



# NRLN Review

**NRLN**  
NATIONAL RETIREE  
LEGISLATIVE NETWORK

## NRLN Review, Summary for August 2024

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

### Negotiated Medicare Drug Prices Finally Happen

For several years the NRLN advocated that prescription drug prices should be negotiated for Medicare beneficiaries. On August 15 the Biden Administration announced the successful competition of negotiating lower Medicare prices on the first 10 prescription medicines. Medicare gained the power to negotiate prescription drug prices for the first time in history through the passage of the Inflation Reduction Act in 2022.

The new prices will go into effect for people with Medicare Part D prescription drug coverage in 2026. The 10 drugs on the list and their price reductions for a 30-day supply are:

- **Sitagliptin (Januvia):** for type 2 diabetes; original price \$527, negotiated price \$113 (79% decrease)
- **Insulin aspart injection (NovoLog, among others):** for diabetes mellitus; original price \$495, negotiated price \$119 (76% decrease)
- **Dapagliflozin (Farxiga):** for type 2 diabetes, heart failure, and chronic kidney disease; original list price \$556, negotiated price \$179 (68% decrease)
- **Etanercept (Enbrel):** for rheumatoid arthritis; original list price \$7,106 (\$1,777 per weekly dose), negotiated price \$2,355 (67% decrease)
- **Empagliflozin (Jardiance):** for type 2 diabetes and heart failure; original list price \$573, negotiated price \$197 (66% decrease)
- **Ustekinumab (Stelara):** for Crohn's disease, ulcerative colitis, psoriasis, and psoriatic arthritis; original list price \$13,836, negotiated price \$4,695 (66% decrease)
- **Rivaroxaban (Xarelto):** to prevent blood clots and reduce risks for patients with coronary or peripheral artery disease; original list price \$517, negotiated price \$197 (62% decrease)
- **Apixaban (Eliquis):** to prevent stroke and blood clots; original list price \$521, negotiated price \$231 (56% decrease)
- **Sacubitril/valsartan (Entresto):** for chronic heart failure; original list price \$628, negotiated price \$295 (53% decrease)
- **Ibrutinib (Imbruvica):** for chronic lymphocytic leukemia/small lymphocytic lymphoma and other blood cancers; original list price \$14,934, negotiated price \$9,319 (38% decrease)

The powerful pharmaceutical industry which has long fought against allowing Medicare to negotiate prices has filed multiple lawsuits in federal courts across the US contending that the program is unconstitutional. Courts have dismissed seven of the lawsuits.

Medicare will select up to 15 additional drugs covered under Part D for negotiation in 2025, up to an additional 15 Part B and D drugs in 2026, and up to 20 drugs every year after that.

## **NRLN Legislative Committees' Work**

The NRLN's Legislative Advisory Committee (LAC) composed of Judy Stenberg, Chairwoman, Deb Morrissett, Joe Mazzei and Al Duscher prioritizes retirement-related bills it reviews 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 August 12 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](http://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.1666/S.1673, Protecting Access to Ground Ambulance Services**, would extend a specialized rate increase for Medicare payment of ground ambulance services in rural areas for an additional three years, until January 1, 2028, Enacting the bill will help ambulance service providers hire and retain EMT staff, update their equipment, and continue providing lifesaving medical care across the country, especially in the underserved areas.

-- On July 12, NRLN President Bill Kadereit sent letters the House Ways and Means, Subcommittee on Health Chairman Vern Buchanan (FL-16) and Ranking Member Lloyd Doggett (TX-37) and Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health Chairman Brett Guthrie (KY-02) and Ranking Member Anna Eshoo (CA-16) requesting Subcommittees' votes on **H.R.1666**.

-- On July 12, NRLN President Bill Kadereit sent letters to the Senate Committee on Finance Chairman Ron Wyden (OR) and Ranking Member Mike Crapo (ID) requesting a Committee vote on **S.1673**.

**H.R.2583/S.3481, Increasing Access to Quality Cardiac Rehabilitation Care Act of 2023**, would expand and expedite patient access to cardiac and pulmonary rehabilitation services by authorizing physician assistants, nurse practitioners, and clinical nurse specialists to order patients to cardiac and pulmonary rehabilitation under Medicare. The bill builds upon the innovative Improving Access to Cardiac and Pulmonary Rehabilitation Act, passed as part of the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018 (P.L.115-123), which authorized these providers to supervise cardiac and pulmonary rehabilitation beginning in 2024.

Currently, only physicians are authorized to order cardiac and pulmonary rehabilitation for Medicare patients. This restriction can create unnecessary obstacles, delays, and paperwork before patients can receive the rehabilitation services that are needed on a timely basis and make it challenging for programs to operate in rural and underserved areas where physicians are scarce.

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-- On July 12, NRLN President Bill Kadereit sent letters to the Senate Committee on Finance Chairman Ron Wyden (OR) and Ranking Member Mike Crapo (ID) requesting a Committee vote on **S.3481**.

**H.R.7274/S.3766, Connecting Caregivers to Medicare Act of 2024**, aims to improve the coordination of care between caregivers and Medicare beneficiaries. It will publicize resources Medicare has for family caregivers, including the voluntary option allowing Medicare beneficiaries to allow family caregivers to access their health information through 1-800-MEDICARE. The bill also requires Medicare to train 1-800-MEDICARE operators on how to properly provide family caregivers with all the appropriate information. It further requires that information be provided in non-English languages.

