

Recognizing the Role of Direct Support Professionals Act (H.R. 6137/S. 3211)

The American Health Care Association/National Center for Assisted Living (AHCA/NCAL) encourages members of Congress to cosponsor the **Recognizing the Role of Direct Support Professionals Act (H.R. 6137/S. 3211)**. Congressman Brian Fitzpatrick (R, PA-1), Congressman Joe Morelle (D, NY-25), U.S. Senators Maggie Hassan (D-NH) and Susan Collins (R-ME) introduced this important bipartisan legislation that would establish a Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) for direct support professionals (DSPs).

DSPs support millions of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (ID/DD) to live full lives. DSPs provide supports that are primarily funded by Medicaid and cover a wide range of habilitation services including, support and skill-building for activities of daily living, employment, transportation, and other supports that promote independence. Across the country, providers of services for individuals with ID/DD are unfortunately being forced to shutter programs and reject new referrals due to the worsening DSP workforce shortage.

Currently, “Direct Support Professional” is not recognized at the federal level because it does not have a unique SOC code for data collection. SOCs are used to collect data and help all levels of government identify employment trends. DSPs are often inaccurately and inconsistently incorporated into a variety of SOCs which do not capture their full spectrum of work activities. An SOC for DSPs will enable state and federal agencies to collect data on DSPs and inform policies to address the workforce shortage and challenges.

The Recognizing the Role of Direct Support Professionals Act will help support individuals with ID/DD and the workforce that enables them to live full lives.

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