



## **NRLN Review, Summary for June 2023**

The NRLN Review provides a monthly report on National Retiree Legislative Network actions, events in Congress and important retirement news.

### **NRLN President's Forum Message Sounds Alert on Republican Study Committee's Report**

An NRLN President's Forum Message sounded the alert on June 21 about the 175-member Republican Study Committee's report on June 14 for Fiscal Year 2024 Budget. It is filled with "political speak." What it means that is important to retirees are:

-- **An effort to terminate Medicare as we know it.** The proposal recommends a "premium support" plan that would subsidize seniors for private insurance options that would compete with traditional Medicare. This plan which the NRLN opposes would require a government subsidy check for seniors to purchase their own healthcare insurance. Over time, as premiums rise above the adjusted subsidy, older Americans would have to spend out-of-pocket to cover the difference. Millions in private Medicare Advantage plans, currently heavily subsidized, would also be affected.

-- **Raise the Social Security retirement age.** Those now age 59 would see an increase in the retirement age of three months per year beginning in 2026. The retirement age for full benefits would reach 69 for those who turn 62 in 2033. The NRLN contends that raising the retirement age represents diminished benefits and opposes the proposal. While many are willing to work more years, individuals who have worked in physically demanding jobs and/or have health issues may not be capable of extended labor.

To read the entire NRLN President's Forum message, go to: <https://nrln.org/Blog/presidents-forum/>

### **NRLN Action Alert – Medicare Patients Need All Chiropractic Services for Pain Management**

An NRLN Action Alert was issued on June 6 asking NRLN members to urge their U.S. Representative and Senators to support passage of H.R.1610/S.799, Chiropractic Medicare Coverage Modernization Act of 2023.

The proposed legislation would remove obstacles imposed on Medicare recipients that aren't required by private insurers, thus expanding Medicare coverage to include access to all chiropractic care. Medicare does not currently allow for chiropractic practices like joint mobilization, physiological therapies, soft tissue massage techniques, and other treatments, which are covered by private sector health coverage plans and other federal health delivery systems.

Passage of this bill will bring Medicare chiropractic coverage more in line with services provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs, Department of Defense, the Federal Employee Health Benefits Program, and private health insurance coverage. This legislation will ensure that all seniors on Medicare, especially those

who suffer from chronic pain and often use harmful opioids for relief, have access to all chiropractic treatments for pain management.

## **NRLN Legislative Committees' Work**

The NRLN's Legislative Advisory Committee (LAC) composed of Judy Stenberg, Chairwoman, Deb Morrissett, Joe Mazzei and Al Duscher submitted the following bills for the Legislative Action Planning Committee (LAPC) to consider for action during its June 5 conference call. The LAPC includes Bill Kadereit, Chairman, Judy Stenberg, Alyson Parker, Martha Deahl and Ed Beltram. The LAPC's actions included:

**H.R.1610/S.799, Chiropractic Medicare Coverage Modernization Act of 2023**, would remove obstacles imposed on Medicare recipients that aren't required by private insurers, thus expanding Medicare coverage to include access to all chiropractic care. Medicare does not currently allow for chiropractic practices like joint mobilization, physiological therapies, soft tissue massage techniques, and other treatments, which are covered by private sector health coverage plans and other federal health delivery systems. Passage of this bill will bring Medicare chiropractic coverage more in line with services provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs, Department of Defense, the Federal Employee Health Benefits Program, and private health insurance coverage. This legislation will ensure that all seniors on Medicare, especially those who suffer from chronic pain, have access to all chiropractic treatments for pain management.

-- An NRLN Action Alert was issued on June 6 asking NRLN members to send a letter to their U.S. Representatives and Senators to request they support getting the bipartisan **H.R.1610/S.799, Chiropractic Medicare Coverage Modernization Act of 2023** out of committees and to the House and Senate floors for a vote.

**H.R.1691, Ensuring Patient Access to Critical Breakthrough Products Act of 2023** would require Medicare to temporarily cover breakthrough products for four years while the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) would be required to make a permanent coverage determination. The FDA can give "breakthrough designation" to new medical devices for several reasons, such as: the devices are more effective than alternatives, they offer significant advantages over alternatives, there are no approved alternatives, or the device provides care for a diagnosis of life-threatening or debilitating diseases or conditions. By expediting the coverage determination process for FDA-approved breakthrough devices, this bill removes unnecessary barriers that prevent seniors from accessing the most innovative and cutting-edge treatments. With this legislation, millions of seniors could live longer, healthier lives, and companies that develop these innovative treatments would be supported in their investment in medical technologies and devices.

-- Alyson Parker, NRLN Executive Director, will contact the health issues staff member for the Senate Committee on Finance to ask if she knows if a companion bill may be introduced in the Senate for **Ensuring Patient Access to Critical Breakthrough Products Act of 2023**. In addition, Alyson will inquire about the definition of "new medical devices."

