



NRLN Review



NRLN Review, Summary for May 2022

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

Letters to Congressional Leaders

NRLN President Bill Kadereit sent letters on May 26 to 16 Congressional leaders about some Medicare Advantage plans delaying and denying benefits. A few paragraphs in the letter were: (Read the entire letter at <https://www.nrln.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/NRLN-Letter-Schumer-MA-Denials-Final.pdf>.)

The recent report by the Office of Inspector General (OIG) for the Department of Health and Human Services showing delays and denials of healthcare by Medicare Advantage (MA) plans should be an ominous warning on the future of medical care for seniors if Congress continues to promote taxpayer funded privatization of Medicare.

If you and your healthcare policy staff have not already read the report at <https://oig.hhs.gov/oei/reports/OEI-09-18-00260.pdf> it is important that the findings be understood and action taken to ensure that MA plans are held accountable to provide the healthcare services authorized by Medicare.

A brief description of what the Inspector General discovered is that Medicare authorized services for many MA beneficiaries were delayed or denied. In addition, MA plans denied payments to providers for some services that met both Medicare coverage rules and MA billing rules.

The NRLN supports true cost-effective competition from private healthcare plans. **However, we do not support bonuses and rebates to MA plans just to promote the notion that private insurance plans are more cost effective or provide better care than original Medicare, when the record shows they are not.** Nor can we be silent when the Inspector General reports that many seniors in MA plans are being deprived of the healthcare services they deserve. Congress needs to see to it that:

- CMS informs all Medicare eligible Americans about the serious MA violations and who the bad actors were.
- CMS holds the MA bad actors accountable, cancelling their contracts when necessary.
- CMS does not give MA plans an 8.5% rate increase next year.
- CMS is prohibited from paying MA insurers more per enrollee than it spends for original Medicare.

NRLN Legislative Committees' Work

The NRLN's Legislative Advisory Committee (LAC) composed of Judy Stenberg, Chairwoman, Deb Morrisett, Joe Mazzei, Al Duscher and Bob Martina did not have bills to submit in May for the Legislative Action Planning Committee (LAPC) to consider for actions. The LAPC includes Bill Kadereit, Chairman, Judy Stenberg, Alyson Parker, Bob Martina and Ed Beltram.

Key News Articles Posted in May

During May 42 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 headlines.

[Medicare Surprise: Drug Plan Prices Touted During Open Enrollment Can Rise Within a Month](#) ~ May 03

[Senators decry lack of 'sunlight' on PBM processes, push for reforms in transparency](#) ~ May 05

[Healthcare Provider: Telehealth Visits Should Be Protected](#) ~ May 06

[Commentary: How Mail-Order Pharmacies Can Help Seniors On Medicare](#) ~ May 07

[How Medicare Advantage plans wrongly deny prior auth requests](#) ~ May 11

[Why Won't More Older Americans Get Their Covid Booster?](#) ~ May 12

[Inspectors Find 1 In 4 Medicare Patients Harmed During Hospital Stays](#) ~ May 13

[The cost of retiree healthcare is climbing— here's what you should expect to spend](#) ~ May 16

[FDA OKs At-Home Combined Test For Covid, Flu, And RSV](#) ~ May 17

[As Covid Surges Again, Masking Rules Are On The Table. Again](#) ~ May 19

[CMS Updates Medicare.gov To Simplify, Support Navigation](#) ~ May 19

[As Social Security Customer Service Problems Persist, Congress Is Stepping In](#) ~ May 19

[Multiemployer plans await final PBGC aid rules](#) ~ May 23

[AHA presses for False Claims Act probes to target payers over Medicare Advantage denials](#) ~ May 23

[Will Hordes Of Poor Seniors Overwhelm Government Welfare Programs?](#) ~ May 24

[CRS Updates Report on Social Security Shortfall to Reflect Inflation](#) ~ May 25

[More Americans are avoiding healthcare due to cost uncertainty](#) ~ May 25

[Pharmacy groups pressure FTC to ramp up scrutiny and enforcement of PBMs](#) ~ May 26, 2022

[Patients Face Long Delays for Imaging of Cancers and Other Diseases](#) ~ May 26

[Aduhelm price cut, limited coverage leads CMS to lower Medicare premiums in 2023](#) ~ May 27

[Your Social Security check might be taxed. Here's how that could change](#) ~ May 29

[Opinion: Lowering the Medicare eligibility age would be an expensive mistake](#) ~ May 30