



# *NRLN Review*



## **NRLN Review, Summary for November 2022**

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

### **NRLN President's Thanksgiving Message**

In his annual Thanksgiving Message to NRLN members, on November 21, NRLN President Bill Kadereit commented on the increased price per pound of Turkey compared to a year ago. He noted how inflation has had its ups and downs over decades and our years of living give us a sense of economic history in our country that can provide hope for better years ahead.

He asked NRLN members to be thankful for what we have and remember in our prayer the members of our military and all men and women in uniform who are working to keep us safe.

### **Holiday Shopping Through AmazonSmile Can Benefit AREF**

Bill Kadereit in his role of Chairman and President of the NRLN's research and education arm, the American Retirees Education Foundation (AREF), emailed a reminder to NRLN/AREF members on November 17 that during the holiday shopping season making your purchases through [AmazonSmile](#) the AREF will receive 0.5% of the purchase price with no additional cost to you.

Click here for details on [AmazonSmile](#).

### **NRLN's First Live Podcast On YouTube**

The NRLN held its first live podcast on YouTube on the evening of November 16. It was recorded and is now available to view: [Click here for NRLN website](#). [Click here for YouTube](#). [Click here for Facebook](#).

Alyson Parker, NRLN Executive Director, spoke about:

- Limiting retirees' exposure to pension recoupment when a company wants pension money back due to its error in calculating a pension payment.
- NRLN's support for the Susan Muffley Act to restore the pensions of Delphi salaried retirees whose pensions were reduced when the federal government intervened in the General Motors and Delphi bankruptcies and the Pension Benefits Guaranty Corporation (PBGC) took over Delphi salaried retirees pension plan.
- NRLN's efforts to pass legislation to make permanent, or at least reauthorize, the Health Coverage Tax Credit (HCTC) that helps individuals ages 55-64 cover the cost of health insurance if their pension plan was taken over by the PBGC as the result bankruptcy.
- The NRLN's proposal on pension surplus usage is in a bill to extend and amend Section 420 of the Internal Revenue Code to lower the pension funding threshold from 125% to 110% so excess assets can be used to fund retirement benefits, such as, healthcare and life insurance.
- The NRLN's proposals are in a bill that would improve the AFN. Passage of the bill would reduce the time of reporting the pension funding balance from 16 months to 4 months. The AFN would be simplified by moving all relevant data to a table on the front page.
- Described the NRLN process taking place to develop the NRLN's 2023 Legislative Agenda. Protecting retirees in de-risking (when a company sells its pension plan to an insurance company) will be an NRLN priority in 2023.

Bill Kadereit, NRLN President, spoke about:

- Medicare Advantage (MA) plans were created by Congress to compete with original Medicare Fee-for-Service (FFS). But, after 35 years and nearly \$500 billion in subsidies paid to insurance companies, \$57 billion in 2022, MA plans have yet to beat original Medicare in either cost per enrollee or quality.
- Taxpayers are footing the bill for MA plans' eye, hearing and dental benefits, drug plan premiums, and copays, over the counter drugs, air filter changes, carpet cleaning, free rides to doctor's offices. Yet those in FFS are denied equal treatment by Congress.
- ACO REACH will be launched on January 1, 2023, by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS). ACO REACH will receive even more subsidies and doctors can be paid increased salaries and bonuses. ACO REACH private ownership can keep up to 100% of

savings generated. Outside investors can control 25% of an ACO REACH.

-- The NRLN Predicts ACO REACH will result in delays for care, benefit denials, more private networks, closure of some rural care hospitals and clinics, and ultimately total privatization of Medicare. The NRLN will stand up to stop it!

The last section of the live podcast was devoted to questions received from NRLN members. Ed Beltram, NRLN Vice President - Communications directed three questions to Bill and two to Alyson. You will need to view the recording of the podcast to hear the questions and the answers from Bill and Alyson.

### **NRLN Action Alert - Prevent Cut to Medicare Home Health Care**

On November 15 an NRLN Action Alert was sent to NRLN members requesting that they urge their Representative and Senators to pass **H.R.8581/S.4605, Preserving Access to Home Health Act of 2022**. Passage of the bill before the end of the 117th Congress on December 31, 2022, would prevent CMS from making a permanent 7.69% cut (\$1.33 billion) to Medicare home health care beginning in 2023.

The letters to the members of Congress asked: How can CMS have the gall to try to save \$1.33 billion by cutting home health care for seniors when it is expected to exceed \$57 billion in 2022 of taxpayer subsidies to private insurance companies for Medicare Advantage plans?

In addition, Congress is allowing CMS to launch Realizing Equity, Access, and Community Health (ACO REACH) on January 1, 2023, which will pour billions more of taxpayer dollars into the pockets of insurers, investors, doctors, clinics and hospitals.

[Click here to access the Action Alert.](#)

### **NRLN Action Alert - Time is Running Out on HCTC**

An NRLN Action Alert issued on November 9 asked NRLN members to tell their Representative and Senators that time is running out for the 117th Congress to pass legislation to make permanent, or at least reauthorize, the Health Coverage Tax Credit (HCTC) which helps Americans age 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 (PBGC), or if their job was outsourced abroad and they qualify for Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA).