**H.R.3008, Drug Shortage Prevention Act of 2023** would require manufacturers to notify the FDA if they experience six consecutive weeks of an increase in product demand to minimize drug shortages and improve the FDA's predictive ability and responsiveness. New drug shortages in the US increased nearly 30% between 2021 and 2022, according to a report commissioned by the Senate that was published March 22, 2023. At the end of 2022, drug shortages experienced a record five-year high of 295 active drug shortages, according to the report. It also found that while the average drug shortage lasts about 1.5 years, more than 15 critical drug products have been in shortage for over a decade.

-- Letters requesting a vote on **H.R.3008** in the House Committee on Energy and Commerce Committee were sent on June 5 to Chairwoman Cathy McMorris Rodgers (WA-05) and Ranking Member Frank Pallone (NJ-06).

**Tabled:**

**H.R.1046/S.393, Social Security Expansion Act.** After the LAC did an analysis of the Social Security 2100 Act vs Social Security 2100 Act: A Sacred Trust vs Social Security Expansion Act, it recommended to the LAPC to table **H.R.1046/S.393, Social Security Expansion Act.** The LAPC accepted the LAC's recommendation.

**H.R.3261, Strengthening Social Security Act of 2023,** would increase benefits, ensure the Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) adequately reflects the real cost of living today, and improve the financial condition of the Trust Fund. This bill was previously introduced as **HR 2624**(5/8/19) and **HR 4921** (8/4/21). All three bills have the same sponsor and almost identical co-sponsors. The LAC has tabled and monitored the previous bills. The current bill, **HR 3261**, has no chance of progressing. The LAC recommended that **H.R.3261** be tabled and not monitored. The LAPC accepted the LAC's recommendation.

The bills have been posted on the NRLN's website Bills webpage at: <https://nrln.org/legislative-action-network/#/bills> which feeds the NRLN Report Card. See whether your Representative and Senators are a cosponsor of bills the NRLN supports by going to <https://nrln.org/legislative-action-network/#/legislators/>. Click on your state on the USA map. When your Congressional delegation appears, click on EXCEL DOWNLOAD.

The letters have been posted in Archives on the NRLN website in Letters to Washington at: <https://nrln.org/letters-to-washington-2/> .

### Key News Articles Posted in June

During June 44 links to news articles related to retirement issues were researched and posted daily IN THE NEWS on the NRLN website home page. The headlines below are links to the articles. Or read the articles at [www.nrln.org](http://www.nrln.org) under IN THE NEWS in the right column. Scroll down the right column and click on the headline to access the article you want to read. Below are some of the headline links.

[\*\*Medicare won't change coverage policy for pricey Alzheimer's drugs\*\*](#) – June 1

[\*House Democrats press Medicare agency for more info on covering Alzheimer's drugs\*](#) – June 6

[\*\*Merck sues Biden administration over Medicare drug price negotiations\*\*](#) – June 6

[\*Cancer Centers Say US Chemotherapy Shortage Is Leading to Treatment Complications\*](#) – June 7

[\*\*Medicare Allowance Explained: What You Need to Know\*\*](#) – June 8

[\*CMS Announces Multi-State Initiative to Strengthen Primary Care\*](#) – June 8

[\*\*Sanders to Biden: Don't Let Big Pharma Bankrupt Medicare With 'Unconscionable' Price of Alzheimer's Drug\*\*](#) – June 7

[\*10 Social Security Calculators That Can Help You Decide When to Claim\*](#) – June 12

[\*\*Pfizer warns FDA of shrinking penicillin supply\*\*](#) – June 13

[\*The Highest Medical Costs to Expect in Retirement\*](#) – June 15

[\*\*House GOP Panel Releases Budget That Would 'Destroy Social Security as We Know It'\*\*](#) – June 15

[\*Global Study Shows Loneliness Can Shorten Life Spans\*](#) – June 19

[\*\*Preventing Alzheimer's: Here's 6 Ways You May Reduce Your Risk\*\*](#) – June 19

[\*CDC panel recommends RSV vaccines for seniors\*](#) – June 21

[\*\*As Drugmakers Abandon Cheap Generics, Cancer Patients Are Left Without Meds\*\*](#) – June 21

[\*What Medications Are Used to Treat Alzheimer's?\*](#) – June 21

[\*\*The Drug Industry Just Launched An Attack On Biden's Prescription Drug Reforms\*\*](#) – June 21

[\*Moderna requests FDA authorization for updated COVID shot\*](#) – June 22

[\*\*Why Your Family History Is So Important to Your Doctor\*\*](#) – June 24

[\*Statin alternative significantly reduces heart disease deaths, new study finds\*](#) – June 24

[\*\*Major Cuts to Social Security Are Back on the Table — What's Being Proposed Now?\*\*](#) – June 25

[\*Experts Propose Tax Cap as Social Security Solution — Which Americans Would Be Most Affected?\*](#) – June 25

[\*\*CMS Increases Nursing Home Ownership Transparency\*\*](#) – June 28

[\*Social Security phone service disruptions led to dropped calls, longer wait times, report finds\*](#) – June 28, 2023

[\*\*CDC recommends RSV vaccine for adults age 60 and older\*\*](#) – June 29

[\*Biden admin revises drug negotiation program amid legal onslaught\*](#) – June 30