Biden Administration Moves to Tighten Medicare Advantage Regulations

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) has issued a draft rule that would require Medicare Advantage plans to encourage beneficiaries to actually use all of the supplemental benefits available to them. Beneficiaries would also have to be informed mid-year about any unused benefits available to them.

The draft rule would also more strictly limit the amount insurance agents and brokers who advise customers can be paid, setting a fixed amount for guidance no matter which plan a consumer chooses. Payment caps currently exist, but some corporations reward advisers with extras like golf trips when a client chooses their plan.

“CMS must continue to hold Medicare Advantage corporations accountable,” said Robert Roach, Jr., President of the Alliance. “There should be no tolerance for corporations compensating insurance agents or brokers more than is allowed.”

Our New Debt Commission Position Paper

The Alliance has released a new position paper outlining its opposition to the Fiscal Commission Act (H.R. 5779) and the Fiscal Stability Act (S. 3262).

These two bills were introduced by Rep. Bill Huizenga (MI) and Sens. Joe Manchin (WV) and Mitt Romney (UT). They each establish a 16-member “Fiscal Commission” to make recommendations on balancing the federal budget and improving the solvency of Federal trust funds, including Social Security and Medicare.

“Social Security cannot, by law, contribute to the national debt,” said Richard Fiesta, Executive Director of the Alliance. “These bills are built on the flawed, dangerous premise that we need to...
cut earned benefits rather than strengthen and expand them. We encourage alliance members to share this information with their friends and family and urge their elected officials to vote no on these bills.”

**LAST CHANCE TO REGISTER**

*Watch Your Wallet: Making Housing Decisions, Managing Debt and Avoiding Scams as You Age Webinar*

On Monday, November 27, 2023 from 4:00 PM to 5:00 PM Eastern Time the Alliance will host an educational webinar with Hector Ortiz and Cora Hume from the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau’s Office for Older Americans.

To RSVP, click [here](#).

**Free At-Home COVID Tests Available for Home Delivery**

As Americans prepare to gather for the winter holidays, the federal government is offering four free at-home COVID tests per address through the mail. Tests can be ordered online at [www.covidtests.gov](http://www.covidtests.gov).

The release of additional tests comes days ahead of Thanksgiving and the busy holiday travel season, which has corresponded with a surge in [coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus) cases in recent years.

According to a recent survey, sixty one percent of Americans aged 65 years or older have already gotten the updated COVID vaccine or plan to get the new vaccine. However, smaller percentages of Americans overall say they plan to get the updated vaccine.

“Information is power,” said Joseph Peters, Jr., Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance. “Having a few COVID tests on hand is a good idea if you are going to be spending time with people who are particularly vulnerable.”

**KFF Health News: Extra Fees Drive Assisted Living Profits**

Assisted living centers have become an appealing retirement option for hundreds of thousands of boomers who can no longer live independently, promising a cheerful alternative to the institutional feel of a nursing home.

But their cost is so crushingly high that most Americans can’t afford them.
These highly profitable facilities often charge $5,000 a month or more and then layer on fees at every step. Residents’ bills and price lists from a dozen facilities offer a glimpse of the charges: $12 for a blood pressure check; $50 per injection (more for insulin); $93 a month to order medications from a pharmacy not used by the facility; $315 a month for daily help with an inhaler.

The facilities charge extra to help residents get to the shower, bathroom, or dining room; to deliver meals to their rooms; to have staff check-ins for daily “reassurance” or simply to remind residents when it’s time to eat or take their medication. Some even charge for routine billing of a resident’s insurance for care.

Read more here.