



***NRLN Review*, Summary for March 2020**

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

Two Action Alerts

NRLN issued an Action Alert on March 3 requesting that NRLN members email the NRLN's sample letter to urge their members of Congress to immediately pass legislation on three important healthcare issues. **1.** Eliminate surprise medical bills. **2.** Protect Medicare beneficiaries with pre-existing medical conditions. **3.** Protect access to breast cancer screening.

An NRLN Action Alert issued on March 26 asked NRLN members to email the NRLN's sample letter to their U.S. Representative to request that he/she support action by the House to retain the 2020 waiver for Required Minimum Distributions (RMDs) for IRAs and 401(k)s that is in the \$2 trillion Coronavirus emergency relief legislation passed by the Senate on March 25 in response to the Coronavirus epidemic. The House passed the Senate bill with the RMD waiver included on March 27.

NRLN President's Forum Messages

On March 2, NRLN President Bill Kadereit issues a Forum message that provided a summary on NRLN Annual Leadership Conference, February 24 – 26, in Washington, DC. The focus of the lobbying efforts were opposing Medicare privatization, legislation to reduce the cost of prescription drugs and protecting retirees' pensions. Included with the message was a video by Kadereit which talked about lobbying on Capitol Hill.

In the NRLN President's Forum Message on March 22, Kadereit announced letters were emailed on Sunday, March 22, to Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi requesting that the next Coronavirus economic stimulus include a 2020 waiver for Required Minimum Distributions (RMDs) for Individual Retirement Accounts (IRAs) and 401(k)s. A letter on the same issue was emailed to President Trump on March 24. (Click here to access the letters <https://www.nrln.org/ARCHIVES-W.HTML>)

On March 27, a Forum message announced that the House had passed the Senate's \$2 trillion Coronavirus emergency relief bill and the President immediately signed it into law. Kadereit thanked NRLN members who responded to the March 26 NRLN Action Alert by sending the NRLN's sample letter which urged their U.S. Representative to retain the 2020 waiver for Required Minimum Distributions (RMDs) for IRAs and 401(k)s. The House did retain the RMD waiver. The RMD waiver was included in the bill.

NRLN's Messages on Coronavirus

The spread of the Coronavirus in the U.S., the NRLN began emailing messages to NRLN members about the virus on March 17. Additional messages were emailed, posted on the NRLN website, www.Facebook.com/nrln1, www.Instagram.com/photosnrlnorg and www.Twitter.com/nrln3 on March 19, 20, 21, 23 and 27. Click here to access the messages. <https://www.nrln.org/coronanews.html>

Spring 2020 NRLN FOCUS Newsletter Issued

An email to NRLN members announced on March 16 that the spring 2020 edition of the NRLN FOCUS Newsletter was available to read on the NRLN website. Go to www.nrln.org and click on the link to the newsletter in the center column.

The 8-page newsletter includes:

- NRLN President Bill Kadereit's column: Why NRLN Has a Focus on Medicare and Medicare Advantage
- Report on NRLN February 24-26, 2020 Fly-In to Washington, DC
- NRLN Executive Director Alyson Parker's column: A Perfect Storm to Accomplish Very Little

The FOCUS newsletter was sent in the U.S. Mail on March 26 to NRLN contributors who do not have an email address.

NRLN Legislative Committees' Work

The NRLN's Legislative Affairs 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 March 2 conference call.

- **H.R.1781/S.801** -- Payment Commission Data Act of 2019
- **H.R.2594/S.1190** -- Rural Access to Hospice Act of 2019
- **H.R.3029/S.1999** -- Improving Low-Income Access to Prescription Drugs Act of 2019
- **H.R.3415** -- Real-Time Beneficiary Drug Cost Bill
- **H.R.4629** -- Star Rating for Biosimilars Act

The following bills were awaiting further review by the LAPC:

- **H.R.861** -- End Surprise Billing Act of 2019
- **H.R.2777/S.1936** -- Protecting Access to Lifesaving Screenings (PALS) Act of 2019
- **H.R.4676** -- Protecting Medicare Beneficiaries with Pre-Existing Conditions Act

The LAPC composed of Bill Kadereit, Chairman, Alyson Parker, Judy Stenberg, Bob Martina and Ed Beltram made the following decisions on its March 3 conference call.

