

Heads up

- Getting a vaccine: <https://covidvaccine.oregon.gov/>
- Questions about boosters and third doses? <https://tinyurl.com/u6tw34b8>
- Conservatives file Oregon Senior Property Tax Freeze Act, 2024-10 initiative. Read it at: <https://tinyurl.com/mrxw7vev>
- August 2022 PERS COLA adjustments explained at: <https://tinyurl.com/avxss6y5>

Volume 2022 Issue 3

August 2022

Actively Retired in Oregon

But which 10?

Medicare prescription negotiations allowed

Seniors on Medicare get long-sought relief from the ever escalating costs of prescription drug prices on at least three fronts under the recent Inflation Reduction Act signed by President Joe Biden.

One, an annual cap of \$2,000 on out-of-pocket prescription expenses.

Two, beginning in 2023, a month's supply of insulin products is capped at \$35 through 2025, after which it will be adjusted to a low percentage of the Medicare negotiated price.

Three, Medicare is unblocked from negotiating prescription drug prices. The IRA requires the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), beginning in 2026 to negotiate the maximum prices for brand-name drugs that account for the greatest Medicare spending. These are drugs, Sen. Jeff Merkley's office explained, that are the most expensive and without an alternate drug available to patients.

For 2026, negotiations cover the top 10 such drugs; then 15 in 2027 and 2008; then 20 for 2029 and

turn to **Negotiating** Page 3

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Subtitle B—Prescription Drug Pricing Reform

PART 1—LOWERING PRICES THROUGH DRUG PRICE NEGOTIATION

SEC. 11001. PROVIDING FOR LOWER PRICES FOR CERTAIN HIGH-PRICED SINGLE SOURCE DRUGS.

(a) PROGRAM TO LOWER PRICES FOR CERTAIN HIGH-PRICED SINGLE SOURCE DRUGS.—Title XI of the Social Security Act is amended by adding after section 1184 (42 U.S.C. 1320e-3) the following new part:

“PART E—PRICE NEGOTIATION PROGRAM TO LOWER PRICES FOR CERTAIN HIGH-PRICED SINGLE SOURCE DRUGS

“SEC. 1191. ESTABLISHMENT OF PROGRAM.

“(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall establish a Drug Price Negotiation Program (in this part referred to as the ‘program’). Under the program, with respect to each price applicability period, the Secretary shall—

“(1) publish a list of selected drugs in accordance with section 1192;

“(2) enter into agreements with manufacturers of selected drugs with respect to such period, in accordance with section 1193;

Provisions for allowing negotiation of drugs by Medicare begins at Page 42 of the 750-page *Inflation Reduction Act of 2022*. A one-page summary of highlights is at <https://tinyurl.com/3ne93299>. Find the entirety at: <https://tinyurl.com/jmubxcxpm>

Dear Retiree Members . . .



Louise Currin
President

Don't forget

*Ask friends from
your AFT Local to
join the Retirees
Chapter*

Retirees have continued to be busy this summer.

Members had a great time cheering on the Hillsboro Hops at the Chapter's June Summer Outing. Of course, it is always more fun for an opportunity to cheer on the winning team. We hope to make this an annual event and with even more folks attending. We also joined our ROSE (OSEA retired) friends August 9 for the annual Union Friends Picnic. Thanks go to Everice Moro for hosting us in her beautiful backyard. We look forward to seeing you all at the October membership meeting featuring a preview of the November, mid-term election.

In July, former Chapter President Val Jack and I represented you at the biennial AFT convention in Boston. We attended the preceding Retiree Conference and will be putting into action some organizing ideas that we brought home. We had the good fortune to listen to many special guests such as First Lady Dr. Jill Biden, Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), and new AFL-CIO President Liz Schuler. After

committee review and recommendations, the Convention adopted resolutions relating to organizing, ending violence, protecting higher education and reproductive rights.

As your delegate I carried the Chapter's vote for electing officers, including President Randi Weingarten; Secretary-Treasurer Fedrick Ingram; Executive Vice-President, Evelyn DeJesus; and a slate of 43 Vice-Presidents. Together, those elected comprise the AFT Executive Council.

I also want to thank our Treasurer Dean Pfaender for his service and contribution to AFT-Oregon Retirees. Dean has decided to return to the workforce and has resigned his position. We wish him the best. He is retaining his membership. We certainly hope that he will seek a leadership position again when he decides to once again retire.

In solidarity,

Louise
President

Actively Retired in Oregon

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Pfaender leaves Treasurer post, heads back to ODOT

Retiree Chapter Treasurer Dean Pfaender, has left his position to take on the challenge of a Signal Timing Engineer with the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT). He notified the Executive Board August 6, of his decision to leave his post to take the temporary ODOT position.



Dean Pfaender

"ODOT," Pfaender said, "finds themselves in an understaffed predicament and I was asked to help with traffic signal controller timing and deployment." It was work he had previously done with ODOT before retiring. He subsequently worked as a bus driver for Hillsboro School District as a member of Hillsboro Classified

United, Local 4671. The time commitment finds him, he said, "without the time to work as Treasurer."

Pfaender served as Treasurer since October, 2020, the first since Constitution amendments split the position from the previous role of Secretary-Treasurer. He was unopposed for re-election to a full, two-year that began July 1. His resignation was accepted "with regrets" by the Executive Board at its August 10, meeting.

Until the vacancy can be filled, President Currin designated VP Membership Program Dick Schwarz to handle chores as Acting Treasurer.



Drug price reporting

Oregon Transparency Act lists prescription drug information

Find a variety of drug pricing data and reports from the Division of Financial Regulation at: <https://tinyurl.com/5h42thvz>

The 2018 Prescription Drug Price Transparency Act and its path through the legislature is at: <https://tinyurl.com/3xfxrjx3>

The 2018 State Oregon House and Senate shined a light on drug prices Oregonians pay with the *Prescription Drug Price Transparency Act*.

It requires prescription drug manufacturers annually to report prices of drugs and related development and marketing costs of prescription drugs.

Health insurers offering prescription drug benefits also have to report prices and impact on premium rates. The information is made available to the public.

The information reported to the Oregon Dept. of Consumer and Business Affairs and parsed by the Division of Financial Services includes the

Negotiating prices

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beyond. Failing compliance with negotiating requirements can cost drug manufacturers civil penalties and excise taxes. The first 10 won't be known until the program ramps up to 2026.

Since 2003 when Medicare Part D prescription coverage was created, Medicare has been blocked from negotiating prescription drug prices.

Its legacy, the infamous “doughnut hole” gap in drug payments, was closed by “Obamacare” in 2010 but prohibiting negotiations remained. The IRA unblocks negotiating bulk prescription drug prices.

top 25 each most often prescribed drugs and most costly drugs among the data collected and available under the Act.

The Act, one of the first in the country, has been producing the annual

reports for three years.

Consumers accessing the website also can ask questions and report their own their experiences and rising prescription drug price stories.

Top 10 most frequently prescribed drugs

Rank	Drug name	Commonly prescribed for
1	Hydrocodone-Acetaminophen	Pain Relief
2	Hydrochlorothiazide	High Blood Pressure
3	Atorvastatin Calcium	Cholesterol
4	Ventolin	Asthma
5	Lisinopril	High Blood Pressure
6	Amlodipine Besylate	High Blood Pressure
7	Proair	Asthma
8	Trazodone Hydrochloride	Depression
9	Azithromycin	Bacterial Infections
10	Omeprazole	Acid Reflux

Top 10 most costly drugs

Rank	Drug name	Commonly prescribed for
1	Humira	Rheumatoid Arthritis/Crohn's Disease/Plaque Psoriasis
2	Enbrel	Rheumatoid Arthritis/Crohn's Disease/Plaque Psoriasis
3	Tecfidera	Relapsing-Remitting Multiple Sclerosis
4	Truvada	HIV Treatment
5	Stelara	Rheumatoid Arthritis/Crohn's Disease/Plaque Psoriasis
6	Remicade	Rheumatoid Arthritis/Crohn's Disease/Plaque Psoriasis
7	Herceptin	Breast Cancer
8	Rituxan	Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma
9	Cosentyx	Plaque Psoriasis
10	Genvoya	HIV Treatment

Legislature

Greg Monahan
VP Legislative
Activities is away

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Upcoming Events:

Programs, Events and Meetings

- October 18, 10 a.m. General election roundup and forecast, TBA

Other events announced individually

Executive Board Meetings

(Unless announced otherwise, all convene at 10 a.m. at the AFT-Oregon office)

- September 14
- October 12
- November 9
- December *no meeting*

Action on Chapter's resolution goes to AFT Exec Council

Measures on the November 2022 general election ballot:

No. 111 (SJR 12) healthcare access

No. 112 (SJR 10) removes slavery and involuntary servitude as punishment from Constitution

No. 113 (IP14) - Legislative Accountability

No. 114 (IP 17) - Reduction of Gun Violence Act

Find ballot measure details at:

<https://tinyurl.com/4k75tceu>

Delegates to the 2022 AFT Biennial Convention ducked Oregon Retirees Chapter resolution.

"Lowering the Voice of Money in Politics," submitted by the Chapter's Executive Board to the national convention, was among a batch of resolutions forwarded by the Convention. The Chapter's resolution calls for amending the U.S. Constitution to undo the effects of the Supreme Court's *Citizen's United* decision, unleashed money

as "political speech." The proposed amendment says money is not "political speech," exempting money from the first amendment's free speech protection.

With each convention committee first reporting only its top three resolutions, time constraints limited further reports. The Chapter was advised in mid-August the AFT Executive Council Resolutions Committee will take any action "sometime in the fall" on remaining resolutions.

AFT-Oregon president recognized

Following an amendment adopted by the membership at the May 2022 annual meeting, the Executive Board has awarded the first Honorary Membership to AFT-Oregon President Jaime Rodriguez.

The Executive Board resolved earlier that if the membership approved granting Honorary Memberships, it would recognize sitting State Federation Presidents during their terms of office. A strong supporter of the Retirees Chapter, Rodriguez was first elected in 2019, and re-elected in 2021.



Retirees President Louise Curran, left, and AFT-Oregon President Jaime Rodriguez,