



NRLN Review, Summary for September 2023

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

Fly-In Attendees Advocate NRLN Proposals on Capitol Hill

Four retiree Association and seven Chapters were represented at the NRLN Fly-In to Washington, DC on September 25-27. After an NRLN Board meeting on Monday morning and an afternoon briefing session on advocacy issues, most attendees spent all day Tuesday and part of Wednesday in appointments with Congressional staff members.

Meetings were held in offices of 22 U.S. Representatives and 13 U.S. Senators. Sessions were held with staff members for the Senate Committee on Finance and Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions.

Proposals presented during the meetings with prepared folders given to staff members included:

- Protecting Retirees in Pension Risk Transfers – “De-Risking”
- NRLN’s Proposed De-Risking Statutory Amendments to Employed Retirement Income Security Act
- Protecting Retirees in Pension Risk Transfers – 2023 NRLN Case Study
- Congress’ Medicare Advantage Privatization Attempt Fails –
MA Scheme Costs 9% More than Medicare’s FFS and Denies 27 million Seniors Equal Benefits
- Annual Rate of New Beneficiaries (2.0%) and Increased Cost Per Beneficiary (7-8%)
- Funding Social Security Is Essential to Keeping America’s Promise
- Congress Needs to Reduce Prices of Prescription Drugs
- Pass bill to make Health Coverage Tax Credit (HCTC) Permanent
- Pass the Susan Muffley Act to Restore Pensions for Delphi Salaried Retirees.

NRLN President Bill Kadereit’s column in the fall NRLN FOCUS newsletter will provide more information on the Fly-In.

NRLN Act Alert - Enact Medicare Multi-Cancer Early Detection Screening Coverage

Early detection of cancer through screening saves lives.

An NRLN Action Alert issued on September 11, 2023, asked NRLN members to urge their U.S. Representative and Senators to pass **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**. The bills

would make it possible for Medicare to cover costs of emerging blood-based cancer screenings which hold the potential to catch cancer earlier than ever before.

Currently, Medicare is only able to screen for five cancers and just 14% of cancers are found through these screenings. Ensuring seniors have timely access to multi-cancer early detection screening is essential since age is a primary risk factor for cancer and Americans age 65 and older have more than 70% of cancers.

NRLN Legislative Committees' Work

The NRLN's Legislative Advisory Committee (LAC) composed of Judy Stenberg, Chairwoman, Deb Morrisett, Joe Mazzei, Al Duscher and Bob Martina submitted the following bills for the Legislative Action Planning Committee (LAPC) to consider for action during its September 11 conference call. The LAPC includes Bill Kadereit, Chairman, Judy Stenberg, Alyson Parker, Martha Deahl and Ed Beltram. The LAPC's actions included:

H.R.1770/S.2477, Equitable Community Access to Pharmacist, would ensure seniors can access certain clinical services from their pharmacist. The bill would allow Medicare to reimburse for certain pharmacist-administered tests, treatments, and vaccinations for influenza, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), COVID-19, strep throat and other services that pharmacists are already licensed to perform under state laws.

H.R.3382/S.1894, Colorectal Cancer Payment Fairness Act. Colorectal cancer kills more than 50,000 Americans annually. It is second only to lung cancer in U.S. cancer deaths. **H.R.3382** would require Medicare to provide coverage for removal of cancerous growths, or polyps, during colorectal cancer screenings. Medicare provides coverage of the screenings, but not the removal of the polyps. Patients could face surprise charges if polyps were removed during the procedure.

H.R.3842/S.1832, Expanding Access to Diabetes Self-Management Training Act of 2023. Nearly 26 million Americans are afflicted with diabetes and another 79 million have pre-diabetes, a condition that is known to progress to diabetes without early intervention, according to the CDC. **H.R.3842** would expand Medicare coverage for diabetes self-management training sessions, where diabetes educators train Medicare patients on how to manage their glucose, maintain a healthy weight, eat healthy foods, manage their insulin levels, and improve general care for their diabetes.

H.R.3876/S.2323, Access to Genetic Counselor Services Act of 2023. Medical professionals recognize the need for genetic testing and genetic counseling to help their patients. Medicare does not recognize genetic counselors as providers and does not reimburse for genetic counselor services. **H.R.3876** would make genetic counselors recognized by Medicare and reimburse them for services delivered to Medicare beneficiaries at 85% of physician payment levels.

-- Letters requesting votes in Subcommittee on **H.R.1770, H.R.3382, H.R.3842, and H.R.3876** were sent on September 12, 2023, to Energy and Commerce 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).

-- Letters requesting votes in Committee on **S.2477, S.1894, S.1832, and S.2323** were sent on September 12, 2023, to Committee on Finance Chairman Ron Wyden (OR) and Ranking Member Mike Crapo (ID).

