

CalABLE Quarterly

July 2020

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From the Director

Did you know that a higher percentage of workers with disabilities are employed in essential positions such as agricultural, public administration, manufacturing and retail than people without disabilities?

According to the **Bureau of Labor Statistics**, people with a disability were more concentrated in service occupations than those with no disability, 20.7% compared to 17% percent. In addition, workers with a disability are also more likely than those without a disability to work in production, transportation, and material moving occupations, around 14%, compared with around 12%.

We are service providers, agricultural laborers, public administrators, grocery store personnel, food service employees, and warehouse staff.

We are your coworkers, parents, sisters, brothers and neighbors.

We are people with autism, mental health and physical disabilities, learning and sensory disabilities.

We help keep California running.

We are essential.

As a proud member of California's disability community, I am profoundly grateful for the essential workers with disabilities and for those essential workers who serve our community in these COVID-19 days. Thank you for keeping our communities functioning, putting your life at risk on our behalf, and for advocating for the resources we need.

I salute you.

Sincerely,

Dante Q. Allen
Executive Director

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Dante Allen
Executive Director
CalABLE

In this Issue

Your COVID-19 Aid

On March 27, 2020 President Donald J. Trump signed the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act—**CARES Act**. Because there are over 800 pages of direction for federal departments and agencies contained within this act, we have provided a few resources to strike-through the technical jargon.

The CARES Act provides financial relief to millions of Americans, but making sense of the legal and bureaucratic jargon is not easy. To pull apart the specialized language, the National Disability Institute (NDI) launched a Financial Resilience Center to zoom in on what you need to know during this crisis. This Center distills the CARES Act into relatable words, effectively answering questions that matter to you. Click the icon below for more information.



Am I eligible for money from CARES Act? How will I get my money? Will money from CARES Act affect my Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)? Click the icon below to find answers to your first-order financial questions during COVID-19.



Find step-by-step strategies to maintain financial health during COVID-19 by clicking the icon below.



I understand all too well the impact COVID-19 is having on the financial and physical well-being of our community. CalABLE's partnership with NDI is one way we resource factual answers to your questions about money matters in these bleak times. Make use of this partnership—visit nationaldisabilityinstitute.org to get free online financial wellness training, free professional financial counseling, and up-to-date information about your finances during COVID-19.

Lastly, in response to advocacy efforts from our community, a **bipartisan letter** signed by 20 senators was sent to congressional leadership requesting disability funding in the next stimulus bill. The letter proposes a \$50 billion increase in funding for Medicaid's Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) programs, paid sick leave for people with disabilities and their caregivers, a boost in Medicaid funding, and emergency income relief. The letter also calls for a 12% increase in the Medicaid matching rate and for the permanent reauthorization of **Money Follows the Person** (MFP), funds providing states with enhanced federal matching funds for services to help people with disabilities move from institutions and into the community.

Your disability community leaders and advocates are devoted to your financial security and wellbeing. Together, we are pushing for relief on your behalf. In the meantime, be safe and wash your hands.

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Essential Salutes

California is home to the largest direct-care workforce in the country. Over a half million workers support older adults and people with disabilities every day across the U.S. Let's take this moment to **clap our hands, bang pots and pans, say a word, shout to the sky**—anything to shine light on the essential women and men serving the disability community during these COVID-19 days.

Direct-care workers make it possible for us to go to work each day knowing our loved ones are cared for. They are the difference between living well, remaining part of a community, or being confined to an airless room, a chair, or hospital bed.

In some cases, her work—and it's generally a "her"—can be the difference between life and death. This is as primal as it gets, friends.

So, let's tell more stories about essential workers, elevating them in our public discourse. Let's rethink why we so easily accept their service without thanks when they give so much of themselves to maintain the lives of our vulnerable citizens. Let's invest our public resources in a manner that ensures care is affordable and that those who provide care are paid appropriately for the value they bring to our lives.

That said, the current need for direct-care workers is urgent. On March 30, Governor Newsom **called for retired healthcare workers and students** to join in caring for the expected surge of COVID-19 patients. He believes California can add 37,000 healthcare workers by asking retired providers, those getting a medical license, and students enrolled in medical or nursing schools to apply to the newly created **California Health Corps**.

Newsom's message to anyone with healthcare experience is clear—"We need you." And for those of us in the disability community, we know he's right.

I said it once, I'll say it again—I salute you.



Phil Bonnet,
Executive Director
Alta California
Regional Center
Sacramento,
California

A Word from A Friend

To all of the dedicated and heroic direct care professionals,

I am grateful for the work you do every day on behalf of the people we serve. As a person who spent over a decade of my career in the direct service of individuals with developmental and intellectual disabilities, I am familiar with the sacrifices you make. Your passion to support the folks who depend upon you every day for critical and life-sustaining services is so important. I know the work that you do is often unrecognized and underappreciated by those who don't know you. Please allow me to express my deepest appreciation to each and every one of you for your selfless efforts on behalf of our community.

