
HCFACMS

ALUMNI NEWS

WINTER 2016 (Vol. 23 No. 1)

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Well, the holidays are behind us and WINTER is upon us. The New Year is underway and the days are getting longer and we all are looking forward to SPRING and the end of this WINTER that we thought would never come and then it arrived with a vengeance. Now it seems like the ground has been white forever.

I am happy to begin yet another one-year term as your President. I am also very pleased to report that 122 of our members and friends had a terrific time at the Holiday Luncheon (see article inside) and I encourage everyone to join in future activities of this nature.

I am also pleased that the association continues to attract new members and membership renewals are coming in. On page 2 you will see a list of 11 new members, bringing the membership up to an all time high of 745. In this issue we are continuing the 2016 membership renewal process for those who need to do so. Dues remain at \$5.00 per year and we hope you will take advantage of the opportunity to renew at this time, while it is fresh in your mind. And you can renew for any number of years. **Members with expiration dates of 12/31/15 or earlier need to renew, members with expiration dates later than 12/31/15 do not.**

In this issue you will also find items about the COLA Count, the Board of Directors, the Alumni St. Patrick's Day Celebration on March 22 (Flyer also enclosed), Medicare Rates, Social Security Tax Rates, the Social Security Earnings Test, and the latest in CMS senior staff and organizational news. As usual, the Komedie Korner makes another heralded appearance. There are lots of items that hopefully will be of interest to you.

I want to wish you all a Wonderful New Year and continued happiness, good health and prosperity in retirement.



William L Engelhardt

HCFA/CMS ALUMNI NEWS

Published four times a year for the members of the Health Care Financing Administration /Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (HCFA/CMS) Alumni Association

PRESIDENT

William L. Engelhardt

VICE PRESIDENT

Lynn T. Strange

SECRETARY

Lillian H. Lehnert

TREASURER

Herbert B. Shankroff

OTHER DIRECTORS

LuAnne DiStefano
William A. Grant
Beverly Sgroi

OFFICE ASSISTANTS

Darlene Summerfield

DUE DATES FOR FUTURE ISSUES

Spring Issue – March 31, 2016

Summer Issue – June 30, 2016

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<http://www.cms.hhs.gov/About-CMS/Career-Information/CMSAlumni/index.html>

NEW MEMBERS

The Association extends a hearty "Welcome Aboard" to the following new members:

John Amrhein
Susan Anderson
Mitch Croll
William Dowdy
Jean Young Faulcon
Bob Fortenbaugh
Karen A Fedi
John Michener
Thel Moore, Jr.
Chioma Obi
Donna Witts

We now have 745 active members.

2016 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Board of Directors re-appointed incumbent board members Lillian Lehnert, Herbert Shankroff, and Lynn Strange to another two-year term, ending December 31, 2017. The Board also appointed Beverly Sgroi to fill the unexpired term of Richard Faulstich, who died on October 4, 2015. That term ends December 31, 2016. The 3 incumbent members officially began their new two-year term at the Board Meeting on January 8, 2016.

The Board also unanimously elected the following officers, to serve for the calendar year 2016:

President – William L. Engelhardt
Vice President – Lynn T. Strange
Treasurer – Herbert B. Shankroff
Secretary – Lillian H. Lehnert

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL AND PAYMENT OF YEAR 2016 DUES

We are now continuing the collection of the annual dues for the year 2016, covering the period of January 1, 2016 through December 31, 2016. Members receiving this issue via e-mail will have already received a separate e-mail dealing with membership renewals.

Members who receive this issue in hard copy via the mail, because we do not have an e-mail address for you or because you advised us that you are not computer savvy enough to handle an electronic newsletter, **will receive a renewal form only if they need one.** Renewal forms as needed were included with the snail mail copies of the FALL 2015 issue of the HCFA/CMS Alumni News so this is a second solicitation. To facilitate keeping track of individual enrollment periods, the mailing labels used to send the HCFA/CMS Alumni News contain the member's I.D. Number and the date of expiration of enrollment, i.e., 12/31/15. **Those with a date later than 12/31/15 do NOT need to renew at this time. If you have already paid your 2016 dues you should NOT find an enrollment form included with this issue, unless we include one by mistake, ha.** We have reluctantly dropped from the membership rolls snail mail recipients with expiration dates prior to 12/31/15. **Some 85 delinquent e-mail connected members may soon suffer the same fate.**

When using the form to mail in your dues, please note any changes in information so we may update our records (i.e. address, e-mail, phone number, etc.). We no longer provide return envelopes for submitting renewal forms. Since we cannot provide them to members receiving this

electronically, it wouldn't be fair to do so for the snail mail recipients.

Also responding to popular request, we continue to accept membership enrollment (or re-enrollment) for multiple years. Dues are \$5.00 per year and members can sign up for any number of years. Because the dues are nominal, there are no discounts for multiple year enrollments and there is no "lifetime" membership. Multiple year enrollments are available as a convenience to members.

MEMBERSHIP SEARCH

As always, we acknowledge that there are many HCFA/CMS retirees that we have not been able to reach to tell them about the Alumni Association and invite them to join. We continue to ask for your assistance in spreading the message about us to them. If you know of any retiree that is not a member, please let them know about us and tell them how to contact us by telephone, snail mail or e-mail (all of that information can be found on page 2 of this issue). We will be very happy to send, either electronically or via snail mail, anyone the enrollment form and further information about membership. Since we no longer have an office at CMS, the telephone and e-mail contact information on page 2 refers to William L Engelhardt, President.

ALUMNI EVENTS DURING 2016

Mark your calendars so you don't miss any of the following exciting events:

March 22, 2016 – Tuesday
St. Patrick's Day Party*

ALUMNI EVENTS DURING 2016
(Continued):

June 29, 2016 – Wednesday
Summer Picnic*

October 5, 2016 – Wednesday
Oktoberfest Party*

December 7, 2016 – Wednesday
Holiday Luncheon - Turf Valley Country
Club, Ellicott City MD

* Held at the home of Alumni Member
Lillian Lehnert in Fulton MD.

Fliers announcing each event will be
released with appropriate issues of the
HCFA/CMS Alumni News, but now you
know to set aside the dates if you'll be
interested in attending any of these popular
events.

SOCIAL SECURITY ALUMNI
ASSOCIATION

We'd like to again remind members that we
also have a link to our sister alumni, the
Social Security Alumni Association, web
site on our web site. The web site has been
completely revamped and vastly improved.
The actual URL for it is
"<http://www.ssaanational.org>" but you can
just click on the link on our page. Many
HCFA and/or CMS retirees also worked for
the Social Security Administration
somewhere along the line, and are eligible
for membership in both alumni associations.

SOCIAL SECURITY ALUMNI
ASSOCIATION BLOG

Joe Vaughan, Former President of the Social
Security Alumni Association (SSAA) has
continued to remind us that HCFA/CMS
folks are certainly welcome to participate in
any Social Security Alumni activity. Many
of us are eligible to, and some of us actually
do, belong to both alumni associations. The
SSAA also has a blog. Go to
<http://ssaanews.blogspot.com/> to check it
out. If you are a former SSA worker you
just might be interested enough to join the
SSAA.

FEAA

We'd like to remind members that we do
have a link to the Federal Employee
Activities Association (FEAA) on our web
site. The actual URL for it is
["http://www.federaleaa.org/News1.html"](http://www.federaleaa.org/News1.html) but
you can just click on the link on our page.
The people listed as "Our Team," EAA
Directory of Employees, are all at CMS.
The web site also says, "The EAA was
formed in 1942 for the welfare and
recreation of our employee-members. The
EAA supports and donates to many Federal
sponsored charities and programs. The EAA
strives to provide our members with many
different benefits. We currently have an
EAA service center within the CMS
building."

That office is located near the Copy Center
in the Lower Lobby area of the Central
Building.

HCFA/CMS retirees are eligible to
participate in discount purchases and to take

FEAA (Continued):

advantage of everything the EAA has to offer.

HOLIDAY LUNCHEON

122 Alumni members and friends came to the Holiday Luncheon in the Cameo Ballroom at the beautiful Turf Valley Country Club on December 9 and everyone had a wonderful time. Everyone enjoyed the event and the place was abuzz with happy people renewing old acquaintances. The setting in a banquet room was great and the ambiance was fantastic. We hope to have a similarly great experience and see even more of you at next year's Holiday Luncheon, to be held on Wednesday, December 7, 2016 in the Wedgewood Ballroom.

