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# HCFA/CMS

## *ALUMNI NEWS*

SUMMER 2013 (Vol. 19 No. 3)

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Well, Memorial Day and the 4<sup>th</sup> of July have come and gone and Labor Day seems right around the corner. Let's all enjoy the best of the rest of the summer.

I am pleased that the association continues to attract new members. On page 3 you will see a list of 16 new members, bringing the current membership to an all time high of 695. By providing a Member Directory, a quarterly newsletter, and e-mail messages about happenings at CMS, we promote a continuing connection between CMS (formerly HCFA) and its retirees, both at the central office and regional office levels. We certainly strive to provide varying information of interest to all of our retirees.

In this issue you will find items about the COLA Count (looks like so far we are actually in line for a 1.3% COLA), a report on the successful Spring/Summer Cookout, a report in this issue and a separate flier about, an OKTOBERFEST in SEPTEMBER on September 18, a piece on phased retirement, and senior management announcements. We also feature an item about the new Federal Employee Activities Association, which replaces the Social Security Administration Employee Activities Association, and an item about a new patient Network Web established by the FDA. We again serve up some whimsical pieces in the KomedY Korner. There are lots of items that hopefully will be of interest to you.

We are also enclosing a new 2013 Member Directory, as we try to do with each Summer issue of the HCFA/CMS Alumni News.

I want to wish you all a Wonderful Rest Of The Summer 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

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**DUE DATES FOR FUTURE ISSUES**

Fall Issue – September 27, 2013

Winter Issue – December 27, 2013

Send material to:

HCFA/CMS Alumni News  
P.O. Box 47564  
Baltimore, MD 21244-7564

TELEPHONE: 410-786-3918

FAX: 410-786-3898

E-MAIL:

[HCFAALUM@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:HCFAALUM@cms.hhs.gov)

INTERNET:

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

### **NEW MEMBERS**

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

Burke L Barrett  
Roger Buchanan  
Sydney P Galloway  
Barbara Greenberg  
Mary Homans  
Marlene C Kidd  
Steven Lisker  
Raquel Lugo  
Kathleen McCabe  
Robb Miller  
Harry A Mirach  
Richard Morrison  
Thomas Reilly  
Wayne Schreiber  
Mary E Warren  
George H Wilson

We now have 695 active 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. And Bill Engelhardt says you can always e-mail him personally at [wengelhardt@comcast.net](mailto:wengelhardt@comcast.net) for faster response (as the office e-mail is only accessed weekly).

### **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 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, President of the Social Security Alumni Association (SSAA) has reminded us again 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 has developed 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.

### **SOCIAL SECURITY ASSOCIATION RETIRED PERSONS**

There is also a web site created by and for Social Security Administration Retired Persons. It is a website for SSA retirees and employees who worked for SSA, but retired from other agencies (like CMS). Current employees are also invited to visit often and to join the mail list. The ssarp.org administrator is Stanley LeBlanc, Dallas Region, who retired June 3, 2003. Retirees with the support of SSA employees began the site, but it is not an official SSA site. There is an email communication list for those who subscribe. The ssarp.org administrator is Stanley LeBlanc, Dallas Region, who retired June 3, 2003. A username and password is needed to access some of the sections and you can obtain it by sending an e-mail request to [retired@ssarp.org](mailto:retired@ssarp.org). Check it out at:

<http://www.ssarp.org>

### **SSA EAA NOW FEDERAL EAA**

The long time Social Security Administration Employee Activities Association (SSAEAA) has been replaced by the Federal Employee Activities Association (FEAA), serving Federal employees nationwide. The web site can be accessed at: <http://www.federaleaa.org/News1.html> and the people listed as “Our Team,” EAA Directory of Employees, are all at CMS. That page of 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 advantage of everything the EAA has to offer.

### **COLA COUNT**

Through nine months of the counting period toward the January 2014 federal retiree cost of

living adjustment, the inflation index used to set that adjustment stands at 1.35 percentage points.

The new CPI-W figure for June 2013 was 230.002, 1.35% percent higher than the average CPI-W for the third-quarter of 2012, which was 226.936. The 2012 third-quarter average is the reference figure for determining the 2014 COLA. The annual COLA count measures the change in the index's average from one-third calendar quarter to the next. October, November, December saw modest drops in the COLA count but January, February and March each saw a gain. April saw a decrease of 0.2%, May saw an increase of 0.2% and June saw an increase of 0.3% ending up with a net gain of 1.35% for the counting period. There are three months left in the counting period. So far, we have a 2014 COLA of 1.3%.

### **SPRING SUMMER COOKOUT**

Some 56 Alumni members and friends (a record setting number) signed up for the spring/summer cookout at the home of alumni member Lillian Lehnert in Fulton, Maryland on June 13. Unfortunately, the combination of an accident on the Baltimore Beltway and a severe weather forecast reduced the attendance to 31. However, the weather in Fulton turned out to be rain free for the duration of the picnic and everyone had a wonderful time. Lillian was a most gracious host and we can never thank her enough for her hospitality. Many of the partygoers brought hot or cold covered dishes and/or desserts. Food was plentiful and fantastic. Allan Platt cooked up the meat in fine fashion and the liquid refreshment was in good supply. A lot of reminiscing, story telling and just great conversation filled the air. We hope to repeat the wonderful experience with another great picnic next year. We hope to see even more of you next year.

### **OKTOBERFEST**

The Spring/Summer Cookout was such a huge success that Lillian Lehnert has graciously offered to host an Oktoberfest on Wednesday, September 18, 2013. The enclosed flier provides the details and contains the signup form. Plan to celebrate the Fall Festival and the joys of retirement From Noon until 4:00 p.m. on September 18. Say hello to old friends and just have a wonderful time. The menu will consist of wursts, hot dogs, potato salad, beans, sauerkraut, beer, and German desserts.

### **HOLIDAY LUNCHEON ALERT**

The 17th annual Alumni Holiday Luncheon will take place at the Turf Valley Country Club on Thursday, December 12, 2013. We have outgrown the capacity of Alexandra's Restaurant so this year's event will be in the Cameo Room. More details and a flyer will be included with the FALL issue of the HCFA/CMS Alumni News.

## **PHASED RETIREMENT IN, HIGHER CONTRIBUTIONS OUT**

From FEDweek Weekly Newsletter

In combining and passing two high-priority bills, Congress dropped several proposals to require higher retirement contributions by all employees but backed a plan to create a "phased retirement" authority. Bills extending some transportation programs and a student loan rate reduction were merged, but the final version that has now been signed by President Obama (P.L. 112-141) does not include a higher contributions requirement that had been proposed in each as a revenue raiser – in one version, an additional 1.2 percent of salary, in another 1.5, both phased in. However, the measure does include language that the Senate initially added to the transportation bill and that a House committee passed separately, allowing agencies to offer retirement-eligible employees the opportunity to continue working part-time while drawing both a proportionate salary and a proportionate annuity, without reduction.

The presumption in the phased retirement language is that an affected retiree typically would work half-time but the working time could range between one to four days a week. Similarly, the presumption is that such persons would spend a fifth of their working time mentoring younger employees, but that also could be waived. When the individual fully retired, the annuity would be recalculated to take the additional service into account. Due to the complexities involving various benefits issues, getting such a program operating is expected to take some time, however, potentially around a year after enactment, according to a recent CBO analysis. That report also projected that the benefit would be used relatively sparsely, by 1,000 retirees a year, who would average working three years in phased retirement status. However, even at that rate, CBO projected 10-year savings in reduced retirement benefits and increased income into the federal retirement fund from continued employment totaling \$450 million—a key factor in the plan's enactment.

## **FDA PATIENT NETWORK WEB SITE**

A new patient Network Web site, <http://www.patientnetwork.fda.gov>, has been established by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The site gives patients and advocates a bigger voice in medical product regulation, which includes drugs, devices, and biologics.

