



WASHINGTON UPDATE

DECEMBER 2015

Spread Holiday Cheer, Not the Flu!

It's estimated that between 80 percent and 90 percent of seasonal flu-related deaths have occurred in people 65 years and older. As you prepare for holiday gatherings, get vaccinated for flu to protect yourself, your friends, and your loved ones from flu and its complications, such as deadly cases of pneumonia. While you're at the doctor or the pharmacy, ask about other vaccines covered by Medicare, including pneumococcal, shingles, and Tdap (which covers both tetanus and whooping cough). These vaccines are vital for your health-and the health of those around you.

For vaccine resources, visit: nanasp.org/vaccineawarenessresources

Congressional Update

House and Senate Pass Full Funding Bill for FY2016

The House and Senate today (Friday) passed the FY 2016 Omnibus Appropriations bill. This bill, which will fund federal programs for the remainder of FY 2016, through September 30, 2016, provides a number of increases for aging programs:

- OAA Title IIIC, Congregate and Home-Delivered Meals, received an increase of \$20 million, bringing these programs to a total of \$835 million
- OAA Title IIIE, National Family Caregivers Support Program, was increased by \$5 million, and now totals \$150 million
- OAA Title VI Native American Nutrition Program was increased by \$5 million, its first increase in years, and now totals \$31 million
- OAA Title VI Native American Caregiver Program was increased by \$1.5 million, and now totals \$7.5 million
- Elder Justice Initiative was doubled from \$4 million to \$8 million, and will be used for the Adult Protective Services national database
- Community Services Block Grant was increased from \$675 million to \$714 million

Other programs received "flat funding," the same funding levels as FY2015, including:

- OAA Title II Aging Network Support Activities (such as the Eldercare Locator and Aging and Disability Resource Centers)
- OAA Title IIIB, Home and Community-Based Supportive Services
- OAA Title IIID, Preventive Health
- OAA Title V, SCSEP, avoiding proposed cuts of \$30 million
- OAA Title VII Ombudsman Program
- OAA Title VII Elder Rights Support Activities
- State Health Insurance Assistance Programs (SHIPs), avoiding proposed cuts of \$22 million
- Social Services Block Grant
- Senior Medicare Patrol
- LIHEAP (Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program)

No Older Americans Act programs received cuts this year.

CMS Proposes to Revise Discharge Planning Requirements

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) proposes to revise the discharge planning requirements that hospitals, including long-term-care hospitals and inpatient rehabilitation facilities, critical access hospitals, and home health agencies, must meet in order to participate in Medicare and Medicaid. The proposed changes would modernize the discharge planning requirements by bringing them into closer alignment with current accepted practice; helping to improve patient quality of care and outcomes; and reducing avoidable complications and readmissions. For more information and to see the proposed revisions, please visit: federalregister.gov. Comments on these proposed revisions are due January 4, 2016. You can comment at regulations.gov.

Demand for ACA Coverage Has Surged

According to data from CMS, more than 1 million new customers—and 2.8 million people overall—have signed up for ObamaCare in the first six weeks of this year's enrollment period.

According to The Hill, CMS Acting Administrator Andy Slavitt pointed to the surge in interest ahead of the December 15 deadline for those seeking to be covered starting January 1, which allows people to avoid the tax penalty during next year's tax filing season. He said that the penalty for not having health insurance, which started last year, is "making a dent." About 8 million people paid a penalty for not having health insurance last year, according to the Internal Revenue Service.

HHS Secretary Sylvia Mathews Burwell has said boosting the number of enrollees further will be difficult because it's harder to reach the remaining uninsured.

This year's enrollment season ends January 31.

Contact Us

We welcome your feedback!
Please share questions,
suggestions or concerns.

Benjamin Rose Institute on Aging
11890 Fairhill Road
Cleveland, OH 44120
216.791.8000
info@benrose.org

Sign up for the email version
of this newsletter at
www.benrose.org/KPI