The Action Alert letter requested that Representatives to immediately pass **H.R.7823, Bob von Schwedler Permanent Health Coverage Tax Credit Expansion Act**, or at least pass **H.R.6339, Health Coverage Tax Credit Reauthorization Act of 2021**. Senators were asked to immediately pass **S.3393, Permanently Extend the Health Coverage Tax Credit**.

[Click here to access the Action Alert.](#)

### **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 November 7 conference call. The LAPC includes Bill Kadereit, Chairman, Judy Stenberg, Alyson Parker and Ed Beltram. The LAPC's actions included:

**H.R. 7559 Prescription Information Modernization Act of 2022**, would update distribution methods for prescribing information (PI) for pharmacists and physicians. According to the American Pharmacists Association, this legislation would give pharmacists access to real time updates to reliable and trusted prescription drug information. This is important for managing patients' medications and contributing to safe medication use.

-- The LAPC decided to Table and Monitor **H.R.7559** for the remainder of the 117th Congress (until December 31, 2022) and request that the **Prescription Information Modernization Act** be reintroduced in the 118th Congress.

**H.R.8581/S.4605, Preserving Access to Home Health Act of 2022**, would help preserve access to home health services for seniors and Americans with disabilities by preventing a CMS proposed permanent cut of 7.69% (\$1.33 billion) to home health payment rates beginning in 2023.

-- An NRLN Action Alert was issued on November 15, 2022, to ask NRLN members to email a letter to their Representative and Senators to urge them to support immediate passage of the **Preserving Access to Home Health Act of 2022**.

**S.4953, Protect Drug Innovation Act**, would roll back the federal government's authority to set drug prices covered by Medicare. The

power to set drug prices was a key component of the "Inflation Reduction Act" passed by Congress in August 2022.

-- The LAC had recommended to the LAPC to either oppose **S.4953** or Table and Monitor. Since it is unlikely that the Senate would take up **S.4953** during the closing weeks of the 117th Congress, the LAPC decided to Table and Monitor the bill.

**H.R.8331- Temporarily Suspend Required Minimum Distribution Rules for Retirement Plans and Accounts**, would suspend for 2022 the requirement to take an RMD from retirement savings.

-- The LAC recommended Table and Monitor for **H.R.8331**. Since it is November and many retirees have already withdrawn their RMD the LAPC elected to Table and Monitor the bill.

**H.R.8581/S.4605, Preserving Access to Home Health Act of 2022**, has been added to the NRLN website Bills webpage at <https://nrln.org/legislative-action-network/#/bills> which feeds the NRLN Report Card with the Action Alert (AA) designation.

#### **Key News Articles Posted in November**

During November 36 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.

[\*\*Prepare for Healthcare Costs To Spike In 2023 and Beyond as They Catch Up to Inflation\*\*](#) ~ Nov 02

[\*\*Senators sound alarm on need to stop Medicare physician pay cuts\*\*](#) ~ Nov 04

[\*\*Medicare enrollees warned about deceptive marketing schemes\*\*](#) ~ Nov 05

[\*\*Here's why private Medicare plans are set to pass traditional Medicare enrollment\*\*](#) - Nov 8

[\*\*Inflation Reduction Act Imposes Prescription Drug Pricing Reforms\*\*](#) ~ Nov 09

[\*\*PBGC Sets Present Maximum Guarantee Values for 2023\*\*](#) ~ Nov 10

[\*\*Congress returns for lame duck with long to-do list\*\*](#) - Nov 14

[\*\*Moderna says new COVID booster effective against subvariants\*\*](#) - Nov 14

[\*\*White House to seek more than \\$9 billion in COVID funding during lame-duck session\*\*](#) - Nov 15

[\*\*\*The New Heart Health Guidelines You Need To Know About\*\*\*](#) -  
Nov 16

[\*\*Column-Warnings of Medicare fraud mount; here is how to avoid it\*\*](#) - Nov 17

[\*\*Telehealth expansion possible in divided Congress\*\*](#) - Nov 18

[\*\*FDA approves 1st drug to delay the onset of Type 1 diabetes\*\*](#) -  
Nov 18

[\*\*Mark Cuban Has Taken On Pharmacy Benefit Managers And Forever Disrupted Healthcare In America\*\*](#) - Nov 19

[\*\*Senators Hassan and Marshall Introduce Bipartisan Bill to Help Seniors with Medicare Coverage Options\*\*](#) - Nov 22

[\*\*Hidden audits reveal millions in overcharges by Medicare Advantage plans\*\*](#) - Nov 21

[\*\*Opinion: Raising the retirement age to 70 could save Social Security for us all\*\*](#) - Nov 22

[\*\*Why Is AARP Boosting Medicare Privatization?\*\*](#) - Nov 26

[\*\*Here's How to Squeeze an Extra 24% Out of Social Security\*\*](#) -  
Nov 28

[\*\*3 Social Security Moves to Make Before the End of the Year\*\*](#) -  
Nov 28

[\*\*Opinion: Medicare is cutting critical cancer care funding\*\*](#) - Nov  
30

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NRLN, 601 Pennsylvania Ave. N.W. Suite 900, South Building, Washington, D.C. 20004-2601