The Web site will:

- Educate the community about FDA regulatory and policy issues, the medical product development lifecycle, mechanisms in place to provide stakeholder input, Federal Register notices, and public meetings.
- Encourage patients and advocates to communicate with FDA.
- Show how patient advocates can serve on FDA working groups, become Patient Representatives, speak at meetings, and more. This is one way the FDA hopes to expand inclusion of the patient perspective in FDA initiatives, problem-solving, decision-making, and medical product development, review and approval.

The new Web site provides a wealth of patient-friendly information on drug and device development and approval, clinical trials, latest treatment options, important safety information and much more. Useful interactive tools help visitors of the site find “Approved Drugs at FDA,” and “Search for a Clinical Trial.”

This Web site also is home to the Patient Representative Program, where members of the public can apply to sit on official FDA Advisory Committees and act as consultants during the drug and device review processes.

## **SENIOR MANAGEMENT ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **MARILYN TEVERNER APPOINTED AS CMS ADMINISTRATOR**

To: All CMS Staff  
From: Secretary Sebelius

Wednesday May 18, 2013

Colleagues,

I'm pleased to announce that the Senate voted today to confirm Marilyn Tavenner as Administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) at the Department of Health and Human Services, making her the first CMS Administrator to be confirmed in over nine years. Marilyn joined the Department in February of 2010 as Principal Deputy Administrator and has served as Acting Administrator since December 2011.

Marilyn's qualifications for this position are unparalleled. As Principal Deputy Administrator and Acting Administrator, Marilyn has overseen policy development and implementation as well as management and operations at CMS for over three years. Marilyn's extensive federal experience is augmented by decades of work at the state and local level. A former Secretary of Health and Human Resources for the Commonwealth of Virginia, Chief Executive Officer for one of the nation's largest hospital management companies, President of the Virginia Hospital Association, and as a Registered Nurse, Marilyn brings with her a breadth of experience and expertise from virtually all angles of health care policy and delivery.

I am so thankful for Marilyn's leadership and service to the Department thus far and look forward to continuing our important work together. Please join me in congratulating Marilyn on her confirmation.

Sincerely,  
Kathleen Sebelius

### **CMS CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER**

Michelle Snyder has been appointed to the position of Chief Operating Officer in CMS. Michelle has held various leadership positions across Government including CMS' Director of

the Office of Financial Management and its first Chief Financial Officer, Acting Deputy Administrator, and most recently Deputy Chief Operating Officer. Additionally, Michelle has been a manager in the HHS Budget Office and has had assignments with the Office of Management and Budget, the Congress, the Social Security Administration, and as a management consultant in the private sector.

### **CMS CHIEF ACTUARY**

**Paul Spitalnic** was appointed to the position of Chief Actuary of CMS, effective June 30, 2013. The Social Security Act requires that the Chief Actuary be appointed from among individuals that have demonstrated, by their education and experience, superior expertise in the actuarial sciences. Paul has been the Acting Chief Actuary since February and has clearly demonstrated his superior expertise during this time. The recently released 2013 Medicare Trustees Report is just one example of Paul's accomplishments as Acting Chief Actuary. Paul has ten strong years of experience working for CMS; he joined the agency in 2003 and led the actuarial efforts to implement the new Part D program. Since 2006, Paul has held the position of Director of the Parts C & D Actuarial Group. Prior to joining CMS, he worked as a Consulting Actuary focusing on retiree health insurance issues. Paul is an Associate of the Society of Actuaries, a Member of the American Academy of Actuaries and has a B.A. in Mathematics from Binghamton University.

### **CENTER FOR MEDICARE AND MEDICAID INNOVATION**

**Patrick Conway** has been appointed Acting Director of the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation (CMMI). Patrick will continue to serve as the CMS Chief Medical Officer and Director of the Center for Clinical Standards and Quality (CCSQ) along with Wes Perich who will continue in his role as the CCSQ Deputy. After serving for almost three years as the Director, Rick Gilfillan decided to leave CMS and move on to new opportunities at the end of June.



