services.

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**Press release from Families USA, January 3, 2025, excerpt**

<https://familiesusa.org/press-releases/more-than-300-organizations-urge-new-congress-to-protect-and-strengthen-medicaid/>

As the 119<sup>th</sup> Congress is sworn in today, 334 national, state and local organizations called on Congressional leadership to protect, preserve and strengthen Medicaid, which covers 80 million Americans and is the backbone of the health system on which we all rely. While President-elect Trump said, including in an NBC interview last month and elsewhere, that he would not cut entitlements like Medicaid, Medicare or Social Security, the consumer advocacy organization Families USA spearheaded the letter in response to some House and Senate Republicans proposing to restrict, cut or cap Medicaid coverage in order to pay for extending tax cuts.

After an election where Americans sent a clear message to lower costs — for groceries, rent and health care, the letter argues that the last thing Congress should do is to cut or cap Medicaid, which would raise costs and limit access to health care for the millions of Americans who need it.

“During the 2024 election cycle, cutting Medicaid was not a budget solution that American families asked for — and doing so now would betray your constituents of all political affiliations who are seeking more economic security, not less,” stated the organizations in their letter. “Cutting Medicaid would shift costs and administrative burdens onto working class families, states and health systems.”

They continued, “Proposals to cap funding, reduce the federal share of Medicaid spending, establish block grants, institute work reporting and community engagement requirements, cut state revenue from provider taxes or otherwise undermine the fundamental structure of the Medicaid program all have the same effect: If instituted, Americans will lose access to lifesaving services, states will be strapped with massive budget holes, hospitals and clinics will lose revenues and be forced to scale back services, and American families and workers will be unable to afford essential care and get sicker — leading to a loss in productivity and the economy suffering as a result.”

**VOR is proud to be one of the organizations that have signed on to this letter.**

**MEDICAID EXPENDITURES DOCUMENT FROM VOR**

Considering that there may be possible cuts to Medicaid spending, the VOR document below highlights how small of a percentage of Medicaid dollars are spent on ICFs/IID, which are called habilitation centers in Missouri.

**Dispelling the Myth of Institutional Bias**

There is no Medicaid “Institutional Bias” for Persons with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (I/DD)

The allegation of a Medicaid institutional bias for people with I/DD needing Long-Term Services and Supports (LTSS) is simply not true. It is based on two false premises: (1) that all institutional services are mandatory and all home and community-based services (HCBS) are optional, and (2) that more dollars are spent on institutional services than on HCBS services.

**First, all Medicaid programs for people with I/DD are optional** – whether provided through Intermediate Care Facilities for Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities (ICFs/IID) or the HCBS program. Second, as detailed below, far more Medicaid dollars are spent on HCBS than on ICFs/IID services for people with I/DD.

**How, then, did this myth come into being?** The answer is by mixing the funding sources for very different populations, (1) the elderly and physically disabled who are served through the nursing facilities (NF) program, a **mandatory** Medicaid program, and (2) people with I/DD, who receive funding through **optional** ICF/IID and HCBS programs. By combining the dollars spent on the NF and ICF/IID programs as “institutional” funds, proponents of community funding represent that there is an institutional bias.

When only programs for people with I/DD are separated out, it is absolutely clear that there is neither a bias in the nature of the program nor in the amounts spent for institutions. (Source: Medicaid Long Term Services and Supports Annual Expenditures Report Federal Fiscal Year 2019 December 9, 2021) 1

A) ICFs/IID comprise 12% of total Medicaid “institutional” spending; nursing facilities account for 80% of total Medicaid “institutional” spending. The remaining 8% is allocated to other institutional expenses, including Mental Health Facilities, Disproportionate Share Hospitals, and other institutional long-term services and supports. (See p. 29)

B) Less than 5% of total Medicaid long-term care expenditures are for persons with I/DD served in ICFs/IID, while 59% is spent for community-based long-term care services for people with I/DD. (See p. 83)

**Total (state + federal) Medicaid Institutional Long-Term Care Expenditures: \$61,243,655,747**

ICF/IID: \$ 7,873,488,377 = 12%  
 Other Institutional: \$ 5,493,166,282 = 8%  
 Nursing Facilities: \$ 53,370,167,370 =80%

**Total (state + federal) Medicaid Long Term Care Expenditures: \$162,125,902,881**

ICF/IID: \$ 7,873,488,377 = 5%  
 Other Institutional: \$ 59,202,833,821 = 36%  
 HCBS: \$ 95,049,580,683 = 59%

The decades long trend for total Medicaid LTSS expenditures from 1988 -2019 has been a large increase for HCBS expenditures from 12% to 59% and a substantial decrease in institutional expenditures from 88% to 41%. (Graph pg. 14) As previously stated, less than 5% of total Medicaid long term care expenditures are for persons with I/DD served in ICFs/IID.

