



# WASHINGTON UPDATE

MAY 2014

## ANNUAL MEETING

There's still time to reserve your spot at the 2014 Annual Meeting of the Benjamin Rose Institute on Aging. The meeting is Thursday, May 8, at 4pm in the Conference Center at Benjamin Rose, 11890 Fairhill Road, Cleveland 44120.

Larry Minnix, President and CEO of LeadingAging, joins us to discuss Redefining Age.

## SAVE THE DATE

The Eighth Annual Katz Policy Lecture is September 19, 2014. Guest lecturer is Peter Kemper, PhD, Professor Emeritus of Health Policy and Administration and Demography, Pennsylvania State University

For information on these and other upcoming events, visit [www.benrose.org/education](http://www.benrose.org/education)

## Congressional Update

### House and Senate Appropriations Process Begins for Fiscal Year 2015

The House and Senate appropriations committees are beginning their work on fiscal year 2015 spending bills. The House has been moving faster - last week, the full House approved the Military Construction-Veterans Affairs (VA) and Legislative Branch bills. The Commerce-Justice-Science (C-J-S) bill was approved at the subcommittee level and will be considered at the full committee level this week. Transportation-Housing and Urban Development (HUD), notorious for being the bill that stalled the spending process last year, will be considered in subcommittee this week as well. *Congressional Quarterly* reports that the House plans to vote on all bills on the floor before the July recess.

Sen. Barbara Mikulski (D-MD), the Chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee, is expected to release allocations for each of her 12 subcommittees the week of May 5, which will allow the bill drafting process to begin in the Senate. Senate Appropriations will mark up Military Construction-VA on May 22, and Agriculture will follow shortly after. Sen. Harry Reid (D-NV), the Senate Majority Leader, has committed four weeks of Senate floor time in June and July for appropriations bills work.

Advocates for specific budgetary items, such as Elder Justice and other senior issues, should be prepared to sustain their efforts over the next several months. Look for updates on appropriations discussions directly impacting older adults in future issues of *Washington Update*.

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If you'd like to read summary information or the complete bills presented in the House and Senate, search for "2015 appropriations" at <http://beta.congress.gov>.

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## Contact Us

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

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## Official Figures Available on ACA Sign-Ups

According to numbers officially released earlier this month, Affordable Care Act sign-ups reached over 8 million between October 1 and April 19. 28% of those who signed up were young adults between the ages of 18 and 34; 25% were between the ages of 55 and 64. Those 55-64 tended to select higher-coverage plans, accounting for 27% of gold-level plans and 21% of platinum-level plans. The full ASPE/HHS report can be found at [http://aspe.hhs.gov/health/reports/2014/MarketPlaceEnrollment/Apr2014/ib\\_2014Apr\\_enrollment.pdf](http://aspe.hhs.gov/health/reports/2014/MarketPlaceEnrollment/Apr2014/ib_2014Apr_enrollment.pdf).

## Sebelius Resigns; Burwell Confirmation Hearings to Be Held

Early in April, Secretary Kathleen Sebelius of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) resigned and President Obama nominated Sylvia Mathews Burwell, the director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), to replace her. Burwell is scheduled to appear before the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee on May 8 for her first confirmation hearing and before the Senate Finance Committee at a later date.

## Bipartisan Bill Would Expand PACE to Non-Elderly People

Reps. Earl Blumenauer (D-OR) and Chris Smith (R-NJ) introduced a bill on May 1 to expand the Program for All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE). PACE currently targets people 55 and older with expensive medical problems and allows them to use Medicare and Medicaid benefits to stay in their communities instead of moving to long-term care. This bill would expand the program to those under 55 with serious medical conditions. If enacted, this change could open up opportunities for PACE programs, as almost 40% of dually eligible people are under the age of 65.

## Study Points to Challenges with ACO Goals

A study published on April 21 by the *Journal of the American Medical Association* (JAMA) states that one-third of Medicare beneficiaries assigned to accountable care organizations (ACO) in 2010-2011 weren't assigned to the same ACO in both years. This makes it very challenging to provide accountable care. The study also found that much of the specialty care patients received was provided by doctors and hospitals outside the assigned ACO, making care coordination extremely difficult for ACOs. This is worsened by the study's finding that the most "unstable" beneficiaries were in high-cost groups such as those with end-stage renal disease, disabilities and dual enrollees. An abstract of the article can be found [here](#).

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