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House Repeals CLASS Act

On February 1st, the House voted to repeal yet another portion of the Affordable Care Act: a voluntary, long-term care insurance program known as the Community Living Assistance Services and Support Program or the CLASS Act. The vote was 267-159, with 28 Democrats in support along with 239 Republicans. The bill, H.R. 1173, *The Fiscal Responsibility and Retirement Security Act of 2011*, has been sent to the Senate where it may not see any action. However, having determined that CLASS is fiscally unsustainable, the Obama Administration has already stopped funding the implementation of the program. The program would have helped users to pay for home-based or nursing home care.

ADMINISTRATION UPDATES

IHS Director Clarifies Agency's Position on FACA

Following a November 2011 request for comments on the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) and IHS advisory committee compliance, the Director of the Indian Health Service (IHS), Dr. Yvette Roubideaux, released a "Dear Tribal Leader Letter" clarifying the Agency's position on the issue. The letter also contains a list of questions regarding FACA that the Agency is seeking comments on. Comments are due Friday, March 2, 2012.

To read the letter, [click here](#).

New Report Shows ACA Saves Medicare Patients \$2.1 Billion in Prescription Drug Costs

Nearly 3.6 million people with Medicare saved \$2.1 billion on their prescription drugs in 2011 thanks to the Affordable Care Act (ACA) according to data issued on February 2nd by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Savings for people with Medicare will increase over time. According to a [new report](#) issued from HHS, the average person with Medicare will save nearly \$4,200 by 2021 because of the law.

The Affordable Care Act provides a 50% discount on brand-name prescription drugs and this year, a 14% discount on generics. Last year, it provided a seven percent discount on covered generic medications for people who hit the



prescription drug coverage gap known as the donut hole, with 2,814,646 beneficiaries receiving \$32.1 million in savings on generics.

In 2011, the 3.6 million Americans who hit the donut hole saved an average of \$604 on the cost of their prescription drugs. Data also show that women especially benefitted from the law's provision with 2.05 million women saving \$1.2 billion on their prescription drugs. By 2020, the donut hole will be closed completely.

The new report released by HHS finds that this provision and other features of the health reform law will generate substantial savings for people with Medicare. Typical Medicare beneficiaries will save an average of nearly \$4,200 from 2011 to 2021. People with high prescription drug costs could save as much as \$16,000.

The savings are a product of provisions in the Affordable Care Act and other cost trends that:

- Decrease prescription drug costs for seniors
- Make preventive services free for everyone in Medicare
- Reduce growth in Part B premiums (for physician services)
- Reduce growth in cost-sharing under both Parts A (hospital care) and Part B.

These announcements come one day after HHS announced that in 2012, Medicare Advantage premiums have fallen by seven percent on average and enrollment has risen by about 10 percent since last year. For more details on that announcement, visit

<http://www.hhs.gov/news/press/2012pres/02/20120201a.html>

For state-by-state savings figures for the donut hole announcement, visit:

<http://www.cms.gov/Plan-Payment/>

For a fact sheet about donut hole savings, visit

http://www.cms.gov/apps/media/fact_sheets.asp

For the report regarding savings those with Medicare will see over time, visit

<http://aspe.hhs.gov/hp/reports/2012/MedicareBeneficiarySavings/ib.shtml>

UPCOMING EVENTS

HOUSE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE HEARING ON, "PROGRAMS THAT REWARD PHYSICIANS WHO DELIVER HIGH QUALITY AND EFFICIENT CARE"

DATE: FEBRUARY 7TH

TIME: 10:00 AM

LOCATION: 1100 LONGWORTH HOB
WASHINGTON, DC

HHS TRIBAL BUDGET CONSULTATION PLANNING CALL

DATE: FEBRUARY 9TH

CONFERENCE CALL NUMBER (FOR EVERY CALL)

CALL IN #: 866-421-8841

PASS CODE: 6999396

TIME: 3:00 PM EST

IHS TRIBAL SELF-GOVERNANCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

DATE: FEBRUARY 9TH AND 10TH

LOCATION: THE EMBASSY ROW HOTEL
2015 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE NW
WASHINGTON DC 20036

You are cordially invited to attend

National Indian Health Board's 29th ANNUAL CONSUMER CONFERENCE

*Celebrating
NIHB'S 40th Anniversary*

September 24- 28, 2012
DENVER, COLORADO

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