



The Capitol Circuit

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National Advocacy

Accessing Content and Taking Action in a New Way

The Epilepsy Foundation's Advocacy Team is excited to announce that we have transitioned to a new platform for grassroots engagement – VoterVoice! You will still be able to take action with just a few clicks, but now you will have even more opportunities to easily engage in different ways, including through tweets. As part of this transition, our advocacy content can now be found directly on [epilepsy.com](https://www.epilepsy.com) and our former site – advocacy.epilepsy.com – is no longer active. You can learn about the ways to [get involved](#), our [policy priorities](#), and read the latest advocacy [newsletter](#)! You can also [take action](#) from there as well! We hope you will take some time to navigate our new content and let us know what you think.

Congress Closes in on Year End Package

On Friday, December 11, Congress passed and the President signed a one-week continuing resolution to fund federal agencies through December 18 and provide more time to wrap-up year-end business. This week, lawmakers have been negotiating final details of an omnibus package, which includes all 12 of

the Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 spending bills and hopefully a COVID-19 relief package. This omnibus may also include a bipartisan, bicameral legislative agreement to end surprise medical billing. However, as of print time, consensus had not been reached and there is possibility of a short government shutdown or another short continuing resolution before the chambers are ready to vote.

The Epilepsy Foundation and our grassroots advocates have been advocating for epilepsy community priorities in all parts of the omnibus package. This includes a possible increase to the CDC's Epilepsy Program and the VA Epilepsy Centers of Excellence in the FY 21 spending bills, dedicated funding for Medicaid home-and community-based services in the COVID package and addressing surprise medical billing.

COVID-19 Vaccine Allocation and Distribution

Last week, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued the first emergency use authorization (EUA) to Pfizer and BioNTech for a vaccine to prevent COVID-19. The first vaccines will be administered to front-line health care workers and residents and staff of long-term care facilities, following guidelines issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP). The Epilepsy Foundation was very involved in [encouraging the CDC to prioritize residents of all ages in congregate settings](#). According to the Kaiser Family Foundation, [40% of COVID-19 related deaths have occurred among residents and staff of long-term care facilities](#).

The FDA is currently reviewing another application for EUA from Moderna. The CDC ACIP will vote this weekend to recommend further priority phases for vaccination, including non-healthcare essential workers, people with high-risk conditions, and people over age 65. Once ACIP's recommendations are approved, each state still determines its specific vaccine allocation plan.

Learn more about the COVID-19 vaccine [here](#).

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