

Community Outreach Newsletter

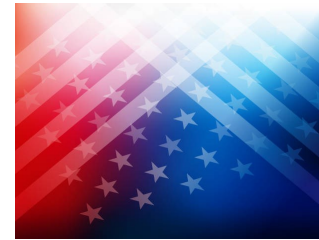
Updates from the Office of Health Policy



A group of students recently made a comment in their opinion, they had little impact on policy. I was quick to remind them voting is one of the most important things they can do to impact policy. Voting is a way to influence our government and policy makers. These influences have an impact on our communities where we live, whether in Oklahoma, California or any state. State elections impact our state and national election results can impact every state.

The first step is making sure you are registered to vote. This will open the door for voting in local, state and national elections. Every election from the school board to the president of the United States is important. Vote every chance you get, and encourage your family and friends to vote.

Voting improves our legal protections as citizens of this great country. As we approach the midterm elections, study the candidates and vote your convictions. Voting allows our voices to be heard. There have been national elections won by as few as 10 votes. Remember, your voice matters. Your vote is your voice, so make it count.



Protecting Medicare Beneficiaries from Misleading Marketing

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) continues to warn beneficiaries about misleading marketing practices used by some private insurance companies and agents to encourage enrollment in Medicare Advantage plans that may not meet an individual's healthcare needs. Common tactics include unsolicited phone calls, mail resembling official government correspondence, television advertisements and community enrollment events. Medicare does not contact beneficiaries to market or sell health plans or recommend specific coverage options.

Choosing a plan without fully understanding its costs, provider network or coverage rules may result in higher out-of-pocket expenses, limited access to providers and unexpected barriers to care. Many Medicare Advantage plans require prior authorization for certain services, while original Medicare generally does not require prior authorization for most covered services.

These marketing practices can particularly affect tribal citizens and veterans. Some individuals have enrolled in plans that do not include Indian Health Service (IHS) providers or that offer benefits duplicating services already available through IHS, tribal and urban Indian (I/T/U) health organizations or the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

Beneficiaries can review or change their Medicare coverage during the annual open enrollment period (Oct. 15-Dec. 7). Individuals enrolled in Medicare Advantage may also make certain coverage changes during the Medicare Advantage Open Enrollment Period (Jan. 1-March 31).



Growing the Healthcare Workforce in Chickasaw Country

The Chickasaw Nation is investing in the next generation of healthcare professionals to strengthen healthcare access in Chickasaw Country and other rural communities. Through the Chickasaw Nation Department of Health, students can gain meaningful, hands-on experience while learning from experienced healthcare professionals. These opportunities introduce students to a variety of healthcare careers and help prepare them to serve communities where providers are in high demand.

The Chickasaw Nation Medical Center Nurse Externship Program provides registered nursing (RN) students with valuable clinical experience in a supportive environment. Students work alongside experienced nurses while building the skills and confidence needed to begin their careers. The Chickasaw Nation also helps eligible students pursue higher education through grants, scholarships and financial incentives, making healthcare careers more accessible.

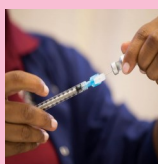
The Career and Technical Education Assistance Program supports students attending accredited career technology centers, trade schools and professional certification programs, creating additional pathways into the healthcare workforce. As many rural communities continue to experience healthcare provider shortages, these investments help prepare future physicians, nurses and allied health professionals while expanding access to quality care for generations to come.

Any policy has the possibility of impacting health.

Flu/RSV Season

As respiratory virus season approaches, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) encourages people to stay up to date on recommended vaccines. An annual flu vaccine is recommended for everyone aged 6 months and older, who do not have contraindication to vaccination. Because flu viruses change from year to year, receiving a flu vaccine each year provides the best protection against serious illness.

The CDC also recommends a one-time RSV vaccine for adults ages 75 and older, as well as adults ages 50-74 who have certain medical conditions or other factors increasing their risk for severe RSV illness. RSV protection is also available for eligible infants through maternal vaccination during pregnancy or an RSV antibody for babies entering their first RSV season.



Retatrutide—Peptide Awareness

Retatrutide is an investigational medication currently being studied as a potential treatment for obesity and related metabolic conditions. Researchers continue to evaluate its safety and effectiveness through Phase 3 clinical trials, and the medication has not been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for any use.



Despite its investigational status, reports indicate retatrutide is being marketed and sold through online vendors, social media and other unauthorized sources before receiving FDA approval. These products are not regulated; therefore, the quality, purity and dosage cannot be verified. Healthcare providers have also expressed concern about potential risks associated with unapproved products, including unknown ingredients and unexpected side effects. Visit [FDA.gov](https://www.fda.gov) to learn more about this topic.

Individuals interested in weight-loss medications should discuss available treatment options with a licensed healthcare provider rather than purchasing products from online or unverified sources. FDA-approved medications have undergone extensive review for safety, quality and effectiveness, while investigational medications continue to be studied before becoming available to the public.

We value your feedback. Please complete this survey:

