

RETIREE INSIGHTS REPORT

Week of October 13–19, 2026

THIS WEEK: Medicare open enrollment opened October 15 with higher Part D limits and new GLP-1 drug pricing, Social Security announced a 3.6% COLA for 2027, a Senate hearing on senior loneliness is set for October 29, and the FBI is warning about election-season scams. Know the changes, keep connected, and guard your wallet.

1. Health & Medicare

Medicare's Fall Open Enrollment began Thursday, October 15, and runs through December 7, with changes taking effect January 1, 2027. Beneficiaries can choose between traditional Medicare and a private Medicare Advantage plan, plus a prescription drug plan (AP via PBS NewsHour).

On the drug side, the Part D out-of-pocket cap rises to \$2,400 from \$2,100, and the standard deductible rises from \$615 to \$700. A temporary Part D premium subsidy that began in 2024 ends at year-end, though CMS projects only modest premium increases for most people. Medicare-negotiated prices also take effect for 15 drugs, including Ozempic, Rybelsus and Wegovy.

The Medicare Rights Center, citing CMS and KFF, reports the average beneficiary will see 35 Medicare Advantage plans in 2027, down from 39. Because some plans are being dropped, some enrollees will need to choose a new plan; CMS says about eight in ten MA enrollees can stay in their current plan at the same or lower premium.

- Open enrollment: October 15 – December 7, 2026; coverage starts January 1, 2027.
- Part D out-of-pocket cap: \$2,400 (up from \$2,100); deductible: \$700 (up from \$615).
- Average MA premium expected to dip from \$14.37 to \$12.00; average standalone Part D premium from \$35.09 to about \$36.
- Negotiated prices for 15 drugs, including GLP-1s, begin January 1.

ACTION ITEM: Review your plan's Annual Notice of Change and re-check your drugs and doctors in the Medicare Plan Finder before December 7, even if you are happy with your current plan.

Sources: AP/PBS NewsHour, Medicare Rights Center

2. Social Isolation & Mental Health

The Senate Special Committee on Aging will hold a field hearing on Thursday, October 29, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. at Cumberland Woods Village in Allison Park, Pennsylvania. Titled "Connecting Pennsylvania's Seniors: Addressing Loneliness and Social Isolation," it will feature Senators Dave McCormick and John Fetterman.

The hearing will examine how common loneliness and isolation are among older Pennsylvanians, highlight community-based approaches that keep seniors connected, and explore how federal aging programs could better support them. It is open to the public. Little other major news on this topic surfaced this week, so the hearing is the one to watch.

- Field hearing: October 29, 2026, 10:00 a.m., Allison Park, PA; open to the public.
- Focus: community-based connection programs and federal aging program support.
- Isolation is widely linked by health researchers to poorer physical and mental health outcomes in older adults (background context).

TIP: Pick one recurring social touchpoint this week, such as a class, faith group, volunteer shift or standing call, and put it on your calendar. Regular contact matters more than occasional big events.

Sources: Pennsylvania Providers Association (Senate Aging Committee announcement)

3. Housing & Aging in Place

Housing news was light this week, so here is useful background. A RISMedia profile from earlier this year quotes senior-housing specialist Bryan Devore saying about 92% of seniors want to stay in their current homes, but only around 50–60% are able to, either because the home does not suit their needs or they do not know what changes to make. These figures are his own and the article does not cite a source for them.

Devore points to Certified Aging in Place Specialists (CAPS) contractors who know which modifications, such as ramps, fewer stairs and wider walkways, help people stay home longer, and to the National Aging in Place Council's local chapters as a resource. He calls housing the most important pillar of successful aging in place.

- Home modifications (ramps, fewer stairs, mobility-friendly layouts) are a common first step.
- CAPS-certified contractors specialize in aging-in-place remodels.
- Planning early beats reacting after a fall or health event.

ACTION ITEM: Walk through your home with a "mobility lens": stairs, bathroom, entry, lighting. List the three changes that would matter most if you needed a cane or walker tomorrow.

Sources: RISMedia (April 2026, background)

4. Scams & Fraud Targeting Seniors

The FBI issued a public service announcement this week warning of election-season fraud ahead of the November midterms, with scammers using candidates' names, images and slogans, sometimes with AI and deepfakes (The Register, October 16).

The FBI named four schemes: campaign "investment pool" schemes promising payouts if a candidate wins, fake PACs that pocket donations, campaign merchandise that never arrives, and phishing texts

claiming you are not registered to vote. Separately, the U.S. Attorney's Office for Utah's Fraud Prevention Initiative for Older Americans (launched June 2026) reminds seniors that government agencies will never call to demand money, gift cards or crypto, or tell you to move money to "keep it safe."

- Genuine campaign donations do not appreciate over time; "investment pools" are a red flag.
- Verify any PAC through the official election commission website.
- Be wary of urgent texts about voter registration; check status through your state election office.
- Government agencies never demand gift cards or crypto.

TIP: Stop, hang up, and verify. If a call, text or email creates urgency, contact the organization using a number you look up yourself, and talk to someone you trust before sending money.

Sources: *The Register* (FBI PSA coverage), U.S. Attorney's Office, District of Utah

5. FINANCIAL OUTLOOK — 20%

The Social Security Administration announced on October 14 a 3.6% cost-of-living adjustment for 2027, the biggest since 2023. Benefits rise in January 2027, averaging about \$75 more per month for retirees and reaching nearly 72 million Social Security beneficiaries; SSI increases begin December 31, 2026.

Medicare costs will take a bite. Projections based on the Medicare trustees' report put the 2027 Part B premium at \$209.50, up \$6.60 from \$202.90, with the deductible rising from \$283 to \$292. CMS typically confirms official amounts in November. For an average retiree, the premium rise could consume about 9% of the raise. Separately, a one-time \$90 Part B payment is reported for more than 20 million enrollees, though Medicare Advantage enrollees are not eligible (AP).

- 2027 COLA: 3.6%, about \$75/month on average, effective January 2027.
- Projected Part B premium: \$209.50/month (official figure expected in November).
- Online COLA notices appear in late November; enroll in paperless notices by November 18.
- Part D cap rises to \$2,400 in 2027.

ACTION ITEM: Update your 2027 budget now using a net raise of roughly \$65–\$70 per month for the average benefit, then adjust once the official Part B premium is announced.

Sources: Social Security Administration, Medical Daily/AARP, AP via PBS NewsHour

Report Details

Report date: October 19, 2026. Coverage period: October 13–19, 2026. Where a topic had little news this week, background context is labeled as such. Verify figures against official sources before relying on them for decisions. This report is educational and is not financial or medical advice.