



NRLN Review

NRLN
NATIONAL RETIREE
LEGISLATIVE NETWORK

NRLN Review, Summary for January 2024

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

NRLN Action Alert – Don't Allow Funding Cut to Medicare Home Healthcare

Medicare plans a 9.36% cut to its home healthcare program in 2024, on top of the 3.9% cut that began in 2023. An NRLN Action Alert issue on January 15 asked NRLN members to urge their members Congress to pass **H.R.5159/S.2137, Preserving Access to Home Health Act**, which would help preserve access to home health services for seniors and Americans with disabilities by preventing the proposed cuts.

If you have not sent the NRLN's sample letter to your Senators and Representative go to <https://nrln.org/action-alert/#/home/>.

NRLN Action Alert – Include HCTC in Tax Legislation

For several years Congress passed year-to-year legislation to reauthorize the Health Coverage Tax Credit (HCTC) Act. However, HCTC was not extended in 2022 and 2023 to help Americans ages 55-64 cover the cost of health insurance if they are retired and their pensions have been taken over by the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, or if their job was outsourced abroad and they qualify for Trade Adjustment Assistance.

The NRLN was alerted on January 9 that Congressional tax writers were working on a bipartisan tax deal and negotiations are expected to be finalized within the week. This presented an opportunity to include in the legislation **H.R.2914, Health Coverage Tax Credit Reauthorization Act of 2023**, which would reauthorize HCTC for five years.

An NRLN issued an Action Alert was issued on January asking NRLN members to immediately send the NRLN's sample letter to their U.S. Representative who is a member of the House Committee on Ways and Means to request that HCTC be included in tax legislation. HCTC is very important to many NRLN members and other seniors because it will help those ages 55-64 cover a large part of their health insurance costs.

NRLN Legislative Committees' Work

The NRLN's Legislative Advisory Committee (LAC) composed of Judy Stenberg, Chairwoman, Deb Morrisett, Joe Mazzei and Al Duscher prioritizes retirement-related bills it will review during its twice-a-month conference calls. The LAC submitted the following bills for the Legislative Action Priorities Committee (LAPC) to consider for action.

The LAPC, which includes Bill Kadereit, Chairman, Judy Stenberg, Alyson Parker, Martha Deahl and Ed Beltram, took the actions below on the bills during its January 8 conference call.

The bills have been posted on the NRLN website at: <https://nrln.org/legislative-action-network/#/bills>. The posted bills feed the NRLN Report Card. For instructions on how to access the Report Card go to www.nrln.org. Click on the Grassroots tab and select Congressional Report Card in the dropdown menu. Letters sent to Washington, DC are posted at: <https://nrln.org/letters-to-washington-2/>.

The work of the LAC and the LAPC provides the cornerstone for much of the dealings with members of Congress and their staff members.

H.R.4104/S.1976, Preserving Patient Access to Home Infusion Act, would protect access to Medicare's home infusion benefit by making clear that pharmacy services for home infusion therapy can be reimbursed and sets an appropriate rate for such services. It will save the Medicare program millions of dollars, cut patient costs, and ensure seniors receive safe and adequate care in the comfort of their own home. Specifically, the legislation would:

- include pharmacy services as part of covered home infusion therapy under Medicare, encompassing assessments, drug preparation and compounding, and care coordination and documentation;
- direct CMS to pay 50% of the nursing rate on home infusion days when a nurse is not present;
- allow nurse practitioners and physician assistants to establish and review the plan of care for home infusion therapy.

-- On January 9, 2024, NRLN President Bill Kadereit sent letters to Committee on Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health Chairman Brett Guthrie (KY-02) Ranking Member Anna Eshoo (CA-16) and Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Health Chairman Vern Buchanan (FL-16) and Ranking Member Lloyd Doggett (TX- 37) requesting a vote in Subcommittees on **H.R.4104**.

-- On January 9, 2024, NRLN President Bill Kadereit sent letters to Committee on Finance Chairman Ron Wyden (OR) and Ranking Member Mike Crapo (ID) requesting a Committee vote on **S.1976**.

H.R.4408/S.1906, Promising Pathway Act, would help Americans with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) and other life-threatening diseases such as Diffuse Intrinsic Pontine Glioma (DIPG) get early access to promising treatments. It would expedite beneficial outcomes for patients by requiring the FDA to establish a rolling, real-time, priority review pathway for drugs intended to treat, prevent, or diagnose serious or life-threatening diseases or conditions.

-- On January 9, 2024, NRLN President Bill Kadereit sent letters to Committee on Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health Chairman Brett Guthrie (KY-02) Ranking Member Anna Eshoo (CA-16) requesting a Subcommittee vote on **H.R.4408**.

-- On January 9, 2024, NRLN President Bill Kadereit sent letters to Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Chairman Bernie Sanders (VT) and Ranking Member Bill Cassidy (LA) requesting a Committee vote on **S.1906**.

