

## The Link - February 2018



WEEK OF FEBRUARY 9, 2018



## NEWS & RESOURCES

- On Jan. 29, 2018, Alex Azar was sworn in as the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS). Azar has served at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services as its General Counsel (2001-2005) and then as Deputy Secretary. While Azar was Deputy Secretary at HHS, he was involved in improving the department's operations; advancing its emergency preparedness and response capabilities as well as its global health affairs activities; and helping oversee the roll-out of the Medicare Part D prescription drug program: <https://www.hhs.gov/about/leadership/secretary/alex-m-azar/index.html>
- President Trump has signed the bipartisan Recognize, Assist, Include, Support, and Engage (RAISE) Family Caregivers Act into law. The bill directs the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to develop, maintain and periodically update a National Family Caregiving Strategy. The bill also calls on HHS to convene a Family Caregiving Advisory Council to advise the department on ways to recognize and support family caregivers. This Council will be comprised of relevant federal agency representatives as well as family caregivers, older adults with long-term services and support needs, health care providers and other key players in the caregiving community: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/3759>
- The CMS Medicare-Medicaid Coordination Office (MMCO) has developed two new resource guides intended to support providers and caregivers caring for older adults living with dementia. Several recommendations are included within the resource guides including trainings and toolkits, fact sheets, publications and information hubs: [https://resourcesforintegratedcare.com/GeriatricCompetentCare/2017\\_GCC\\_Resource\\_Guides/Dementia](https://resourcesforintegratedcare.com/GeriatricCompetentCare/2017_GCC_Resource_Guides/Dementia)
- New Medicare cards will start being mailed out in April 2018. Social Security Numbers are being removed from Medicare cards to prevent fraud, fight identity theft and keep taxpayer dollars safe. CMS has updated its New Medicare Card web pages to provide new resources for beneficiaries, partners and stakeholders, including information about CMS' plan to mail the new Medicare cards in phases by geographic location, messaging guidelines and more: <https://www.cms.gov/medicare/new-medicare-card/nmc-home.html>
- The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) has 11 new modules to train the primary care workforce about dementia caregiving and help providers address caregiver needs. These modules are an addition to the Agency's Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementia's Training Curriculum: <https://bhw.hrsa.gov/grants/geriatrics/alzheimers-curriculum>

- By 2030, Medicare beneficiaries will be spending half of their Social Security benefit on out-of-pocket Medicare expenses, according to a new report from the Kaiser Family Foundation. The findings highlight the particular challenge of rising medical costs for low-income older adults: <https://www.kff.org/medicare/report/medicare-beneficiaries-out-of-pocket-health-care-spending-as-a-share-of-income-now-and-projections-for-the-future/>
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## NUTRITION SERVICES

- As a result of outreach with the ACL Nutrition Innovation Grant, the Heritage Area Agency on Aging which serves counties in east-central Iowa will be opening two congregate meal sites in Marion in March. The Lowe Park site will serve meals on Wednesdays and Thursdays, while the Marion Public Library site will serve meals on Mondays and Fridays: <http://www.heritageaaa.org/>
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## FAMILY CAREGIVER

- The National Alliance for Caregiving, a non-profit organization dedicated to research and advocacy on behalf of family caregivers, has released an advocacy report, From Insight to Advocacy: Addressing Family Caregiving as a National Public Health Issue. The report identifies actions that can be taken to understand and address the impact of family caregiving on the public's health: <http://www.caregiving.org/publichealth/>
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## DISEASE PREVENTION/ HEALTH PROMOTION

- A study published in The American Journal of Infection Control states that researchers who reviewed patient data across 21 U.S. hospitals found that evidence-based oral care protocols aimed at nonventilator hospital-acquired pneumonia (NV-HAP) prevention saved millions in hospital costs, decreased hospital stays and saved patients' lives: <http://www.ajicjournal.org/article/S0196-6553%2817%2931042-8/fulltext>
  - The Journal of the American Geriatrics Society recently published a study by researchers in the United Kingdom that found that older men with dental issues or who rated their oral health as fair to poor were “more likely to be frail than men without those issues.” In addition, the researchers found that complete tooth loss, dry mouth and additional oral health concerns were especially linked to developing frailty: <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/wol1/doi/10.1111/jgs.15175/full>
  - The National Institute on Aging has developed a website designed to help older adults quit smoking. SmokeFree60+ provides information, support and strategies that have been proven to help smokers quit: <https://www.60plus.smokefree.gov/#>
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## LEGAL PROTECTIONS

- A representative payee is a third party who is authorized to receive and manage Social Security payments for a beneficiary who isn't able to do so for themselves. Often, a creditor, such as a nursing facility or other residential facility can be appointed by the Social Security Administration (SSA) to act as a representative payee. A new Justice in Aging issue brief dives into some of the conflicts that can arise and proposes ways to strengthen the oversight and protections within the representative payee system: <http://www.justiceinaging.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Skilled-Nursing-Facilities-and-Other-Creditors-Acting-As-Representative-Payees.pdf>



## ELDER ABUSE PREVENTION

- The National Center on Elder Abuse (NCEA) has released two new public service announcement videos on strengthening the structure of justice to prevent elder abuse. These videos are helpful resources to share with professional constituencies and public audiences to spread the word about practical solutions in preventing and addressing elder abuse: <https://www.youtube.com/user/NCEAatUCI>
- A recent National Council on Aging blog focuses on financial exploitation scams that are making the rounds now and provides tips on how older adults can stay alert and report suspicious activity: <https://www.ncoa.org/blog/3-most-popular-scams-targeting-seniors/>
- The Iowa Department of Justice has issued a new issue of *Consumer Focus* that talks about schemes that target consumers by offering "free" pain relief creams and other medical products: <https://www.iowaattorneygeneral.gov/newsletter-preview/66/6E1988FAE50BFBBAAAD957E73F3AF09CE/>



## UPCOMING EVENTS

### **Survey: "Understanding Healthcare Accessibility and Its Impact on the Elderly"**

This brief online survey will assist researchers at the University of Iowa School of Social Work gain a better understanding of the barriers facing senior citizens in our community. Responses will be kept completely confidential, and no personally-identifying information will be collected.

[Take the Survey](#)

### **Webinar: "Suspicious Activity Reports and Their Role in Identifying and Remediating Elder Financial Exploitation"**

Wednesday, Feb. 7 (1-2:15 p.m. CT)

[More Information](#) | [Register](#)

### **Webinar: "State of the States in Aging and Disability"**

Wednesday, Feb. 14 (2-3 p.m. CT)

[More Information](#) | [Register](#)

### **Webinar: "Innovations in Medicaid Managed Long-Term Services and Supports: How Health Plans are Providing Support to Family Caregivers"**

Wednesday, Feb. 28 (Noon-1 p.m. CT)

[More Information](#) | [Register](#)



*The mission of the Iowa Department on Aging is to develop a comprehensive, coordinated and cost-effective system of long-term living and community support services that helps older Iowans maintain health and independence in their homes and communities.*

