



***NRLN Review*, Summary for April 2020**

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

Coronavirus Messages

Based on research the NRLN has done, the Kaiser Family Foundation (KFF) is a highly reliable source of information on major health care issues. On April 1, the NRLN shared KFF's article *FAQs on Medicare Coverage and Costs Related to COVID-19 Testing and Treatment*.

On April 13, an email reported to NRLN members that the need for hand sanitizer during the Coronavirus Pandemic is far more than the existing hand sanitizer industry can produce. America's distillers, along with other alcohol industries like craft breweries, have stepped up to make hand sanitizer.

An email was sent to NRLN members on April 16 to alert them to government agencies' warnings for Americans to be vigilant as scammers try to take advantage of them during the Coronavirus Pandemic.

Click here to read the NRLN's Coronavirus News. <https://www.nrln.org/coronanews.html>

A View from Washington Message

Alyson Parker, NRLN Executive Director, issue a message on April 17 saying that during the twenty-two years she has lived in the Washington, DC area, she has never seen downtown DC and the Hill so empty. It really is a ghost town because of the Coronavirus. She said she has been in contact with other industry groups and staff on the Hill by phone and emails regarding our NRLN priorities, so we will be ready to go when the government reopens for regular business. Her message is posted on the NRLN home page at www.nrln.org.

Social Security and Medicare Trustees' Report

Bill Kadereit provide NRLN members with key facts from the annual Social Security and Medicare Trustees' report in an April 24 NRLN President's Forum message. Social Security will be able to pay scheduled benefits until 2034. At that time, the fund's reserves will become depleted and continuing tax income will only be sufficient to pay 76 percent of benefits. Medicare's Hospital Insurance (HI) Trust Fund, which pays Medicare Part A inpatient hospital expenses, will be able to pay scheduled benefits until 2026. At that time, the fund's reserves will become depleted and continuing total program income will only be sufficient to pay 90 percent of benefits. The Supplemental Medical Insurance (SMI) Trust Fund: Part B, pays for physician and outpatient services, and Part D, covers prescription drugs. SMI is adequately financed because current law provides financing from general revenues and beneficiary premiums each year. Trustees urged lawmakers to address the Social Security and Medicare financial challenges as soon as possible.

Grassroots Committee at Work

During April which has been dominated by COVID-19 matters, the NRLN Grassroots Committee has been reminding members of Congress that other matters must also be addressed, hopefully before the November election. During the February NRLN meeting in Washington, DC folders with information on major retirement issues were handed out to staffs by NRLN association and chapter members who had appointments on Capitol Hill. However, 216 staff members of Representatives and Senators on committees that deal with retirement issues were not contacted during limited time on the Hill. NRLN Congressional District leaders for these members of Congress and Grassroots Regional leaders began in April to take steps to get the fly-in folders into the hands of these staff members with a reminder not to forget retirees. The folder contained information on these topics:

- Medicare Advantage Plans
- Reduce Prescription Drug Prices
- Pension De-risking
- Mergers, Acquisition and Spin-offs

For more information on these topics go to www.nrln.org and click on the Legislative Agenda tab. Also, on the NRLN home page is access to: (1) a state report card showing your Senators' and Representatives' support (co-sponsorship) of bills the NRLN supports; and (2) how much each Senator and Representative is receiving in campaign contributions from the pharmaceutical industry. Both reports are updated monthly. You may find this interesting as we approach the November election. Feel free to share this and other information on the NRLN website with your friends. -- AND always respond to Action Alerts, a primary Grassroots method of alerting Congress to NRLN issues.

Why NRLN Database Needs Home Address

One of the strengths of the NRLN is the ability to issue Action Alerts to ask our Grassroots Advocates to email letters to their members of Congress. There are times when an Action Alert or other communications needs to be directed to a specific Representative or Senator. An email was sent on April 23 to individuals who have an email address in the NRLN database but did not provide their street address, city and zip code. The email requested they provide this information so the database can identify their Congressional Districts. All information in the database is kept private. Click here to access the NRLN's sign up webpage to update your database information. <https://www.nrln.org/congresslegs.html#/signup/go/id/B3E43B6C-D9E6-873E-24F02319CCE5EA9B>

NRLN Legislative Committees' Work

The NRLN's Legislative Affairs Committee (LAC) composed of Judy Stenberg, Chairwoman, Deb Morrissett, Joe Mazzei, Al Duscher and Bob Martina submitted the following bills for the Legislative Action Planning Committee (LAPC) to consider for action during its April 6 conference call.