The LAC tabled and is monitoring the following bill:

H.R.5338, No Discrimination in my Benefits Act, is intended to ensure that investment managers stay focused solely on providing maximized returns for retirement savers, rather than focusing on diversity, equity, and inclusion metrics.

Key News Articles Posted in January

During January, 78 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.

[Senators call for Medicare Advantage improvements. Here's what you can do now.](#) – January 31

[**Medicare to kick off first drug price negotiations, and it could get heated**](#) – January 30
Will Medicare Push Drug Prices Down in 2024? – January 29

[**Senators Wicker, Hyde-Smith join bipartisan call for permanent access to telehealth for Medicare beneficiaries**](#) – January 29
Moody's: Why Medicare Advantage's profitability may be on the decline – January 29

[**Social Security Administration weighs in on bill to repeal taxes on benefits**](#) – January 29
Is a "Backroom Scheme" to Cut Social Security Benefits About to Be Passed? – January 27

[**Medicare Advantage May Face Big Plan Cuts, Price Hikes in 2025**](#) – January 26
Rep. Craig introduces bill to eliminate federal tax on Social Security benefits – January 26

[**Will All Seniors Eventually Have No Choice but Medicare Advantage?**](#) – January 25
Humana Blames Medicare Advantage As Stock Falls After Larger Than Expected Quarterly Loss, Grim Outlook – January 25

[**Lobbying spending by top interest groups dipped amid 2023 gridlock**](#) – January 24
Senator Probes Medicare Plan Distributors on Marketing Tactics – January 24

[**Opinion: In 2024, Congress needs to stop bickering and start working**](#) – January 23
Medicare Advantage is popular, but some beneficiaries feel buyer's remorse – January 23

[**Canada raises concerns about safeguarding drug supplies as US pursues import plan**](#) – January 23
Opinion: Saving Social Security should be a priority in Congress – January 22

[**Federal report finds most prescription drug prices up**](#) – January 22
Looking for a deal on that expensive prescription drug? We've got you covered. – January 21

[**House panel advances debt commission without shields for Medicare, Social Security**](#) – January 19
The federal debt tops \$34 trillion and some in Congress want a commission to find ways to tackle it – January 18

[**Humana and Other Insurers Bet Big on Medicare Advantage. Now the Risks Are Coming Into Focus.**](#) – January 18
Medicare drug price negotiations hit critical phase – January 18

[**Sanders plans to subpoena Merck, J&J CEOs on drug pricing**](#) – January 18
AMA President: Medicare Physician Pay Cuts Will Have 'Dire' Impact if Not Reversed – January 17

[**Federal program to save rural hospitals feels 'growing pains'**](#) By Sarah Jane Tribble and Tony Leys, KFF Health News – January 17, 2024

[**Ever wondered how members of Congress cash in after they retire? Look no further than Tom Suozzi's financial disclosures**](#) – January 16
Congressional advisors grapple with Medicare Advantage data that reveals plenty on excess, but not much on access – January 16

[**Financial Relief For Medicare Patients: Part D Overhaul Caps Out-of-Pocket Drug Cost Limits**](#) – January 16
MedPAC Report on Medicare Advantage Growth, High Costs Generates Kerfuffle - January 16

[**Opinion: Social Security must not be cut by any 'debt commission'**](#) – January 15
Elizabeth Warren says lawmakers need a raise so that Congress isn't 'the plaything of multimillionaires and billionaires' – January 14

[**A \\$174,000 salary isn't enough for members of Congress. In fact, they should probably give themselves a \\$100,000 raise.**](#) – January 12
Social Security Administration tells Jupiter couple they were overpaid, owe more than \$70,000 – January 11

[**More Than Half of Seniors 'Stuck' in Medicare Advantage Plans**](#) – January 11
How to protect yourself from Medicare scams – January 10

[**Americans Often Pay 3 Times More for Medicare Drugs Up for Negotiation Than Comparable Countries**](#) – January 9
Opinion: The political stalemate over Social Security reform – January 9

[**Canada vows to defend its drug supply against Florida importation plan**](#) – January 9
Coalition ad campaign urges Congress to reject Medicare cuts to hospitals - January 8

[**Can Congress overturn presidential election results? Here are changes since Jan. 6, 2021**](#) – January 7
A starring role for NASA in Biden's push to end cancer – January 6

[**Woman fearing homelessness because of Social Security clawbacks: 'I'm scared to death'**](#) - January 5
Spending cap placed on Medicare Part D prescriptions – January 4

[**How Prices for the First 10 Drugs Up for U.S. Medicare Price Negotiations Compare Internationally**](#) – January 4

[Older Americans say they feel trapped in Medicare Advantage plans](#) – January 3

[**Blumenthal calls out United Healthcare for ‘deceptive ad’ on Medicare plans**](#) – January 2

[New CMS Medicare Appeals Proposal Falls Short of Addressing Nursing Homes’ 3-Day Stay Issue](#) – January 2

[**With the new year comes new, higher prescription costs**](#) – January 2