COLA COUNT

Through three months of the counting period toward the January 2015 federal retiree cost of living adjustment, the inflation index used to set that adjustment stands at minus 1.47 percentage points below the 2014 third quarter average base index of 234.242, following decreases of 0.12% in October, 0.28% in November, and 0.4% in December. The current index stands at 230.791. The annual COLA count measures the change in the index's average from base period third calendar quarter to the latest. Since there was no COLA in 2015, 2014 is still the base period. There are nine months left in the counting period. Should the count finish in negative territory for the full 12 months, benefits would be frozen but not reduced. That happened twice in recent years.

ST. PATRICK'S DAY CELEBRATION

For the third year in a row, the HCFA/CMS Alumni Association is sponsoring a St. Patrick's Day celebration and Alumni Member Lillian Lehnert has again donated her home for the merriment. This year's celebration will be on Tuesday, March 22, 2016. See the enclosed Flyer for all of the details.

MEDICARE RATES

Most federal retirees elect to have Medicare, which primarily covers non-hospital costs, even though they typically also have FEHB coverage in retirement because there are certain gaps in each that the other covers; for those with both, FEHB acts effectively as a "Medigap" plan, stepping in as the second payer for costs not covered by Original Medicare. For 2016, the monthly Part B premium—which is the basic cost regardless of whether they are in the traditional fee for service design or one of the many alternatives--will remain \$104.90 for the roughly 70 percent of enrollees who have their premium deducted from their Social Security benefit. Because there was no 2016 Social Security benefit COLA, they are held harmless and cannot have their premium increased. Those roughly 30 percent of enrollees who do not receive a Social Security benefit, or already pay a higher premium because of high earnings, or are new enrollees, are not held harmless. Those who were paying a premium of \$104.90 would have been increased to about \$159.30 but Congress limited their increase to \$121.80. Those with annual taxable incomes above \$85,000 for single filers and \$170,000 for joint filers also pay at that rate plus surcharges that range from about \$50 to

\$270 a month. The Part B annual deductible

MEDICARE RATES (Continued):

will rise from \$147 to \$166 for all enrollees.

Medicare Part A, which primarily covers hospitalization-related costs, requires a premium only for enrollees who did not have at least 40 calendar quarters of covered employment. For most, the main cost of interest is the hospitalization deductible, which rose from \$1,260 to \$1,288 in 2016 for each benefit period.

SOCIAL SECURITY TAX RATES

FEDweek

The Social Security withholding "FICA" tax of 6.2 percent still applies to salary up to \$118,500. For FERS employees, the tax cuts off at that figure but CSRS Offset employees continue paying it, with the money going into the federal retirement fund instead. Regular CSRS employees don't pay Social Security taxes; they pay into the federal retirement fund only. There is no limit on the 1.45 percent Medicare tax paid by all employees, a tax that sometimes is presented together with the FICA tax and labeled as the Social Security tax, even though only the FICA portion goes to Social Security.

SOCIAL SECURITY EARNINGS TEST

FEDweek

For those drawing Social Security benefits, the earnings test applying to beneficiaries aged 62 through "full retirement age," currently 66, will remain 15,720. Those beneficiaries lose \$1 in Social Security benefits for every \$2 in earnings through employment or self-employment above the

limit. A separate earnings test applies only to earnings for months in the year an

individual reaches full retirement age but prior to the individual attaining that age. One dollar in benefits will be withheld for every \$3 in earnings above \$41,880. There is no limit on earnings beginning the month an individual attains full retirement age. And for purposes of determining the benefit offset under the windfall elimination provision--which can reduce Social Security benefits of CSRS retirees who worked long enough in each system to qualify for a benefit from each--the annual "substantial earnings" minimum will remain \$22,050.

**SENIOR MANAGEMENT
ANNOUNCEMENTS**

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

Dr. Mandy Cohen, CMS Chief of Staff, has taken on the additional responsibility of the position of Chief Operating Officer, replacing the retired Deb Taylor. Prior to accepting her role as Chief of Staff, Mandy held a number of different roles across the agency, including CCIIO Deputy Director, Senior Advisor to the Administrator, and Group Director in the Innovation Center.

