

## Announcements

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### April 2025

The Alaska Medicare Information Office has a quick presentation, the second Monday of each month, called *The Medicare Minute*, which focuses on a specific Medicare topic. After the monthly topic is presented attendees can ask Questions.

**This event** is online through Zoom. You will receive an email with details about how to join the event once you register. These are the upcoming dates and topics that will be discussed during the Medicare Monday seminars:

**April 14-** Premium-related Appeals and Troubleshooting

**May 12-** Lowering your Part D Costs

**June 9-** Part B vs. Part D Drugs

**July 14** Medicare and Durable Medical Equipment (DME)

#### **Zoom Event: Need Help Through the Medicare Maze? April 23- 5:30-7:00pm**

Interested about the basics of Medicare. The Alaska Medicare Office will go over the basics of Medicare A, B, C, D. Medigap (Medicare Supplements), and how to protect yourself from Medicare fraud and abuse. This presentation is approximately one hour followed by a 30-minute Q&A session.

**Have questions or need help registering?** Contact the Medicare Information Office at (907) 269-3680 or [hhs.medicare@alaska.gov](mailto:hhs.medicare@alaska.gov). You can also visit [their website](#) and [calendar](#) for more information.

### March 2025

On **March 5, 2025, Wednesday**, members affected by the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and the Government Pension Offset (GPO) began receiving their **one-time retroactive payment, deposited** into the bank account Social Security Administration has on file for you.

The one-time retroactive **payment will date back to January 2024**, the month when WEP and GPO no longer applied.

Social Security benefits are paid one month behind, so **most affected beneficiaries will begin receiving their new monthly benefit amount in April 2025** (for their March 2025 benefit).

Remember there are **3 areas the Social Security Fairness Act might effect:**

2025 **Taxes** that we will file in 2026

Your SSA 1099 Form for 2025 (will have this information)

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**Medicare Premiums** by moving RETIREES into a higher tax bracket, potentially trigger IRMAA surcharges

**IRMAA** is based on a two-year lookout, the 2025 increase could **affect premiums starting in 2027**

I put 2 documents on your table, **one from Kiplinger**, the **other document** begins with: **Social Security update Mar. 3 on the Fairness Act**

Since 1980 the **Alaska Health Fair** is an organization providing health education and affordable blood screenings. Last year AlaskaCare did not provide Retirees the Health Fairs as we had expected. I am providing another alternative, the [Alaska Health Fair website](https://alaskahealthfair.org), (alaskahealthfair.org) when you scroll down you can see individual testing prices and both a Men's and Women's Wellness Package with both of these prices listed.

Scrolling down further is the Location, Date & Time, event Address, & Make Appointment with a link to click.

**2025 Senior Recognition Day** is Thursday, May 8, 2025. Registration begins on **Friday, March 21<sup>st</sup>** online or by phone at (907) 450-1070.

**AlaskaCare Town Hall**—March 20<sup>th</sup> at 10am and April 17<sup>th</sup> at 10am

### February 2025

The Alaska Community Foundation has a new ***Giving Hub for Don Dewitt's Scholarship***. The address is:

[https://alaskacf.fcsuite.com/erp/donate/create/fund?funit\\_id=1240](https://alaskacf.fcsuite.com/erp/donate/create/fund?funit_id=1240)

**Social Security Fairness Act:** Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and Government Pension Offset (GPO) **update website:**

[https://www.ssa.gov/benefits/retirement/social-security-fairness-act.html?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=govdelivery&tl=2](https://www.ssa.gov/benefits/retirement/social-security-fairness-act.html?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery&tl=2)

As of Feb. 3, 2025, SSA is finalizing its plan to implement the Act. No estimated timeframe is available. On the above website, SSA will continue to provide update.

Our NEW **AlaskaCare Retiree Health Plan** went into effect January, 1, 2025. The 2025 AlaskaCare Defined Benefit Retiree Insurance Information Booklet is online [https://drb.alaska.gov/docs/booklets/DB-RetireeInsuranceBooklet WEB.pdf](https://drb.alaska.gov/docs/booklets/DB-RetireeInsuranceBooklet_WEB.pdf)

**Alaska Care Town Hall**—Feb. 20, 2025 @ 10am

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### January 2025

**Sarah Perez with Literacy Council of Alaska** is in need of volunteers to mentor clients. Literacy Council is on 517 Gaffney Road, phone 907 456-6212.

