

Aging Matters

REGION I

Northwestern Area Agency on Aging

105 Bridge Street Plaza, P.O. Box 2086 • Wheeling, WV 26003

*Brooke, Calhoun, Doddridge, Gilmer,
Hancock, Harrison, Marion, Marshall, Monongalia, Ohio, Pleasants,
Ritchie, Tyler, Wetzel, Wirt, and Wood Counties*

Phone 304-242-1800 • Fax 304-242-2437

Email: belomar@belomar.org



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Michele Pultz, Editor

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Older Americans Act Reauthorization Signed into Law

*Statement from Assistant Secretary for Aging
Kathy Greenlee*

April 19, 2016-President Obama signed the Older Americans Act Reauthorization Act of 2016 into law today, reaffirming our nation's commitment to the health and well-being of older adults. Earlier this year, the President called on Congress to reauthorize this important legislation as part of his remarks at the White House Conference on Aging.

For more than 50 years, the Older Americans Act has helped people live the lives they want, with the people they choose, throughout their lives. Through the aging services network, it has helped older adults continue to work, play and volunteer in their communities, to the great benefit of all. Because of the Older Americans Act, neighborhoods and organizations across the country are able to continue to draw upon the wealth of knowledge that comes only with life experience.

The OAA underpins a promise to preserve the right to live independently, with dignity, making everyday decisions according to our individual preferences and goals across our lifespan. This promise is more important than ever. In a few short years, more than 77 million people will be over the age of 60, and more than 34 million people—mostly family and friends—will be supporting a loved one who is over 60. These numbers will continue to grow for the next several decades.

The OAA affects everyone—older adults, people who help support them, and all of us who hope to one day grow old. I am delighted to see its reauthorization, and I am deeply grateful for the renewed commitment to preserving the rights of all people, for the full course of our lives.

Informational Bulletin about Social Security Number Removal Initiative



On Thursday, May 5, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) released a bulletin about the Social Security Number Removal Initiative (SSNRI). On April 16, 2015, Congress passed the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act (MACRA) of 2015 (PL 114-10) on April 16, 2015. MACRA included a requirement that Social Security Numbers be removed from Medicare ID cards and instead be replaced with a

randomly generated identifier. This requirement was included to minimize the risk of identity theft that Medicare beneficiaries face.

For more information go to <https://www.medicare.gov/federal-policy-guidance/downloads/CIB-05-05-16.pdf>

The 2 Winners of AARP's Nationwide Caregiving Tech Competition

Mom's still living at home, but she's getting older and you can't be there to check in on her every day. Peace of mind would come from having a professional check in on her. There's an app for that.

Dad's got dementia, and his mind is slipping. You could slow that and give him a better quality of life by bringing specially programmed music and singing into his life. There's an app for that, too.

Companies offering those two technologies were chosen from 10 health tech startups competing in Sunnyvale, Calif., in a *Shark Tank*-style event sponsored by AARP. The AARP Innovations@50+ Live Pitch featured four venture capitalists and an audience of several hundred who considered each entry's technologies, ranking them on whether they are unique, how much of a need there is for the product and would they refer the company to a family or friend. All of the inventions focused on caregiving.

The Winners

Penrose Senior Care Auditors of Dallas, Texas, took the venture capitalist judges award for **Penrose Check-Ins**, its system of app and proprietary technologies that combine with home visits by auditors. The auditors check a proscribed list related to the family member's well-being. The Medivisor app reduces the clutter and misinformation seniors often get when they turn to Dr. Google for help, its creator said.

The audience favorite was Los Angeles-based **SingFit**, which Next Avenue has written about. The company's app and music software stimulates the minds of dementia patients and helps caregivers provide a better body-mind workout.

The winners received plaques from AARP, but the real prize comes with exposure gained through the contest. The companies get media coverage (such as this article), a

chance to meet with AARP management and five hours of AARP Innovation team mentorship.

"We were very impressed with our finalists this year, and how their businesses will improve the lives of caregivers and those they care for," said Jody Holtzman, senior vice president, Enterprise Strategy and Innovation, AARP.

Turning Ideas into Action

All the presentations aimed at making life easier for either the aging patients or their caregivers, or both. The explosive growth of Silicon Valley and the race for new and better technologies for health care issues is driven by an ever-aging population and an understanding that caring for the elderly is no easy task.

Each presenter indicated that he or she got into the business after caring for a loved one or watching a family member go through a difficult time.

"When my father was in care, I found things didn't get done," said Penrose CEO Rhonda Harper. So she helped create a company that would ease the worried mind of the caregiver, whoever that may be.

The other winner, SingFit, is all about improving the lives of dementia patients, who are among the most challenging for caregivers. Rachel Francine, SingFit CEO, said music and song can elevate the mood of a patient and improve speech.

The youngest presenter, 17-year-old Kenneth Shinozuka, created a wearable sensor designed to help older people avoid falling, or to summon help if they do fall. "I knew I wanted to use technology to solve problems," he said.

