



FEDERAL BENEFITS EXPERTS

LANSING AREA MICHIGAN

CHAPTER 0289



4th Quarter Newsletter 2024

Chapter Officers

- President William Fude
1st Vice President Diane Fielder
2nd Vice President Mary Cook
Secretary Frances Johnston
Treasurer Joe DeSira
Nomination Chair Vacant
Audit Chair Kathy Zerkle

Committee Coordinators

- Membership Bruce Miles
Sunshine Kathy Zerkle
NARFE-PAC Joe DeSira
Newsletter Frances Johnston
Legislative Chair Frances Johnston

To contact our chapter officers, go to the Chapter Web page https://www.narfe.org/chapter0289/ use Contact Us to send a direct message.

NARFE WEBSITES

Important Web Addresses

- Chapter Web Page address is: https://www.narfe.org/chapter0289/
Federation Webpage address is: https://www.narfe.org/mi/
National: https://www.narfe.org/
NARFE National Headquarters | Facebook
Federation NARFE Facebook page. https://www.facebook.com/NARFEMI
FEDHub: Home - FEDHub (narfe.org)

Lansing Chapter 289 meetings are normally held at 1pm at the Tri-County Office on Aging, 5303 South Cedar St. in Lansing. Enter through Door number 1 on north side.

Upcoming Programs

We have some interesting programs coming up in the next months. Be sure to put on your calendar so you will remember what is coming. The newsletter only comes out quarterly.

- October 3rd - AARP discuss computer and telephone scams.
November 7th - Health Insurance Representatives
December 5th - Holiday Meeting at Jimmies Pub
January 2nd - Hantz group to bring information on changes in tax law in anticipation of preparation and filing of tax returns.
February 6th - Channel 10 Chief Meteorologist Darrin Rockcole will be discussing weather forecasting.

If any member has a specific topic that they think might interest the group or has a friend that speaks on a particular topic- let Mary Cook know. She is open to any and all suggestions for guest speakers and work together to bring information to our group.

Chapter President Message:

I am very grateful that the current elected officers of Chapter 289 have all agreed to serve again during the upcoming year. My most sincere thanks to Diane, Mary, Fran, Joe, and Kathy! Please know that we still welcome others who may wish to vie for one of these positions, mine included, to serve the Chapter. In addition to Chapter duties Joe is also the Federation President; Fran also serves in numerous vital Federation roles; Diane is the Paul Davis Scholarship Treasurer; and Bruce, our Membership Chair, is also Area VP and Federation Treasurer. We also are grateful for the service of a long-time member, Arlene Kessler, who passed this summer. Arlene and her late husband Ed were stalwart Chapter members who served in several Chapter and Federation roles. The dedication of these members, and all those others who previously served, contributes to keeping NARFE, the Michigan Federation, and Lansing Chapter 289 relevant and viable.

Chapter News

Walk to End Alzheimer's. What are you doing on October 13, 2024, at 11:00 am? Would you care to go on a walk with our chapter team that is trying to financially support change for the future? The chapter team led by Mary Cook will be there with other team members; as well as hundreds of other people who contribute money for research to find a cure, but these donations also support the families who are dealing with a loved one who is suffering from this disease. What if you can't walk? Can you use your credit card and donate to support this cause? Can you write a check to donate? The answer to all these questions is yes! You may think that you are immune from this disease, or that maybe you have great insurance, and you can get preventative care. The 2024 Walk to End Alzheimer's will be taking place in front of our State Capitol Building in Lansing, Michigan. There are other activities for those not walking. Contact Chapter Secretary Fran Johnston, if you have any questions.

2024 Membership Drive. NARFE kicked off the annual membership drive on September 1, and the program will run through December 31, 2024. Current members can **earn \$10** for each new member they recruit as well as other prizes. The Michigan Federation Board approved that current members could earn an **additional \$30** for each new member they recruit in conjunction with the national office award. The acknowledgement of the national recruitment award needs to be sent to the Michigan Federation Treasurer. It is important that the recruiter include his/her name and NARFE membership number on the recruitment application. **ALL our members need to become recruiters.**

Holiday Meeting. Plans have been made to celebrate the holiday season at a restaurant instead of holding a meeting at our regular location. Reservations have been made for our December meeting at Jimmy's Pub, 16830 Chandler Road, East Lansing, MI 48823 to enjoy a luncheon together from 12-2. This meeting is open to all NARFE members, and their families, and we hope we have a good attendance to enjoy good food and fellowship.