**New AlaskaCare Retiree Health Plan** information Booklet goes into effect January 1, 2025. Proposed booklet website:

[https://drb.alaska.gov/docs/booklets/AlaskaCare\\_RetireeDBBooklet\\_2025\\_FinalCandidate\\_PublicComment.pdf](https://drb.alaska.gov/docs/booklets/AlaskaCare_RetireeDBBooklet_2025_FinalCandidate_PublicComment.pdf)

**Income Related Monthly Adjustment Amount (IRMAA) Reimbursement** is ready for your Enrollment Form. This is the Alaska Retiree IRMAA website address that has information on the process:

<https://drb.alaska.gov/retiree/healthplans.html#retireeirmaa>

Now with the repeal of WEP/GOP the question is: **When will I get my Social Security benefits restored?** Steps need to be taken to recalculate Social Security benefits for roughly 2.8 million retired education employees and other public workers around the country. That may take some time, but that process starts as soon as President Biden signs the bill and the implementation date is reached. When **enacted into law**, the Social Security Fairness Act **makes payments retroactive to January 2024**. (An estimate by the **Congressional Budget Office expects recipients** who were **affected by the Windfall Elimination Provision** that their **monthly benefits to increase** by an average of \$360 by December. ~source NPR, January 6, 2025, Juliana Kim)---Social Security needs you to make sure your mailing address and direct deposit information are up to date. You can do this by checking your profile or signing up for, MySocialSecurity.

### December 2024

**On Friday Dec. 20, the Senate voted 76-20 to pass *The Social Security Fairness Act* (H.R. 82) by **repealing the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and Government Pension Offset (GPO)**. The House passed the Bill by an overwhelming majority of 327-75. **President Biden signs H.R. 82 on Sunday, Jan. 5, 2025.****

**Notice of Proposed Updates** to the **2025 AlaskaCare Retiree Health Plan Booklet** which have been posted for public comment

<https://drb.alaska.gov/news/2024/1130-notice.html>

**All comments must be received no later than 4:30 p.m. AK Time on Dec. 30, 2024**

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**You may comment on the proposed updates by submitting written comments:**

**By Mail:** State of Alaska Department of Administration  
Division of Retirement and Benefits  
PO Box 110203  
Juneau, AK 99811-0203

**By Email:** [doa.drb.alaskacare.retiree.plan@alaska.gov](mailto:doa.drb.alaskacare.retiree.plan@alaska.gov)

**A public teleconference will be held Dec. 11, 2024 at 2 p.m. AK Time**  
**Teleconference # 907 202-7104 ID# 537 078 063**

[AlaskaCare Town Hall](#) for December is next Thursday, December 19, 2024 @ 10am

### November 2024

**This is the month, November, we receive our Social Security Letters** please read very carefully since **you might be informed** that you are in the Increased Related Monthly Adjustment Amounts. **If you are subject to the Medicare Part D IRMAA surcharge, you can be reimbursed.**

<https://drb.alaska.gov/retiree/healthplans.html#retireeirmaa> discusses IRMAA and what you need to do for reimbursement

**Social Security—Cost-of-Living Adjustment Announced for 2025** COLA Set at 2.5% for 2025, the lowest since 2021—COLA will bump up estimated average Social Security retirement benefit by \$49 starting in January 2025

[AlaskaCare Town Hall](#) for November is next Thursday, November 21, 2024 @ 10am

### October 2024

[AlaskaCare Town Hall](#) for October is 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday, October 24, 2024 @ 10am

**AlaskaCare Health Matters, Fall 2024 Retiree Edition—Oct. 15, 2024**

<https://drb.alaska.gov/news/2024/0943-healthmattersRE.html>

**The Latest DRB NEWS—**A good website [up-to-date information for Retiree's](#)

**Open Enrollment for members with DVA benefits begin Oct 14, 2024 thru November 27, 2024.** This has to do with your **DENTAL BENEFITS**. There are **two PLAN options with different DENTAL coverage provisions:** the [Legacy Plan](#) and

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the Standard Plan. Visit **AlaskaCare.gov/DVA** to review your DVA coverage and make benefit elections during this time. If you are satisfied you do not have to do anything.

Visit [AlaskaCare.gov/DVA](https://AlaskaCare.gov/DVA) on October 14<sup>th</sup> to participate in DVA Open Enrollment and ends November 27, 2024.

### September 2024

**Proposed Updates to AlaskaCare Defined Benefit (DB) Retiree Health Plan**: The AK Dept. of Admin. is working with the Retiree Health Plan Advisory Board (RHPAB) to review updates to both the (DB) Retiree Health Plan and Standard DVA Plan—

- Update to eligible acupuncture services
- Addition of Preventive First Program and increase to Annual Maximum Benefit for Standard Dental Plan
- Addition of Vision Service Plan (VSP) Network to Standard Vision Plan

The proposals and summaries are available on the [Retiree Health Plan Advisory Board webpage](#) for review. **Beginning September 1, 2024**, you may comment on the proposed updates by submitting written comments **through 4:30 pm Alaska time on Sept 30, 2024**.

- **By Mail:** State of Alaska Department of Administration Division of Retirement and Benefits P.O. Box 110203
- **By Email:** [doa.drb.alaskacare.retiree.plan@alaska.gov](mailto:doa.drb.alaskacare.retiree.plan@alaska.gov)

Public teleconference will be held Thursday, Sept. 19<sup>th</sup>, at 3pm Teleconference # (907) 202-7104 ID# 504 292 414#

### Upcoming Retiree Health Plan Advisory Board Meeting

**Date:** September 12, 2024, 9 a.m. – 3 p. m.

**Location:** Video Teleconference | Anchorage Atwood 19<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Room

**Conference #:** (907) 202-7104

**ID#:** 465 999 308#

**Microsoft Teams Meeting**

**McKinney-Vento Program** After the August meeting Judy Rae took a laundry basket packed full of school supplies from Sherry Barrett and Naomi King. They bought out every supply sale around town, and the items completely filled the cart the

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McKinney-Vento staff brought down to collect the donation. All school supplies have been distributed. In addition to the goods donated, \$435 was donated for their discretionary fund use. They were overwhelmed.

For our September meeting, Sept. 11, 2024, McKinney-Vento is in need of winter gear for all levels of students: hats, gloves, or donations for purchase of additional winter gear.

**FRTA Scholarships:** As of the August 13<sup>th</sup> Executive Board Meeting, all five scholarship recipients had filed their paperwork and had the checks sent to their schools. The schools represented are UAF, Oregon State University, Colorado State University, Belmont Abbey University, and Texas A & M.

### August 2024

**Mentors needed**—If you are interested in this you need to email Shaun Kraska <mailto:shaun.kraska@k12northstar.org> as soon as possible. Let Shaun know your interest and what your area of expertise is.

**For our new members**—AlaskaCare holds Town Hall meetings every 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday @ 10 a. m. each month, lasting one-hour. You may call into the Town Hall meetings to ask your question. If you Register in Advance for the Town Hall meetings, AlaskaCare calls you automatically.

**August Town Hall** will take place August 15 @ 10 a. m. and lasts one hour. Questions about our Retiree Benefits this is the place to have your questions answered.

**Fairbanks Fall Health Fair status and report**—In July 2024 AlaskaCare Retiree Health News---Retirees were informed that the Pacific Health Coalition will no longer offer retiree plans members access to Coalition-organized health fairs beginning Fall 2024.

**Tricia Brown author of *The Queen of Fairbanks (Irene Sherman)*** will be at Noel Wien Library signing her book(s) from 1pm through 2:30pm on Saturday, August 17, 2024.

**Changes to Access your Social Security Account** is transitioning to a Login.gov to sign-in rather than SS username and password.

**Postage Stamp going up** Sunday, August 11, 2024 are going up 5 cents to 73 cents.

### July 2024

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Marilyn Nigro, Steve Heckman, Lori Mertes, Karen Shaner and Marlin Collins conducted an internal audit of FRTA Funds on Wednesday July 17, 2024.

We started July 2023 with a beginning balance of \$22,977.91 and ended June 2024 with an ending balance of \$30,919.07.

Karen let the committee know that of the five \$2,500 scholarships awarded, one has cleared the bank and 4 are outstanding.

The audit was successfully completed without exception.