H.R.4752/S.2379, Concentrating on High-Value Alzheimer's Needs to Get to the End (CHANGE) Act of 2023. Alzheimer's affects millions of Americans. **H.R.4752/S.2379** would require the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to identify cognitive impairment detection tools to help clinicians detect, refer, and diagnose Alzheimer's and related dementias in their earliest stages in order to access medications that slow the progression of the disease and preserve quality of life for a longer period of time.

-- Letters requesting a vote in Committee on **H.R.4752** were sent on September 12, 2023, to Committee on Energy and Commerce Chairwoman Cathy McMorris Rogers (WA-05) and Ranking Member Frank Pallone (NJ-06) and Committee on Ways and Means Chairman Jason Smith (MO-06) and Ranking Member Richard Neal (MA-01).

-- Letters requesting a vote in Committee on **S.2379** were sent on September 12, 2023, to Committee on Finance Chairman Ron Wyden (OR) and Ranking Member Mike Crapo (ID).

S.2510, Rolling Active Pharmaceutical Ingredient and Drug (RAPID) Reserve Act. This bill would require the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to award contracts to quality generic drug manufacturers, who are either based in the United States or in a country that is a member of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), to build and maintain reserves of critical drugs. The legislation would require awardees to keep sufficient reserves of key ingredients and finished drug products on hand and bolster production capacity to help prevent potential shortages before they occur.

S.2510 would also help encourage domestic production of these medications by ensuring that U.S. based manufacturers are prioritized for federal contracts. This proposed legislation builds on recommendations from 2019 and 2023 reports which found that generic drug manufacturers' ability to surge production and store supplies are often limited because they regularly operate at or near full capacity.

-- Letters requesting a vote in Committee on **S.2510** were sent on September 12, 2023, to Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Chairman Bernie Sanders (VT) and Ranking Member Bill Cassidy (LA). Also, attendees at the fall NRLN Fly-In to Washington, DC on September 26 and 27, 2023, will lobby for the passage of **S.2510**.

The LAC tabled and is monitoring H.R.4583/S.2280 -- Social Security 2100 Act.

The bills listed above have been placed on the NRLN website's bills page which feeds the NRLN Report Card. The letters listed above have been posted on www.nrln.org in Archives in Letters to Washington.

Key News Articles Posted in September

During September 35 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.

[Warren Grills Biden Medicare Trustee Pick Over 'Shocking' Ties to Medicare Advantage Firm](#) – September 29

[Federal judge declines to block Medicare drug price negotiations](#) – September 29

[Social Security COLA Increase 2024: How Much Monthly Payments Could Go Up](#) – September 29

[Three vaccines seniors should consider getting this fall](#) By Jim Miller, Savvy Senior Column – September 29

[Deadline approaching for veterans to apply for VA healthcare benefits through special enrollment](#) – September 28

[Health Systems Are Starting to Deny Medicare Advantage Plans. Here's What to Do](#) – September 28, 2023

[Medicare Advantage Premiums to Rise 3.6% in 2024](#) – September 28, 2023

[Pharma Giants Shift Stance, Embrace Medicare Negotiations Amid Rising Drug Costs](#) – September 28, 2023

[Average Social Security Benefit by Age](#) – September 27

[Insurance hurdles for new Covid vaccines largely resolved, Biden administration says](#) – September 27

[Will My Disability Benefits Change When I Turn 65?](#) September 22

[6 Reasons You're Getting a Smaller Social Security Check](#) – September 22

[Florida nurse practitioner convicted in \\$200 million Medicare fraud scheme](#) – September 21

[Medicare Enrollment Deadlines You Shouldn't Miss](#) – September 21

[Understanding Medicare Eligibility for Individuals Under 65 With Disabilities](#) – September 20

[Social Security Overpays Billions to People, Many on Disability. Then It Demands the Money Back.](#) – September. 20

[Free Covid tests will be available to order from government again starting next week](#) – September 20

[Study Debunks Notion That Antidepressant Might Ease COVID Symptoms](#) – September 18

[Federal court hears first oral arguments in legal battle over Medicare negotiation](#) – September 15

[Night owls may be at greater risk of diabetes than early birds](#) – September 11

[House lawmakers unveil bipartisan legislation tackling health care cost and price transparency](#) – September 8

[Demand for at-home Covid-19 tests is high, but don't expect a shortage anytime soon](#) – September 8

[State lawmakers find America's medical debt problem 'can no longer be ignored'](#) – September 7

[All signs point to a rise in Covid](#) – September 5

[Online pharmacy programs can save patients millions in prescription drug costs, study finds](#) – September 4

[Biden Administration Proposes New Standards to Boost Nursing Home Staffing](#) – September 1