Federal Benefits Expert

Do not forget that as a member you have access to the Federal Benefits Expert Program Manager. Members can most easily initiate contact with the Federal Benefits Institute from the NARFE website by emailing fedbenefits@narfe.org, or by phone 1 (800) 456-8410 or fax (703) 838-7785. FEDHub, NARFE's online community is another source for connection and advice from other members. Odds are, another NARFE member either has the same issue or has an answer.

NEWS ITEM THAT MAY BE OF INTEREST

Excerpts from: Social Security benefits are projected to rise 2.5% in 2025

By [Kate Gibson](#) Edited By [Anne Marie Lee](#)

Updated on: September 12, 2024 / 9:11 AM EDT / CBS News

The nation's more than 70 million Social Security recipients may want to temper their expectations of how much more they'll be getting in 2025. Retirees are looking at an average monthly bump of \$48, or an increase of 2.5%, according to projections released on Wednesday.

The 2025 cost-of-living adjustment, or COLA, which is based on the rate of inflation, is now forecast to come in below last month's 2.57% calculation, the Senior Citizens League (TSCL), an advocacy group for older Americans, said. The updated forecast came hours after the government reported that prices rose 2.5% in the 12 months ending in August, as inflation continues to moderate.

The projected increase is not yet official, as the Social Security Administration typically determines the following year's COLA in mid-October. A 2.5% rise would translate into an average monthly benefit of \$1,968, and show up in most recipients' January benefit check.

Though a 2.5% hike would be less of an increase than the 3.2% received in 2024, it falls roughly within the bounds of the historical norm, which has averaged at about 2.6% over the past two decades. The COLA ran as low as 0.0% in 2010, 2011 and 2016, and as high as 8.7% in 2023.

The Social Security Administration sets its yearly COLA based on inflation during the third quarter, or from July through September. The agency takes the average inflation rate over that period from what's known as the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers, or CPI-W, which tracks spending by working Americans.

If that inflation rate is higher than the same period a year earlier, the COLA is adjusted upward by the difference.

Medicare Prescription Payment Plan

The Medicare Prescription Payment Plan is a new payment option in the prescription drug law that works with your current drug coverage to help you manage your out-of-pocket costs for drugs covered by your plan by spreading them across the calendar year (January–December). Starting in 2025, anyone with a Medicare drug plan or Medicare health plan with drug coverage (like a Medicare Advantage Plan with drug coverage) can use this payment option. All plans offer this payment option, and participation is voluntary.

If you select this payment option, each month you'll continue to pay your plan premium (if you have one), and you'll get a bill from your health or drug plan to pay for your prescription drugs (instead of paying the pharmacy). There's no cost to participate in the Medicare Prescription Payment Plan.

If you want to know more about this plan there is a video about this plan on the Medicare website at: [What's the Medicare Prescription Payment Plan? | Medicare](#)

The new 2025 Medicare & You 2025 has been published. This is a summary of Medicare benefits, coverage decisions, rights and protections, and answers to the most frequently asked questions about Medicare.

The Postal Service Reform Act of 2022 (PSRA) was signed into law in April 2022. Since then, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), in conjunction with the Postal Service, has been working to implement a new Postal Service Health Benefits (PSHB) Program, as required under the new law. PSHB is a new, separate program within the Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Program and will be administered by OPM. Coverage under the PSHB Program will be effective January 1, 2025. Below is a list of facts regarding the PSHB Program for current annuitants:

1. You are required to select a health insurance plan in the PSHB Program during the 2024 open season period, from November 11, 2024 – December 9, 2024.
2. PSHB plan options and premium information will be available in October 2024.
3. OPM will launch a new enrollment platform for health insurance. Information on how to make elections using the new system will be available prior to the 2024 open season.
4. If you are an **annuitant as of January 1, 2025, and not currently participating in Medicare Part B**, you ARE NOT required to enroll in Medicare Part B to continue your health insurance coverage in the new PSHB Program. Participation in Medicare Part B is voluntary; however, enrollment in Medicare Part B may reduce your overall costs for health care-related expenses and may provide greater value.
 - a. Your covered spouse and eligible family members will also not be required to enroll in Medicare Part B even if they are age 65 or older; however, enrollment in Medicare Part B may reduce overall costs for health care-related expenses and may provide greater value.
 - b. **Note:** If you are an **annuitant as of January 1, 2025, and are already enrolled in Medicare Part B**, you ARE required to remain enrolled in Medicare Part B to continue coverage under PSHB.
5. If you are an **annuitant entitled to Medicare Part A (typically at age 65) prior to January 1, 2024, and have not enrolled in Medicare Part B**, you and your covered, eligible family members may be able to participate in the special enrollment period (SEP) for Medicare Part B that starts on April 1, 2024. Those who enroll during the SEP will not need to pay the late enrollment penalty. Eligibility letters will be sent to annuitants and eligible family members in early 2024.
6. If you **retire between October 31, 2024, and December 31, 2024, and are entitled to Medicare Part A (typically at age 65)**, you will have the option to enroll in Medicare Part B during a specific eight-

month special enrollment period immediately following your retirement date. If you wish to enroll, you MUST contact the Social Security Administration (SSA) to initiate enrollment if you are over the age of 65.

7. As a general rule, spousal and family member PSHB coverage is based on the primary subscriber's eligibility. If the primary subscriber is not required to join Medicare Part B, neither will dependent family members. Likewise, if you qualify for the SEP, so will your covered family members.

From FEDSmith.com

IRS Finalizes Beneficiary RMD and 10-Year Rule on Inherited IRA

By [David Fei](#) August 26, 2024 7:10 AM

New IRS regulations clarify controversial rules around required minimum distributions and inherited IRAs.

The IRS recently released final regulations for inherited IRAs, clarifying and reaffirming controversial rules around required minimum distributions (RMDs). Simultaneously, the agency offered temporary relief for particular beneficiaries by delaying final RMD rules and waiving penalties for missed distributions in 2024.

What is the 10-Year RMD Rule, and How Does It Work?

The [SECURE Act of 2019](#) introduced a 10-year rule for most non-spouse beneficiaries, requiring them to empty inherited accounts within ten years of the original owner's death.

Two Scenarios: The IRS regulations create two distinct situations:

1. Passed Before January 1, 2020: If the original owner hasn't yet reached the age for RMDs, beneficiaries can choose to distribute the assets over their lifetime or within five years.
2. Passed in 2020 and Beyond: Beneficiaries must take annual IRA RMD, and the account needs to be depleted by the end of the 10-year period. Certain eligible designated beneficiaries may extend beyond the new 10-year rule.

They are:

- IRA account owner's spouse
- IRA account owner's minor child (10-year rule starts after they reach the age of majority)
- Individuals not 10 years younger than the IRA account owner
- Disabled beneficiary defined by IRS
- Chronically ill beneficiary defined by IRS

However, the requirement for annual RMDs in the second scenario has been a source of contention, as it wasn't explicitly stated in the *SECURE Act*. Many financial professionals and accountants advised clients that they did not need to take annual distributions as long as the inherited retirement account was depleted by the end of the 10-year period.

You may want to discuss it with your financial professional again now due to the new IRS clarification. If you have computer access read the full article at: [IRS Finalizes Beneficiary RMD And 10-Year Rule On Inherited IRA | FedSmith.com](#)

[FedSmith.com](#)

From FEDWeek

Do Federal Retirees Really Need FEHB and Medicare?

Published: [August 23, 2024](#)

By: *Dallen Haws*

If you are nearing age 65 then you will be absolutely bombarded with phone calls and mailers trying to get you to buy all kinds of Medicare plans/supplements.

To add to the confusion, federal employees have FEHB (federal employee health insurance) which means that what most Americans do won't apply to you.

With medical expenses being one of the most expensive parts of retirement, it is essential that federal employees get this one right.

If you have computer access read the full article at:

[Do Federal Retirees Really Need FEHB and Medicare? \(fedweek.com\)](#)