-- On July 12, NRLN President Bill Kadereit sent letters the House Ways and Means, Subcommittee on Health Chairman Vern Buchanan (FL-16) and Ranking Member Lloyd Doggett (TX-37) and Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health Chairman Brett Guthrie (KY-02) and Ranking Member Anna Eshoo (CA-16) requesting Subcommittees' votes on **H.R.7274**.

-- On July 12, NRLN President Bill Kadereit sent letters to the Senate Committee on Finance Chairman Ron Wyden (OR) and Ranking Member Mike Crapo (ID) requesting a Committee vote on **S.3766**.

### Key News Articles Posted in July

During August, 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.gov Launches New Nursing Home Search Tool – Aug 30](#)

[Unhealthy Days Lead To Higher Health Care Costs For Medicare Advantage Plans](#) – Aug. 29

[Social Security Funds Will Last Until 2034: CBO](#) – Aug. 28

[Feds killed plan to curb Medicare Advantage overbilling after insurers' opposition](#) – Aug. 27

[New Bill Sets 3-Year Time Limit on Social Security Clawbacks](#) – Aug. 26

[A big Social Security shake-up is coming in 2025. Are you prepared?](#) – Aug. 26

[Spanberger, Graves pushing House leaders on Social Security Fairness Act](#) – Aug. 26

[Social Security Commissioner Martin O'Malley outlines plan to revitalize agency](#) – Aug. 22

[Social Security Made Nearly \\$72B in Improper Payments, Watchdog Reveals](#) – Aug. 22

[Decoding Medicare Part D: A Guide to Lower Drug Costs](#) – Aug 21

[Social Security Commissioner Martin O'Malley outlines plan to revitalize agency](#) – Aug. 21

[If your Social Security number was stolen in a data breach, freezing your credit report will stop unauthorized accounts from being opened in your name](#) – Aug. 20

[Social Security Administration Scolded by Auditors](#) – Aug. 20

[Medicare Advantage consensus waning ahead of 2024 election](#) – Aug. 19

[Negotiated Drug Prices Will Help Medicare Beneficiaries; Unclear If And By How Much Government Saves And Industry Loses](#) – Aug 18

[How to Check if Your Information Was Compromised in the Social Security Number Breach](#) – Aug. 17

[How much will Medicare's drug price cuts ultimately save people at the pharmacy?](#) – Aug. 16

[5 takeaways from first Medicare drug price negotiations](#) – Aug 16

[Medicare negotiated drug prices for the first time. Here's what it got](#) – Aug. 15

[Opinion: How to fix, not cut, the Social Security benefits tax](#) – Aug. 15

[Medicare Advantage Home Health Utilization Lags Behind Traditional Medicare](#) – Aug. 14

['Excessive and wrong': Seniors face 144% jump in long-term care insurance](#) – Aug. 14

[Medicare Beneficiaries Facing 'Perfect Storm' for Enrollment, Insurance CEO Warns](#) – Aug. 13

[Biden admin to spend billions to blunt spike in Medicare drug premiums](#) – Aug. 13

[Medicare Advantage Plans' In-Home Health Assessments Remain Under Fire](#) – Aug. 13

[KFF: A look at prior authorization trends in Medicare Advantage](#) – Aug. 13

[Medicare Advantage Hits 32.8M Enrollees, 54% of Spending](#) – Aug. 12

[Medicare Advantage plan denials for prior authorization set record at 3.4 million](#) – Aug. 12

[Social Security's 'Record' Backlog Caused \\$1 Billion in Wrong Payments](#) – Aug. 12

[Social Security Changes Requirements for Payments](#) – Aug. 12

[Medicare Advantage Is Denying More Requests for Seniors' Care: Report](#) – Aug. 9

[Cutting-edge medical devices will soon be covered by Medicare](#) – Aug. 8  
[Aetna May Let Medicare Plan Enrollment Fall 10% in 2025](#) – Aug. 8  
[Changes to Part D Prescription Payment Plans Coming in 2025](#) – Aug. 8  
[Swansboro woman's 4-month wait for prescription fill highlights impact of cancer drug shortages](#) – Aug. 8  
[Opinion: Biden Does a Stealth Medicare Rewrite](#) – Aug. 6  
[Cape Cod widow hit with a \\$41K repayment demand from Social Security Administration](#) – Aug. 6  
[The One-Hour Nurse Visits That Let Insurers Collect \\$15 Billion From Medicare](#) – Aug. 5  
[Centene Becomes Latest Insurer To Pull Back On Medicare Advantage Footprint](#) – Aug. 5  
[New Social Security Bill Phases Out Payroll Tax Cap](#) – Aug. 5  
[Goodbye Medicare Part D Donut Hole; Hello \\$2,000 Cap](#) – Aug. 2  
[New study exposes hospital Medicare fraud](#) – Aug. 2  
[Second-Largest Medicare Advantage Insurer Prepares to Lose Over 200K People](#) – Aug. 2  
[Social Security Change Would Cost Americans \\$6,900 per Year: Analysts](#) – Aug. 2  
[Drug companies confident Medicare price deals won't hit bottom lines](#) – Aug, 2

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