Karen Jackson, currently the Deputy Director of the Innovation Center (CMMI), has taken on the position of Acting Deputy Chief Operating Officer. Prior to joining CMMI, Karen was the Director of the Center for Medicare's Medicare Contractor Management Group.

In support of these changes, **Tim Gronniger** has been appointed as the new Deputy Chief of Staff and **Lisa Watkins** has been named

as a Senior Advisor.

**CENTER FOR PROGRAM
INTEGRITY (CPI)**

In a reorganization of responsibilities, the Medicare Fee-for-Service (FFS) medical review and recovery audit program, formerly administered by the Office of Financial Management (OFM), will be aligned to other program integrity (PI) efforts within CPI. Program payment accuracy measurement and reporting will continue to be a key focus area in OFM. The components going from OFM to CPI shall continue to coordinate with OFM on findings and corrective actions based on the annual error rate findings.

**CENTER FOR CLINICAL
STANDARDS and QUALITY (CCSQ)**

Dr. Kate Goodrich has been appointed to the position of Director of CCSQ. Kate previously served in the role of Director, Quality Measurement & Value-Based Incentives Group (QMVIG) (previously called the Quality Measurement and Health Assessment Group) since August 2012. Prior to her role in QMVIG, Kate served as the Senior Advisor to the Director of CCSQ and the CMS Chief Medical Officer. Prior to this she served as a Senior Medical Officer in the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation.

Kate is a graduate of the Robert Wood Johnson Clinical Scholars Program at Yale University. She was on the faculty at the George Washington University (GWU) School of Medicine and served as division director for Hospital Medicine. She also continues to practice clinical medicine as a

hospitalist and associate professor of medicine at GWU Hospital.

**FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT GROUP
FMG) IN CMCS**

Kristan Fan has been appointed to the position of Deputy Director of the Financial Management Group (FMG) in the Centers for Medicaid and CHIP Services (CMCS). Kristin has been with CMS since 1994 and has spent the majority of her time working in the Medicaid program. She has extensive experience with health care-related taxes and other Medicaid financing requirements. She has a Bachelor of Arts degree with a concentration in economics from Loyola University in Maryland.

**OFFICE OF ENTERPRISE DATA AND
ANALYTICS (OEDA)**

Niall Brennan has been appointed as the Chief Data Officer and Director of the Office of Enterprise Data and Analytics (OEDA). Prior to joining CMS, Niall worked at the Brookings Institution, the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission, the Congressional Budget Office, The Urban Institute, and Price Waterhouse Coopers. He is a graduate of University College Dublin, and earned a master's degree in Public Policy from Georgetown University.

**CENTER FOR CONSUMER
INFORMATION AND INSURANCE
OVERSIGHT (CCIIO)**

Karen Shields has been appointed to the position of Deputy Center and Operations Director for the Center for Consumer Information and Insurance Oversight (CCIIO). She joined CMS in 2009 and

previously served as the Director of the Consumer Information and Insurance

CENTER FOR CONSUMER INFORMATION AND INSURANCE OVERSIGHT (CCIIO) (Continued):

Systems Group in the Office of Technology Solutions (OTS) and as OTS Director. Prior to joining CMS in 2009, Karen has provided over 30 years of leadership in the form of IT operations and customer support to the Federal, State and Private industry. Karen worked for Lockheed Martin supporting DOD, the Department of the Treasury, the Social Security Administration, and CMS.

OFFICE OF SECURITY AND SUPPORT OPERATIONS

Elizabeth (Liz) Mack has been appointed to the position of Deputy Director of the Office of Security and Support Operations (OSSO). For the past year, Liz was the Director of the Division of Performance and Organizational Programs in the Office of Human Capital. Liz previously served as the Senior Advisor to the Director of OOM. Prior to working in OOM, Liz served as the Director of the Division of Budget Formulation in the Office of Financial Management (OFM). Prior to joining CMS, Liz held a series of management positions in private managed care organizations. Liz is a graduate of Towson State University, and the America's Health Insurance Plans (AHIP) Fellows program.