Action Alert issued on March 3, 2020:

- **H.R.861** -- End Surprise Billing Act of 2019
- **H.R.2777/S.1936** -- Protecting Access to Lifesaving Screenings (PALS) Act of 2019
- **H.R.4676** -- Protecting Medicare Beneficiaries with Pre-Existing Conditions Act

Other actions on bills:

- **H.R. 1781 / S. 801**, Payment Commission Data Act of 2019 – Letters emailed on March 6, 2020 to Chairmen Chuck Grassley (IA) and Ranking Member Ron Wyden (OR) requesting a vote in Senate Committee on Finance on H.R. 1781 which the House has passed and in Senate Committee on Finance along with companion bill S. 801.
- **H.R. 3415**, Real-Time Beneficiary Drug Cost – Letters emailed on March 6, 2020 to Chairmen Frank Pallone (NJ-06) and Ranking Members Greg Walden (OR-02), Committee on Energy and Commerce and Chairman Richard Neal (MA-01) and Ranking Member Kevin Brady (TX-08) requesting votes on H.R. 3415.

-- **H.R. 2594 / S 1190**, Rural Access to Hospice Act of 2019 – Letter emailed on March 5, 2020 to Representative Ron Kind (WI-03) expressing the NRLN's disappointment that H.R. 2594 has not advanced from Committee on Energy and Commerce or Committee on Ways and Means. He was thanked for introducing H. R. 2594. Letter emailed on March 5, 2020 to Senator Shelly Capito (WA) expressing the NRLN's disappointment that S. 1190 has not advanced from Committee on Finance. She was thanked for introducing S. 1190.

-- **H.R. 3029 / S. 1999**, Improving Low-Income Access to Prescription Drugs Act – Letter emailed on March 5, 2020 to Representative Pete Olson (TX-22) expressing the NRLN's disappointment that H.R. 3029 has not advanced from Committee on Energy and Commerce or Committee on Ways and Means. He was thanked for introducing H.R. 3029. Letter emailed on March 5, 2020 to Senator Robert Casey (PA) expressing the NRLN's disappointment that S. 1999 has not advanced from Committee on Finance. She was thanked for introducing S. 1999.

-- **H.R. 4629**, Star Rating for Biosimilars Act – No Action – It is part of H.R. 3 Lower Prescription Drug Prices Act, which the NRLN supports to go to conference committee, if the Senate passes **2453, Prescription Drug Pricing Reduction Act**.

Contribute to NRLN

On March 2, letters were sent in the U.S. Mail to past contributors to the NRLN to invite them to make their 2020 contribution. An appeal letter was emailed on March 12 to individuals in the NRLN database who do not receive a contributions request in the U.S. Mail. A convenient way to make a contribution to the NRLN is to click the "Contribute to NRLN" button at the bottom of this message. Or, contribute by going to www.nrln.org and click on the red flashing icon.

Links to Key News Articles Posted in March

During March, 98 links to news articles related to retirement issues were researched and posted daily IN THE NEWS on the NRLN website home page. Click here to read the articles listed below and other articles.

<https://www.nrln.org/>

Here are examples of the headlines:

Senior confusion about Medicare Advantage creating headaches for patients, providers – March 2

Medication fog can mimic or worsen dementia in the elderly – March 3

Don't shortchange Social Security for short-term economic stimulus – March 5

Aon Buys Willis Towers Watson: Another Waypoint In The Demise of Employer Pensions – March 9

Bill aims to give beneficiaries of lump-sum buyouts more info – March 10

Half of primary care doctors say they aren't ready for increase in Alzheimer's cases – March 11

Congress Approves Boost In Food Aid For Seniors But Funding Falls Short Of Growing Need – March 12

Savers are getting destroyed by super low interest rates – March 13

Doctors, and insurers too, urge patients to get medicine on hand – March 13

Fed Cuts Interest Rates to Near Zero to Combat Coronavirus – March 15

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Opinion - Bad News: Your 2021 Social Security COLA Will Probably Be Zero – March 16

'Disengagement' after retirement increases cognitive decline risk – March 16

Insurers Cover Fewer Drugs, Leaving Some Patients Struggling To Get Needed Treatments – March 17

Trump administration announces expanded telemedicine for Medicare users – March 17

10 Things to Know About Senior Living Facilities and the Coronavirus Threat They Face – March 20

Don't worry, you'll still get your Social Security, even with the coronavirus crisis – March 23

Column – Medicare and coronavirus: What you need to know – March 23

Medicare Is Updating Coverage to Help in the Coronavirus Crisis – March 24

Stimulus deal includes temporary relief for retirement plans – March 25

A Guide To The Retirement-Related Provisions In The Senate Coronavirus Stimulus/Relief Bill – March 26

U.S. home healthcare industry warns of possible 'collapse' – March 26

How Coronavirus Will Affect Social Security – March 27

IRA And Retirement Plan Changes In The CARES Act – March 28

Mnuchin: Americans Will Receive Checks Within Three Weeks – March 29

CARES Act Drastically Changes Required Minimum Distribution Rules For 2020 – March 30

Being on Social Security won't prevent you from collecting a stimulus payment -- but that's not the whole story – March 31