

THE Senior SCOOP

Presented by
RetireSafe



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WELCOME

July has been a very busy month here in Washington, DC. Although we cannot physically go to the offices on the Hill, we are there virtually. Currently we are working on the “International Pricing Index”, which the President signed an executive order on July 24th to put into motion. Surprise Billing and COLA increases for Mature Americans is still very high on our priority list. RetireSafe created two videos for you: [“How to Use Zoom”](#) and [“Medicare: Choose Wisely”](#). The Medicare video will be available in Spanish in the upcoming weeks. If there are other topics in which you would like videos on, please contact my office. You are a priority to us and will remain our number one priority. If you would like to have us discuss a particular topic in the newsletter please reach out to me and we will report it. As always, feel free to reach out to me directly at mark@retiresafe.org.

Issues RetireSafe is Currently Working On

During the month of July RetireSafe has joined other non-profit organizations in addressing issues on Capitol Hill that will have an impact on your healthcare. The following are issues that we addressed on your behalf:

- Increase States’ Federal Medical Assistance Percentage During COVID-19 Crisis- In a letter to Congressional leaders, nearly 40 Alliance partners called on Congress to provide increased funding for the Medicaid program by enhancing states’ Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) in pending and future COVID-19 relief packages. According to the letter, “increased federal funding is urgently needed to continue delivering care and services that are critical to the growing number of Americans who rely on the Medicaid program.”

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SCAM ALERT!

Scams are always occurring but they are especially relevant during the pandemic. The economy will potentially decline which leads people to think of ways to make money. Some of which may be illegal and morally wrong. As of late, there have been calls being made to consumers on behalf of people posing to be from local utility companies threatening to turn the power on local residents and some are falling for it. To read more about this new scam click [HERE](#).

As the cost of prescription drugs continues to rise, this creates a way for scammers to scam people. Many Americans including seniors tend to start to look for ways to get the medication they need at an affordable price, there are fraudulent internet pharmacies to be out on the look for. There are safe ways to save money on prescriptions. To read more click [HERE](#).

(continued)

- Virginia Prescription Drug Affordability Work Group: Policy solution suggestions- We, like many others, are frustrated by how much people are paying for their prescription medications and the rising list prices of certain medications. Now more than ever, as patient advocates and other interested partners in quality affordable healthcare, we are interested in solutions that will make prescription drugs affordable to the patient.
- Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) - today to advocate on behalf of states, territories, counties, cities and towns in support of an enhanced federal medical assistance percentage (FMAP) for the Medicaid program in the next bipartisan COVID relief bill.
- Establishing Minimum Standards in Medicaid State Drug Utilization Review (DUR) and Supporting Value-Based Purchasing (VBP) for Drugs Covered in Medicaid, Revising Medicaid Drug Rebate and Third Party Liability (TPL) Requirements (CMS 2482-P) - we appreciate the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) prioritizing efforts towards expanding access to care and lowering prescription drug costs, we are concerned that the proposed rule contains a provision that will increase barriers to access of care and put those individuals struggling with chronic and debilitating disease at risk for further health complications.
- Out-of-Pocket Cost - to express our concern over continued unaffordable out-of-pocket (OOP) costs in the Medicare Part D program, and to implore Congress to work together in a bipartisan manner to take action.
- Federal funding for expanded access to COVID testing - that urges Congress to prioritize federal funding for expanded access to COVID testing as part of the upcoming legislative package.

RESOURCES



GoodRx Is a relatively new telemedicine company and it is free to use their website or app, they track prescription drug prices in the United States they also provide coupons and discounts on medication. They use over 75,000 different pharmacies in the U.S. To learn more about GoodRx click this [LINK](#).

By: Debbie Plotnick, Vice President, State & Federal Advocacy, Mental Health America

The stress and isolation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic is affecting everyone. It's especially hard for older adults who are likely to have one or more medical conditions and are more likely to stay at home and limit in-person interaction with family and friends. It's really hard when you can't hug the grandkids. Between January and June of this year [Mental Health America \(MHA\)](#) has seen an increase of over 400% in the number of people that are coming to its website to screen for depression or anxiety. Loneliness and isolation is the number one reason cited by those whose screening results are in the moderate to severe range. Please check out the resources for [older adults on the COVID-19 pages](#) on the MHA website. And if you're concerned that what you're feeling may be anxiety or depression, please come and take a [free anonymous screen](#).

Local News and Issues

North Carolina

Over 238,000 North Carolina residents have become uninsured, since the beginning of the COVID-19 Pandemic. This is the fifth-highest loss of insurance out of all the states. North Carolina is one of the few states that have yet to expand Medicaid. This Medicaid expansion could help insure thousands of North Carolinians who have become uninsured since losing their job. Contact your state representatives and Congressmen and women to encourage them to fight for the expansion of Medicaid. Click [HERE](#) for the full article.

Michigan

In early July, the Michigan governor signed a group of five bills into law. These bills allow for patient data to be sent to health care providers through video and pictures. This is an expansion of telehealth that will allow doctors to examine these videos and images more thoroughly. Full article [HERE](#).

Georgia

Georgia has not yet adopted the Medicaid expansion, unlike many other states. Georgia enacted legislation (SB106) in 2019 that allows the state to seek federal permission to expand Medicaid, but only to people earning up to 100 percent of the poverty level (as opposed to 138 percent, as called for in the ACA). To get updated on everything that is occurring click [HERE](#).

New York

New York has adopted and implemented the expansion of Medicaid. New York has the majority of its Medicaid population enrolled in managed care programs, under an 1115 waiver that dates back to 1997. In late 2016, CMS renewed the waiver, extending it out to 2021. As of 2018, there were 19 private insurers offering Medicaid coverage in the state, and 16 providing CHIP coverage. Update on Medicaid in New York, click [HERE](#).

Illinois

During this difficult time there are many scams targeting seniors. The Illinois Attorney General provides the senior citizens of Illinois with a Consumer Fraud Hotline where they can report any scams or fraudulent activities that have targeted them. The number for this hotline is: 1-800-243-5377 or 1-800-964-3013.