SENIOR EXECUTIVE SERVICE

Jeffrey Grant has joined the ranks of the

Senior Executive Service. Jeff Grant has worked on ACA financial programs since July 2010, first in the Office of Consumer

Information and Insurance Oversight, and now in CCIIO. Jeff has over 22 years of experience in Federal health insurance programs, primarily on Medicare managed care payment policy and operations. Jeff previously served Senior Vice President for Client Services at Health Risk Partners, LLC. He is a retired Naval Reservist with 22 years of service. Jeff has a B.A in History from the University of Michigan and a Masters in Public Administration from The George Washington University.

OFFICE OF ACQUISITION AND GRANTS MANAGEMENT (OAGM)

Derrick Heard has been appointed as the Acting Director of the Office of Acquisition and Grants Management (OAGM) due to the retirement of Director Daniel Kane. Derrick has served as OAGM's Deputy Director for the past 3 years. Derrick has over 25 years of experience in federal government procurement, and has worked at CMS for the past 14 years.

Don Knode has been appointed as the Acting Deputy Director of the Office of Acquisition and Grants Management (OAGM). Don has been serving as OAGM's Director of the Information Technology Contracts Group for the past 3 years. Don previously served as the Director for the Medicare and Medicaid IT Support Contracts division. He has over 30 years of experience in federal government procurement, and has worked at CMS for the past 10 years.

KOMEDY KORNER

YOU KNOW YOU ARE OVER THE HILL WHEN:

1. You find yourself beginning to like accordion music.
2. You're sitting on a park bench and a Boy Scout comes up and helps you cross your legs.
3. Lawn care has become a big highlight of your life.
4. You tune into the easy listening station...on purpose.
5. You discover that your measurements are now small, medium and large...In that order.
6. You light the candles on your birthday cake and a group of campers form a circle and start singing Cumbaya.
7. You keep repeating yourself.
8. You start video taping daytime game shows.
9. At the airport, they ask to check your bags...and you're not carrying any luggage.
10. You wonder why you waited so long to take up macrame.
11. Your Insurance Company has started sending you their free calendar...a month at a time.
12. At cafeterias, you complain that the gelatin is too tough.
13. Your new easy chair has more options than your car.
14. When you do the "Hokey Pokey" you put your left hip out...and it stays out.
15. One of the throw pillows on your bed is a hot water bottle.
16. Conversations with people your own age often turn into "dueling ailments."
17. You keep repeating yourself.
18. It takes a couple of tries to get over a speed bump.
19. You discover the words, "whippersnapper," "scalawag" and "by-cracky" creeping into your vocabulary.
20. You're on a TV game show and you decide to risk it all and go for the rocker.
21. You begin every other sentence with, "Nowadays..."
22. You run out of breath walking DOWN a flight of stairs.
23. You look both ways before crossing a room.
24. Your social security number only has three digits.
25. You keep repeating yourself.
26. You come to the conclusion that your worst enemy is gravity.
27. You go to a Garden Party and you're mainly interested in the garden.

YOU KNOW YOU ARE OVER THE HILL WHEN: (Continued):

28. You find your mouth making promises your body can't keep.
29. The waiter asks how you'd like your steak...and you say "pureed."
30. At parties you attend, "regularity" is considered the topic of choice.

MEDICAL CHECKUP

An 80-year old man walked into the doctor's office for his regular check-up.

The doctor said to him, "Ahh, Ted, how are you feeling?"

"Great," said the old man. "I have an 18-year old wife, and she's pregnant with my child."

The doctor gave a concerned look and said to Ted, "Ted, let me tell you a story. See, I have this hunter friend and one early morning, he went out hunting, but was in such a hurry that he grabbed his umbrella instead of his gun.

So, as he was hunting, he spotted a lion. He aimed at the lion with his umbrella and shot at it. Bam! The lion fell dead to the ground."

"What?!" cried the old man. "Why? That's impossible! Someone else must have shot the lion."

"Exactly!" said the doctor.

LIKE A NEWBORN BABY

Two elderly gentlemen from a retirement center were sitting on a bench under a tree when one turned to the other and said, "Slim, I'm 83 years old now and I'm just full of aches and pains. I know you're about my age. How do you feel?"