Facing the Money Questions

The presenters were questioned by a panel of four venture capital judges from Comcast Ventures, GE Ventures, Johnson & Johnson and JP Morgan Asset Management. Much of the discussion, not surprisingly, concerned business models and revenue possibilities. Some used "freemium" type apps, others followed subscription models and others sought to make money licensing their products through healthcare agencies or institutions.

Finance Republicans Call for Withdrawal of Proposed Drug Rule for Medicare Part B

In Letter, Senators Warn of Harmful Disruptions in Care for Seniors, and Write, "We find the process by which CMS developed the proposals as concerning as the policies themselves."

WASHINGTON – In a [letter](#) today, Senate Finance Committee Republicans, led by Chairman Orrin Hatch (R-Utah), called on Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) Acting Administrator Andy Slavitt to withdraw CMS's "Part B Drug Payment Model" proposed rule which would disrupt care for vulnerable patients and require providers across the nation to engage in drastic changes in payment procedures.

"We urge you to withdraw the proposed rule immediately as it would severely disrupt care for vulnerable beneficiaries with cancer, macular degeneration, rheumatoid arthritis, neurological disorders, primary immunodeficiency diseases, rare diseases, and other serious medical conditions," **the Senators wrote.** "We are perplexed by the scope of the proposed experiment as it would require providers in the vast majority of the country to participate in at least one dramatic payment change. The unprecedented scope is especially troubling considering the policies could decrease the quality of beneficiary care and increase Medicare costs."



The Senators noted specific policy concerns with proposal, including implementation and lack of oversight, and warned of increased costs and a reduction in beneficiary choice.

"CMS failed to consult with outside experts and those with real-world experience," **the Senators continued.** "It decided to override the Part B drug payment methodology in statute in nearly all areas of the country on the hunch that it will decrease spending without harming patients."

The full letter can be found at www.finance.senate.gov - "Newsroom" - "Chairman's News"- Article 4.28.16

Finance Democrats Outline Concerns with Medicare Part B Demonstration



WASHINGTON – Senate Finance Committee Ranking Member Ron Wyden, D-Ore., along with every Democratic member of the Finance Committee, sent a letter to Andy Slavitt, Acting Administrator of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, outlining concerns with the recently announced Medicare Part B demonstration that would change the way Medicare pays for some prescription drugs.

"We appreciate CMS's interest in testing strategies to improve value in all aspects of our health care system," the senators wrote. **"However, we have heard numerous concerns from patients, providers and other stakeholders about the model's potential to have unintended consequences on Medicare beneficiaries' access to care and physician-administered drugs. Any proposed changes to the Part B program must be carefully considered to prevent any disruptions in care for Medicare beneficiaries, particularly those with serious and complex conditions."**

Given the broad scope of the model, the letter states CMS should resolve the following issues before moving forward with the model:

- Ensuring beneficiaries' continued access to Part B medications and quality of care
- Maintaining appropriate access to community-based care
- Achieving alignment with existing delivery and payment reform models

The letter also encourages CMS to pursue greater engagement with patients, providers and other stakeholders.

The full letter can be found at www.finance.senate.gov - "Newsroom" - "Ranking Member's News - Article 4.28.16

Answers on Aging
41st Annual Conference
& Trade Show
July 24-28, 2016
San Diego



Summer Institute on Aging June 7 - 9, 2016

The 38th Summer Institute on Aging will be held June 7-9, 2016 at Lakeview Resort and Conference Center in Morgantown, WV. The 2016 theme, **"Live Better. Live Longer. Live Life."** More information can be found at wvsioa.org.

BELOMAR REGIONAL COUNCIL

105 Bridge Street Plaza

P.O. Box 2086

Wheeling WV 26003-0290



Imposter Scams

Here's how they work: You get a call or an email. It might say you've won a prize. It might seem to come from a government official. Maybe it seems to be from someone you know – your grandchild, a relative or a friend. Or maybe it's from someone you feel like you know, but you haven't met in person – say, a person you met online who you've been writing to. Whatever the story, the request is the same: wire money to pay taxes or fees, or to help someone you care about. But is the person who you think it is? Is there an emergency or a prize? Judging by the complaints to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), the answer is no. The person calling you is pretending to be someone else. Here's what you can do: 1.

Stop. Check it out – before you wire money to anyone. Call the person, the government agency, or someone else you trust. Get the real story. Then decide what to do. No government agency will ever ask you to wire money. 2. Pass this information on to a friend. You may not have gotten one of these calls or emails, but the chances are you know someone who has. PassitON Want to know more? Sign up for scam alerts at ftc.gov/subscribe. Federal Trade Commission | ftc.gov/PassItOn Please Report Scams If you spot a scam, please report it to the Federal Trade Commission. • Call the FTC at 1-877-FTC-HELP (1-877-382-4357) or TTY 1-866-653-4261 • Go online: ftc.gov/complaint Your complaint can help protect other people. By filing a complaint, you can help the FTC's investigators identify the imposters and stop them before they can get someone's hard-earned money. It really makes a difference.