Jump Start Disability Policy Reform: Two Goals and a Process

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References

- David R. Mann and David C. Stapleton.
Two Disability Policy Reform Goals

- Increase employment opportunities and outcomes for people with disabilities
- Reduce growth in public expenditures to support working-age people with disabilities
Three Barriers Block Progress

- A legacy of distrust
- Financing is misaligned with goals
- Fragmentation of responsibilities
Provisions of Legislation to Support Positive Reforms

- **Goals**
  - Better economic opportunities and outcomes
  - Reduced growth in public expenditures

- **Management and oversight**

- **Transparent accounting**

- **Waivers**
Management and Oversight Provisions (1)

- A federal entity with a charter to:
  - Establish and lead the reform process
  - Grant cross-cutting waivers from current programs to states, localities, private entities and federal agencies
  - Coordinate cross-cutting activities under the waivers
  - Monitor disability population outcomes
  - Establish and operate an appellate process
  - Support continual improvement through evaluation, dissemination, and technical assistance
  - Make midcourse adjustments
Management and Oversight Provisions (2)

- Establish an independent consumer review board system
- Encourage or require state governments to charter comparable entities
Full and Transparent Accounting

- Rolling 10-year budget projections
  - Encompass all federal and state expenditures for working-age people with disabilities
  - Based on current law initially
  - Divide into state-level projections
  - Include projections for state matching dollars
  - Produce annually

- Account for actual expenditures at the end of each year

- Option: gradually reduce the budget
Waivers

- **Default**: None.
  - Continue to administer current programs

- **Preferred**: States, localities, private entities and even federal agencies propose waivers designed to:
  - Improve economic outcomes for the disability population
  - Reduce expenditures relative to projections
  - Start small, build on initial successes, discard initial failures
What might the waivers allow?

- Single door to disability supports
- Restructure benefits to make work pay, encourage savings, support community living
- Short-term disability benefits
- Experience rating
- Integrate SSDI with workers’ compensation and private disability benefits
- Innovative transition programs for youth and young adults with disabilities
- …and many more
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