The ICF/IID program is not the cause of rising Medicaid costs. It is a tiny and falling percentage of all Medicaid funding and a good investment for both the federal government and the states to care for some of their most needy citizens.

All sources: Medicaid Long Term Services and Supports Annual Expenditures Report Federal Fiscal Year 2019 December 9, 2021  
<https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/long-term-services-supports/downloads/ltssexpenditures2019.pdf>

# AUTISM NEWS

## AUTISM CARES ACT RENEWED

HR 7213 was passed by the U.S. Congress that approved a five-year extension of the Autism Collaboration, Accountability, Research, Education and Support, or Autism CARES Act, the nation’s primary autism law.

In December 2024 President Joe Biden signed the law that allocates federal funding for research, prevalence tracking, screening, professional training and other government activities related to autism. To review HR 7213, go to:

<https://www.congress.gov/118/bills/hr7213/BILLS-118hr7213enr.pdf>



## NATIONAL COUNCIL ON SEVERE AUTISM – DIFFERENT LEVELS OF CARE BASED ON SEVERITY LEVELS OF AUTISM

<https://www.ncsautism.org/>

The following information is being cited from:

[https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5a43f3acf9a61e04cdd465e7/t/661019401514bd7b564c36c9/1712331073224/NCSA\\_CaresAct\\_OnePager.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5a43f3acf9a61e04cdd465e7/t/661019401514bd7b564c36c9/1712331073224/NCSA_CaresAct_OnePager.pdf)

Over 60% of those diagnosed with autism are deemed to have profound or severe autism.

27% that meet profound criteria are non-verbal, minimally verbal or have an intelligence quotient (IQ) under 50.

38% of children with autism have full intellectual disability (IQ <70).

24% have borderline intellectual disability (IQ 71-85).

For nearly all the profoundly autistic population and for many in the broader group with intellectual impairment, around-the-clock care is required — significantly increasing the service complexity and costs for care. Combining this data with additional reporting that this substantially impaired autism population will continue to grow, confirms the need for federal laws, regulations and appropriations focused on those with the highest severity ratings.

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## VOR'S 2025 LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVE

## VOR NEWS

The VOR Legislative Initiative on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. will be held May 12 – 14. Meetings will be with members of the 119th Congress and key members of cabinet agencies to discuss issues that affect people with severe / profound I/DD, autism, and mental illnesses.

VOR is a national non-profit organization run by families of people with I/DD and autism for families of people with I/DD and autism.

VOR’s mission is to ensure that all people with I/DD and autism and their families are able to make informed choices from a full range of residential options and employment opportunities.

**VOR IS OUR NATIONAL VOICE** – Decisions made by the U.S. Congress affect our family members.

## MAKE A DIFFERENCE - BECOME A VOR MEMBER online at [www.vor.net](http://www.vor.net)

**JOIN VOR \$45 per year per individual; \$200 per year per family organization; or \$250 per year per provider/professional organization**

**Send completed form with payment to: (checks made out to “VOR”)**

VOR

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Elk Grove Village, IL 60007

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MAKE CHECKS OR MONEY ORDERS PAYABLE TO "BHC Parents Association"

MAIL TO: PARENTS ASSOCIATION 10695 BELLEFONTAINE ROAD ST LOUIS MO 63137



**THE HIDDEN TREASURE SHOP**  
**SHOP TILL YOU DROP!! BEST THRIFT SHOP PRICES!!**  
**BLDG #1901** FIRST BUILDING ON THE LEFT AS YOU ENTER BHC CAMPUS.

**WEDNESDAYS, 10:00 A.M. TO 3 P.M. AT BHC**

Please leave donated items at the Parents Association shed near the Thrift Shop.

PARENTS ASSOCIATION, INC.  
BELLEFONTAINE HABILITATION CENTER  
10695 BELLEFONTAINE ROAD  
ST. LOUIS MO 63137

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