Thanks for all you do!

—Phil Bonnet

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Your Financial Safety

The IRS's Criminal Investigation Division is tracking a wave of new criminal schemes—scammers using your stimulus check to steal personal identifying information. Beware.

"While you are waiting to hear about your economic impact payment," **said IRS Criminal Investigation Chief Don Fort**, "criminals are working hard to trick you into getting their hands on it. The IRS Criminal Investigation Division is working hard to find these scammers and shut them down, but in the meantime, we ask people to remain vigilant."

Telltale signs a scammer is after your cash:

- The caller or emailer uses the words "stimulus check" or "stimulus payment." Government officials use the word "economic impact payment."
- You're asked to sign your check over to the caller.
- You receive an email, text or social media message telling you to verify personal and/or banking information to speed up your stimulus payment.
- The individual offers to expedite your payment.
- You receive a fake check and the sender tells you to call a number to verify your personal information in order to cash it.

Also, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Inspector General is alerting the public about scammers offering COVID-19 tests to Medicare beneficiaries in exchange for personal details. However, the services are not legitimate. See the video on this page.

Fraudsters may target you via telemarketing calls, social media platforms, or door-to-door visits. The personal information collected can be used to fraudulently bill federal health care programs and commit medical identity theft. If Medicare or Medicaid denies the claim for an unapproved test, you could be responsible for the cost. **Protect yourself.**

- Be cautious of unsolicited requests for Medicare or Medicaid numbers.
- Be suspicious of unexpected calls or visitors offering COVID-19 tests or supplies.
- Ignore offers or advertisements for COVID-19 testing or treatments on social media sites.
- A physician or other trusted healthcare provider should assess your condition and approve requests for COVID-19 testing.



If you suspect COVID-19 fraud, contact the National Center for Disaster Fraud Hotline at 866-720-5721 or disaster@leo.gov.

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Cause for Celebration

"The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) broke down barriers to opportunity for millions of American workers," **U.S. Secretary of Labor Eugene Scalia said**. "On this anniversary, we recognize and celebrate the access to opportunity created by the ADA."

While it's unimaginable for us today, there was a time when people with disabilities were confined to their homes or institutions because communities did not evolve with them in mind. Can you imagine not being able to get into your office building, your school, your bank, your pharmacy? Imagine a college denying you admission even after meeting the academic admission criteria and paying your tuition or an employer denying you employment without considering your qualifications. Take this moment to remember the realities faced by Americans with disabilities before the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).



On July 26, 2020, millions of people with disabilities and their family and friends celebrate the 30th anniversary of the signing of the ADA. Signed into law on July 26, 1990 by President George W. Bush, ADA is landmark civil rights legislation that increased the inclusion of people with disabilities in all aspects of community life. Of course, I am aware of the challenges yet to be overcome, but I am joyful about ADA's achievements during the past 30 years.

When it was enacted, the ADA promised people with disabilities equal opportunity, nondiscrimination, and a "level playing field." **President Bush likened enactment of the law to the fall of the Berlin Wall**. He said, "And now I sign legislation which takes a sledgehammer to another wall, one which has for too many generations separated Americans with disabilities from the freedom they could glimpse, but not grasp. Once again, we rejoice as this barrier falls proclaiming together, we will not accept, we will not excuse, we will not tolerate discrimination in America."

Celebrations honoring ADA's anniversary center on the theme "**Increasing Access and Opportunity**" and continue throughout 2020. Updates on observances will be posted on the Department of Labor's "**ADA30**" webpage, so check back often.

CalABLE is thrilled to celebrate ADA's anniversary and I invite you to as well. To prepare, you can find ideas and resources in the **ADA30 Media Kit**.

[» Hide the full article](#)

Drumroll Please!

I am proud to announce that CalABLE is launching an Ambassador Program. The objective is simple: educate, promote and support the value CalABLE can add to the lives of Californians with disabilities and their families.

We are recruiting CalABLE account owners to participate as Ambassadors in this new program—parents, guardians and adults with disabilities that represent a range of experiences. We are also looking for diversity represented by type of disability, age, gender, religion, race and ethnicity.

Ambassadors will be storytellers, sharing their knowledge and success using their CalABLE account. And using their personal story to inspire others to take advantage of being a CalABLE account owner.

Are we looking for you?

If the answer is "yes," contact us at calABLESupport@CalABLE.ca.gov.

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The AchievABLE™ Corner

CalABLE teamed up with the **National Disability Institute (NDI)** to provide the information you need to manage your CalABLE account. No matter where you are in the process—if you are considering opening a CalABLE account, ready to open a CalABLE account, or already using your CalABLE account—NDI has tools and resources in its **AchievABLE™ Corner** to help you maximize the potential of your account.