- H.R.4597/S.3466 -- Acting to Cancel Copays and Ensure Substantial Savings (ACCESS) for Biosimilars Act of 2019
- H.R.4945 -- Safeguarding Medicare Access to Respiratory Therapy Act of 2019
- H.R.5534/S.3353 -- Comprehensive Immunosuppressive Drug Coverage for Kidney Transplant Patients Act of 2019
- H.R.6179 -- Increasing Access to Biosimilars Act of 2020

The LAPC composed of Bill Kadereit, Chairman, Alyson Parker, Judy Stenberg, Bob Martina and Ed Beltram made the following decisions on its April 6 conference call.

- **H.R.4597/S.3466, Acting to Cancel Copays and Ensure Substantial Savings (ACCESS) for Biosimilars Act of 2019** was tabled. Instead, LAPC favored supporting **H.R.6179, Increasing Access to Biosimilars Act of 2020**, which would require the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to establish a demonstration project to evaluate the benefits of providing additional Medicare payments to providers of biosimilar drugs.

-- **H.R.4945, Safeguarding Medicare Access to Respiratory Therapy Act of 2019.** Letters were emailed on April 7, 2020 to Chairman Frank Pallone and Ranking Member Greg Walden, House Energy and Commerce Committee; Chairman Richard Neal and Ranking Member Kevin Brady, House Ways and Means Committee. Letters stated that while now is not the time during the Coronavirus Pandemic to make a decision about Medicare's purchase of ventilators, the NRLN believes that Medicare should do competitive bidding for ventilators, not delay the inclusion of ventilators from competitive acquisition as passage of H.R. 4945 would do. The letter described the NRLN's business model definition of competitive bidding.

-- **H.R.5534, Comprehensive Immunosuppressive Drug Coverage for Kidney Transplant Patients Act of 2019** and **H.R.6179, Increasing Access to Biosimilars Act of 2020.** Letters requesting Committee votes on H.R. 5534 and H.R. 6179 were emailed on April 7, 2020 to Chairman Frank Pallone and Ranking Member Greg Walden, House Energy and Commerce Committee; Chairman Richard Neal and Ranking Member Kevin Brady, House Ways and Means Committee.

-- **S.3353, Comprehensive Immunosuppressive Drug Coverage for Kidney Transplant Patients Act of 2019.** Letters requesting Committee vote on S. 3353 were email on April 7, 2020 to Chairman Chuck Grassley and Ranking Member Ron Wyden, Senate Finance Committee.

Click here to access the letters posted in Letters to Washington.

<https://www.nrln.org/ARCHIVES-W.HTML>

Links to Key News Articles Posted in April

During April, 104 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:

Social Security recipients will automatically receive stimulus pay – April 2

Scammers now targeting Social Security beneficiaries, says state AG – April 3

4 Hard-to-Believe Social Security Facts – April 4

How to Access Social Security Benefits During the Coronavirus Pandemic – April 6

Medicare Recipients Can Still See A Doctor, Through Telemedicine – April 8

Opinion: Another victim of COVID-19: Social Security – April 10

Opinion: The Time Is Now To Lower The Medicare Age To 50 – April 10

Opinion: Here's How To Calculate If You Should Take Advantage Of The New Tax Deadline – April 12

Stimulus Checks: 3 Things Social Security Beneficiaries Need to Know – April 15

Debt collectors are going after millions of stimulus checks — 5 ways to stop them - April 15

FBI sees spike in cyber crime reports during coronavirus pandemic – April 16

Your 2021 Social Security Checks Could Get a Surprise Boost After All – April – 19

Can the IRS Keep My Stimulus Payment if I Owe Money on My Taxes? – April 22

What's Happened To Americans' Retirement Confidence In The Pandemic – April 23

Union leader asks Pelosi, Schumer to spike 'surprise' billing legislation – April 23

Filing Estimated Taxes? The IRS Has Changed the 2020 Due Dates – April 25

Social Security Beneficiaries: Here's When You'll Get Your Stimulus Check – April 27

McConnell: Senate will return on May 4 to start next coronavirus relief bill – April 27

Opinion: Social Security Recipients: You May Have To Act To Get Your Stimulus Money Electronically – April 28

Here's who's still waiting for stimulus money – April 29

Medicare applications raise anxiety for seniors in pandemic – April 29

What Social Security Beneficiaries And Other Seniors Should Know About Their Stimulus Checks – April 30

Opinion: How The Pandemic Is Making The Retirement Crisis Worse — And What To Do About It – April 30