



NRLN Review

NRLN
NATIONAL RETIREE
LEGISLATIVE NETWORK

NRLN Review, Summary for August 2023

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

NRLN Legislative Committees' Work

The NRLN's Legislative Advisory Committee (LAC) composed of Judy Stenberg, Chairwoman, Deb Morrisett, Joe Mazzei and Al Duscher submitted the following bills for the Legislative Action Planning Committee (LAPC) to consider for action during its August 7 conference call. The LAPC includes Bill Kadereit, Chairman, Judy Stenberg, Alyson Parker, Martha Deahl and Ed Beltram. The LAPC's actions included:

H.R.2377/S.100, Saving Access to Laboratory Services Act (SALSA), would address what has been years of deep Medicare payment cuts, while updating Medicare's payment system to ensure clinical laboratory services are on a sustainable pathway forward. Between 2017 and 2022, payment for some common tests for diseases like diabetes, cancer, and heart disease were cut by 27%. The next round of Medicare cuts would lower reimbursements up to another 15% for about 800 laboratory tests widely used to screen and manage many serious diseases. It is essential that Congress protect patients by acting this year to fix the Medicare payment model for clinical diagnostic tests.

-- After Congress returns from its August recess in September 2023, NRLN letters will be sent requesting a vote on **H.R.2377** in the House Subcommittees: Commerce and Energy Subcommittee on Health Chairman Brett Guthrie (KY-02) and Ranking Member Anna Eshoo (CA-18). Ways and Means Subcommittee on Health Chairman Health Vern Buchanan (FL-16) and Ranking Member Lloyd Doggett (TX-37).

-- After Congress returns from its August recess in September 2023, NRLN letters will be sent requesting Senate Committee on Finance Chairman Ron Wyden (OR) and Ranking Member Mike Crapo (ID) hold a Committee vote on **S.1000**.

H.R.2407, Nancy Gardner Sewell Medicare Multi-Cancer Early Detection Screening Coverage Act, and **S.2085, Medicare Multi-Cancer Early Detection Screening Coverage Act**, would create a pathway for Medicare to cover emerging blood-based cancer screenings which hold the potential to catch cancer earlier than ever before. Currently, Medicare screening is only for five cancers and just 14% of cancers are found through screenings. Ensuring seniors have timely access is essential since age is the primary risk factor for cancer and more than 70% of cancer diagnoses are in the Medicare population. This type of screening has the potential to improve quality of life for millions of American cancer patients and their families while saving taxpayer dollars by treating cancer before it spreads.

-- After Congress returns from its August recess in September 2023, NRLN will issue an Action Alert urging Representatives to support **H.R.2407** and urge the members of the Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health and the Ways and Means Subcommittee on Health to pass the bill out of committee.

-- After Congress returns from its August recess in September 2023, NRLN will issue an Action Alert urging Senators to support **S.2085** and urge the members of the Committee on Finance to pass the bill out of committee.

H.R.2474, Strengthening Medicare for Patients and Providers Act, would address payment uncertainty affecting Medicare-participating physicians and avoid a possible physician shortage for Medicare beneficiaries. H.R. 2474 would change the physician payment rate above the current law by providing an annual Medicare physician payment update tied to inflation, as measured by the Medicare Economic Index (MEI). The Medicare Trustees and MedPAC have called for legislative action to address the Medicare physician payment system by providing physicians with an annual inflation-based update tied to the Medicare Economic Index (MEI). A March 2023 report from the Medicare Trustees states that the trustees “expect access to Medicare-participating physicians to become a significant issue in the long term” unless Congress takes steps to bolster the payment system.

-- After Congress returns from its August recess in September 2023, NRLN letters will be sent requesting a vote on **H.R.2474** in the House Subcommittees on Health: Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health Chairman Brett Guthrie (KY-02) and Ranking Member Anna Eshoo (CA-18) and Ways and Means Subcommittee on Health Chairman Health Vern Buchanan (FL-16) and Ranking Member Lloyd Doggett (TX-37). The NRLN will investigate whether a Senator will be introducing a companion bill.

S.127, Pharmacy Benefit Manager Transparency Act of 2023, would bring about greater transparency to Pharmacy Benefit Managers (PBMs) and prevent unfair or anticompetitive practices that harm consumers. The bill would hold PBMs accountable for opaque and often deceptive practices that contribute to high drug prices for consumers. It bans deceptive unfair pricing schemes, prohibits arbitrary claw backs of payments made to pharmacies and requires PBMs to report to the FTC how much money they make through spread pricing and pharmacy fees. Today, three PBMs control nearly 80% of the prescription drug market. They serve as middlemen, managing every aspect of the prescription drug benefits process.

-- After Congress returns from its August recess in September 2023, an NRLN letter will be sent to Majority Leader Chuck Schumer urging him to call for a vote on **S.127** which was reported out of the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation on March 22, 2023. The NRLN will investigate whether a Representative will be introducing a companion bill.

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.

Key News Articles Posted in August

During August 37 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 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 names first 10 drugs up for price negotiations with the government](#) – August 29

[Chairman Arrington, Rep. Burgess Launch Budget Committee Health Care Task Force](#) – August 25

[COVID summer surge: Should you get a booster now or wait?](#) – August 26

[Updated Covid-19 vaccines are coming mid-September, officials say](#) – August 25

[75% of people age 50 and up worry Social Security will run out of money in their lifetimes, survey finds](#) – August 24

[Column: What is the Republican plan for Social Security?](#) – August 19

[Opinion: Want to run the country? Answer the tough questions about Social Security.](#) – August 19

[Christie: Social Security, Medicare cuts are a necessary ‘political risk’ in today’s economy](#) – August 19

[How the immune system contributes to Parkinson's disease](#) – August 16,

[**Nursing home costs increase by largest amount in more than 25 years**](#) – August 15

[New study says even 4,000 steps a day has major health benefits](#) – August 15

[**Social Security checks face \\$17,400 cut if program isn't shored up, study says**](#) – August 14

[Price of elder care soars as demand increases, baby boomers age](#) – August 13

[**Could Popular Heartburn Meds Raise Your Odds for Dementia?**](#) – August 10

[Covid, flu, RSV vaccines urged as health officials brace for respiratory virus season](#) – August 9

[**What to know about the EG.5 coronavirus subvariant, now dominant in the U.S.**](#) – August 8

[Wegovy shown to reduce risk of heart attack, stroke in major cardiovascular trial](#) – August 8

[**The Pros and Cons of Early Retirement**](#) – August 4

[Public Opinion on Prescription Drugs and Their Prices](#) – August 4

[**Uninsured rate hits record low, just as millions start losing Medicaid coverage**](#) – August 3

[PBGC's FY 2022 Projections Report Shows Continued Strength in its Pension Insurance Programs](#) – August

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[**Medicare Coverage Associated with Higher Cancer Screening Rates**](#) – August 1