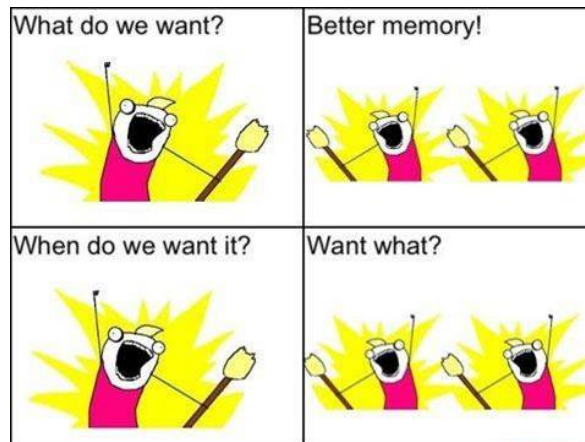
**BOSTON & NEW YORK REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR**

**Raymond Hurd** has been appointed as the new Regional Administrator for the Boston and New York Regional Offices. Ray has served for 20 years in the United States Navy as a commissioned officer where he held many diverse leadership roles including two successful Commanding Officer tours. After retiring from the Navy, he worked for the Federal Protective Service as the Director for Mission Support. Ray joined CMS in June 2011 as the Deputy Regional Administrator in the Boston Regional Office. He has been serving as the Acting Regional Administrator for the Boston and New York offices since May 2012.

**KOMEDY KORNER**

**SENIOR CITIZEN CHEER**

Submitted by Jarrett L Hicks



**FAVORITE SAYINGS ABOUT THE OLDER GENERATION**

By Don Joy

1. Life's too short, that is, if you die before you're 80.
2. The older generation loves kids as long as they are over 30.
3. Drinking and driving does mix – if you want to die young.
4. I don't mind growing old – I just don't like to look old.
5. Growing old is not so bad – until you reach age 30.
6. I like being old – but if I had a choice, I would be young.

7. Growing older each day has some advantage – you’re still alive.
8. Being old or being young are about the same – both only have 24 hours in a day.
9. Why do they say an old person “is 80 years young” and a young person “is 20 years old?”
10. If you’re happy when you’re age 30, 40, and 50, you’ll be happy when you’re 80.
11. At age 80 you begin to see things a lot differently – because you’re usually half blind by then.
12. Children are a big help to their parents – when they pack up and move out.
13. What do people over 65 enjoy the most? – their Social Security checks.
14. When you get old you enjoy everything you do – but there’s not much that you can do.
15. A lot of people say they enjoy the older generation – it’s too bad they just say it.

### **BOY & TEACHER EXCHANGE**

By Don Joy

Boy: I have a question. What weighs 5 pounds, has many wings but can’t fly, and is frozen solid?

Teacher: That’s a tough question but my guess is it’s some small prehistoric creature that likely lived 15,000 to 20,000 years ago and was found frozen in the glaciers of the North Pole.

Boy: Sorry teacher, bad guess. It really is a 5-pound box of chicken wings that’s been in the freezer for a week.

**SENIOR BRILLIANCE!**  
Submitted by Blanche Duffy



"My memory really sucks Mildred, so I changed my password to "incorrect." That way when I log in with the wrong password, the computer will tell me... "Your password is incorrect"

**GOOD NEWS-BAD NEWS-STORY**

By Mike Blank

A man and wife had been married for many years. Over the years the wife had not watched her weight and had become huge.

One night, she had to get up to go to the bathroom. She was so big she got stuck on the commode. She had to call her husband to try to dislodge her. After several unsuccessful attempts, he suggested she take all her clothes off. When even this didn't help, he said the only thing he could think of was to call a plumber. The wife said she didn't want the plumber to see her naked. So the husband went to a closet, got a baseball cap and told his wife to cover herself with the hat.

The plumber came, went into the bathroom to try to solve this problem. He came out of the bathroom and told the husband he had good news and bad news. The good news was that he would be able to get the wife off of the commode. The bad news was, the baseball player was stuck.

**ELDERLY PROPOSAL**

This is the story of two elderly people living in a Florida mobile home park. He was a widower and she a widow. They had known one another for a number of years.

Now, one evening there was a community supper in the big activity center. These two were at the same table, across from one another. As the meal went on, he made a few admiring glances at her and finally gathered up his courage to ask her, "Will you marry me?"

After about six seconds of 'careful consideration,' she answered. "Yes, Yes, I will."

The meal ended and with a few more pleasant exchanges, they went to their respective places. Next morning, he was troubled. Did she say 'yes' or did she say 'no'? He couldn't remember. Try as he would, he just could not recall. Not even a faint memory. With trepidation, he went to the telephone and called her. First, he explained to her that he didn't remember as well as he used to. Then he reviewed the lovely evening past. As he gained a little more courage, he then inquired of her, "When I asked if you would marry me, did you say 'Yes' or did you say 'No'?"

He was delighted to hear her say, "Why, I said, 'Yes, yes I will' and I meant it with all my heart." Then she continued, "And I am so glad that you called, because I couldn't remember who had asked me."

### **GENTLEMAN AT A BAR**

A very elderly gentleman, (mid nineties) very well dressed, hair well groomed, great looking suit, flower in his lapel smelling slightly of a good after shave, presenting a well looked after image, walked into an upscale cocktail lounge.

Seated at the bar was an elderly looking lady, (mid eighties). The gentleman walked over, sat along side of her, ordered a drink, took a sip, turned to her and said, "So tell me, do I come here often?"

### **FLORIDA DRINKERS**

Four old retired men were walking down a street in Yuma, Arizona. They turned a corner and saw a sign that said, "Old Timers Bar--ALL drinks 10 cents."

They looked at each other and then went in, thinking this is too good to be true.

The old bartender said in a voice that carried across the room, "Come on in and let me pour one for you! What'll it be, gentlemen?"

In no time the bartender served up four iced martinis shaken, not stirred and said, "That'll be 10 cents each, please."

The four guys stared at the bartender for a moment, then at each other. They couldn't believe their good luck. They paid the 40 cents, finished their martinis, and ordered another round. There was a fully stocked bar, so each of the men ordered another martini.

Again, four excellent martinis were produced, with the bartender again saying, "That's 40 cents, please."

They paid the 40 cents, but their curiosity got the better of them. They'd each had two martinis and hadn't even spent a dollar yet.

Finally one of them said, "How can you afford to serve martinis as good as these for a dime apiece?"

"I'm a retired tailor from Phoenix," the bartender said, "and I always wanted to own a bar. Last year I hit the Lottery Jackpot for \$125 million and decided to open this place. Every drink costs a dime. Wine, liquor, beer it's all the same."

"Wow! That's some story!" one of the men said.

As the four of them sipped at their martinis, they couldn't help noticing seven other people at the end of the bar who didn't have any drinks in front of them and hadn't ordered anything the whole time they'd been there.

Nodding at the seven at the end of the bar, one of the men asked the Bartender, "What's with them?"

The bartender said, "They're retired people from Florida. They're waiting for Happy Hour when drinks are half-price."

**OBITUARIES**

**MARK D SOKOLIK**

Mark D Sokolik, son of Alumni member Frank Sokolik, died on April 23, 2013 as a result of injuries from a fall. A very good article about him was published in the Baltimore Sun on April 28 and it can be accessed at:

<http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/maryland/baltimore-county/cockeyville/bs-md-ob-mark-sokolik-20130428,0,7034872.story>

# **IN MEMORIAM**

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

**NELSON BEVERIDGE BERRY (5/25/13)\*  
JAMES "JIM" F COAN, JR (1/10/13)\*\*  
CARLTON DIAS (3/20/12)\*  
MYRA EISENSTADT (6/12/13)\*  
CHARLES R FISHER (6/22/13)\*\*  
JAMES EDWARD "JIM" FORBUS (3/7/13)\*\*\*\*  
FRANKLIN M SCHERR (4/2/13)\*  
MARK D SOKOLIK\*\*\*\*\***

\*HCFA/CMS Alumni Member

\*\* HCFA/CMS Alumni Member, husband of Alumni member Edye Fisher

\*\*\* CMS Employee

\*\*\*\* Former HCFA/CMS Alumni Member

\*\*\*\*\*Son of Alumni Member Frank Sokolik

**If you are aware of any other deaths of Alumni please notify the editorial staff  
July 2013**