Slim said, "I feel just like a newborn baby."

"Really!? Like a new-born baby!?"

"Yep. No hair, no teeth, and I think I just wet my pants."

PEER PRESSURE

A reporter interviewed a 104-year-old man.

"And what do you think is the best thing about being 104," the reporter asked?

"No peer pressure," he replied.

THE FROG

A guy was 72 years old and he loved to fish. He was sitting in his boat the other day when he heard a voice say, "Pick me up."

He looked around and couldn't see anyone. He thought he was dreaming when he heard the voice say again, "Pick me up." He looked in the water floating on the top, was a frog.

The man said, "Are you talking to me?"

The frog said, "Yes, I'm talking to you. Pick me up then, kiss me and I'll turn into

THE FROG (Continued):

the most beautiful woman you have ever seen. I'll make sure that all your friends are envious and jealous because I will be your bride!"

The man looked at the frog for a short time, reached over, picked it up carefully and placed it in his front pocket.

The frog said, "Hey, are you nuts? Didn't you hear what I said? I said kiss me and I will be your beautiful bride."

He opened his pocket, looked at the frog and said, "Nah, at my age I'd rather have a talking frog."

With age comes wisdom.

THE PIG!

Walking home one night, this guy heard a, "Psst! Psst!-give me a hand with this pig would you?"

Looking into the shadows the guy saw his neighbor holding onto a restless and agitated pig. "What the heck are you planning to do with that," he asked?

"I'm carrying it indoors and putting in the bath tub."

"Why do you wanna do a crazy thing like that?"

"Well, you see, it's my wife. She is one of those women who knows EVERYTHING! I

tell her that the price of petrol has shot up again...she says I know! I tell her there is more trouble in the East again ... she says I

know! I tell her Francis down the street is getting a divorce and she knows that, too.

Well, tomorrow morning, since she always gets up before me, I'll wait for her to come running to me screaming "THERE'S A PIG IN THE BATH! THERE'S A PIG IN BATH!"

And I'll just turn to her and say, "Yeah, I know!"

WHAT'S FOR SALE?

Two businessmen in a new shopping mall were sitting down for a break in their soon-to-be new shop. As yet, the shop wasn't ready, with only a few shelves set up.

One said to the other, "I bet any minute now some pensioner is going to walk by, put their face to the window, and ask what we're selling."

No sooner were the words out of his mouth when, sure enough, a curious old woman walked to the window, had a peek, and in a soft voice asked, "What are you selling here?"

One of the men replied sarcastically, "We're selling ass-holes."

Without skipping a beat, the old dear said, "Must be doing well. Only two left!"

Lesson here:

Don't mess with old people!!!

OBITUARIES

PAUL GREENBERG

Submitted by Peggy Sparr

Paul Greenberg, one of our CMS Federal surveyors from the Denver Regional Office, Region 8, who had retired (I think) about 5 years or so ago), died on Saturday 12/5/15 at a Colorado hospice. According to his wife Pat, Paul had requested that there be no funeral, but Paul was quite involved with an amazing, schnauzer rescue organization, so if anyone wanted to honor him in a small way, Pat said that he or she could make a small contribution to: Vintage Dog Rescue, 11757 West Ken Caryl Avenue, Suite 276, Littleton CO 80127-3719. Expressions of sympathy can be sent to Pat at their home: 3013 East 148th Place, Thornton, CO 80602-8802, or by email at: paulgreenberg@q.com.

IN MEMORIAM

**The Alumni Association respectfully acknowledges
the passing of the following
Alumni/Employees/Spouses and expresses its
sympathy to family member**

**THOMAS “TOM” BRACKEN (10/23/15)*
HELENE M FREDEKING (10/8/15)**
PAUL GREENBERG (12/5/15)***
KENNETH KOPPENHOEFER (11/3/15)**
KAREN MILHORN (11/4/15)****
PATRICIA ANN STOUT-HRABAL(10/31/15)****

* HCFA Retiree

** HCFA/CMS Alumni Member

*** HCFA/CMS Retiree – Region 8 – Denver CO

**** Wife of HCFA/CMS Alumni Member Ronald A Milhorn

**If you are aware of any other deaths of Alumni please notify the editorial staff
February 2016**