

BUSINESS AND FINANCE

Social Security Matters

Ask Rusty:

Medicare Late Enrollment Penalty

By RUSSELL GLOOR,
AMAC Certified Social Security Advisor
Association of Mature American Citizens

Dear Rusty:

I've never been a fan of socialized medicine, so wasn't happy with that whole "Great Society" thing that happened back in the 1960's, which is where Medicare started. Just on principle, I refused to sign up for Medicare when I turned 65, but with age comes wisdom, I guess, so now I find that maybe I should have. I'm 68 now and starting to develop some health issues, but my insurance agent says that because I didn't sign up for Medicare when I was 65 there's going to be penalties. We didn't talk about how much, but I'm hoping you can give me some insight on what I'm up against. **Signed: Wiser Now than Before**

Dear Wiser:

While I always admire one who sticks to their principles, I also believe, to coin a phrase, that wisdom is the better part of valor. You've been lucky health-wise and avoided a major health crisis for the past several years, but with the wisdom gained by age now realize that the Medicare you paid into over your lifetime isn't such a bad thing after all. The problem is, the law requires that you enroll in Medicare at age 65 unless you have other "creditable" coverage (e.g., from an employer or the VA). To have not done so does, indeed, mean that by enrolling now you'll have to pay a "late enrollment penalty," at least for Medicare Part B (doctors and outpatient services) and Part D (Prescription Drug coverage). Assuming you're eligible for or collecting Social Security, your Part A (hospitalization) coverage should be free, even if you didn't enroll during your "initial enrollment period" (IEP), which started 3 months before the month you turned 65 and lasted until 3 months after.

The Part B penalty for late enrollment is applied as a supplement to the base Medicare Part B premium amount which, for 2018, is \$134 per month if you earned less than \$85,000 as a single-filer in 2016 (the premium is higher if you earned more than that). The late enrollment penalty for Part B is 10% additional for each full year after the end of your initial enrollment period, so \$134/month plus 30% means you'll be paying \$174/month instead, and the penalty is recurring every year. In fact, if the Part B premium goes up (as it periodically does), so will your penalty because the base number is higher.

As for Medicare Part D, although it's hard to justify paying for prescription drug coverage you may not currently need, the sticker shock for enrolling if you need to later is quite severe. Compared to the Part B penalty, the computation for late enrollment in Part D is complicated. You owe the penalty, again on top of your regular Part D premium amount, if you go more than 63 days past your IEP without a creditable Medicare Part D drug plan, a Medicare Advantage (Part C) plan which includes drug coverage, or another healthcare plan (such as the VA), which includes creditable prescription drug coverage. Part D premiums are set by the insurance carrier which provides the coverage, but the penalty amount is set by Medicare, as follows: 1% of the "National Base Beneficiary Premium" (\$32.02 for 2018), times the number of full months you didn't have creditable Part D coverage (rounded to the nearest 10 cents). That amount is added to the Part D premium amount as determined by your insurance provider. And like Part B, the penalty for late enrollment in Part D coverage is recurring and may increase with changes to the National Base Beneficiary Premium as computed by Medicare.

It's important to note that since you're well past your IEP, your timing to enroll in Medicare is now limited. You can only enroll in Part A & B during the annual "General Enrollment Period" which runs from January 1 to March 31 for coverage to begin on July 1st. And you can only enroll in a Part D drug plan during the annual Open Enrollment Period which runs from October 15 to December 7.

The Association of Mature American Citizens (A.M.A.C.), <https://www.amac.us>, is a vibrant, vital senior advocacy organization that takes its marching orders from its members. We act and speak on their behalf, protecting their interests and offering a practical insight on how to best solve the problems they face today. Live long and make a difference by joining us today at <https://amac.us/join-amac>.

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Surviving the Horrors of Hacking

Balancelogic invites small businesses for a Halloween social and seminar on small business cybersecurity

By DANIEL DE PLATA
Balancelogic

WALDORF, MD (September 26, 2018)—Balancelogic, a leading Small Business Services provider, will be holding their third annual Halloween Social, "The Haunted House of Hacking." This event is open to all small businesses to attend and will be an opportunity to meet the Balancelogic team and learn more about the company's services. **The event will be held on Wednesday, October 24th, from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m., with a seminar on cybersecurity in small businesses to kick off the event from 3 p.m. to 4 p.m.** A live hacking demonstration will be included as part of this very informative and educational seminar. "We are very proud of the fact that Balancelogic is the only company in Southern Maryland to be CompTIA MSP Certified and only 1 of 2 companies in State of Maryland," says Bill Campbell, CEO. "We invite everyone to join us at our Waldorf office to celebrate some holiday 'fear' with food, cocktails, and Halloween treats!"

Balancelogic's Halloween Social is an annual event to celebrate the season and bring together small businesses for a night of entertainment and networking in the

Washington D.C., Maryland, and Virginia area. Before the event, Balancelogic would also like to invite everyone to a small business seminar about cybersecurity by Bill Campbell, President and CEO of Balancelogic. After the seminar, guests are invited to stay for a networking opportunity with other small businesses in the area and meet the Balancelogic team that provides quality business services. Balancelogic believes that every business has the potential to grow, and would like to share their knowledge and services to those who look for growth.

Small Business Cybersecurity

Why is Cybersecurity so important to small businesses? In today's world just about everything is done online or over a computer network and Wi-Fi. This is great for productivity, immediate results, and ease of life tasks, but the problem is the devices we use and the network we connect to are not safe and secure. For small businesses, the process of keeping up these as well as new technologies, security updates and fixes, and the knowledge to protect them is a very challenging task. However, it is mandatory in order to protect our devices and our personal information from cyber threats. Cybersecurity in your small business can help prevent cyber-at-

tacks, data breaches, lost information, and identity theft. According to the Ponemon Institute's 2017 State of Cybersecurity in Small & Medium-Sized Businesses report, the percentage of small businesses that have experienced a cyber-attack in the past 12 months is up from 55% in 2016 to 61% in 2017.

Founded in 2004, Balancelogic is a Veteran-Owned and leading provider of small business service solutions to the D.C., Maryland, and Virginia area. Our focus is to provide our clients with high quality services that result in cost savings and business process efficiency. Balancelogic offers the widest range of business support services by any single company, including business consulting, marketing, web and graphic design, SEO, IT support, and Avaya phone systems. Balancelogic's advantage lies not only on what services are provided, but also in how these services are provided, with a cross-trained and experienced team, a well thought out and proven process, and the integration of the right technology, giving the client an outstanding experience. For more information or for a quote on Balancelogic's services, contact Bill Campbell at (301) 396-8455 or e-mail bcampbell@balancelogic.com. Visit www.balancelogic.com

Family & Nursing Care Celebrates 50 Years in Business

Office move, service area expansion, leadership transition, and stakeholder events mark milestone anniversary

By PRESS OFFICE
Family & Nursing Care

SILVER SPRING, MD (October 11, 2018)—Family & Nursing Care, the premier resource for in-home care services for older adults, celebrates half a century in business in 2018 with an office move, service area expansion, leadership transition, and a series of events for key stakeholders. Family & Nursing Care recently moved from 962 Wayne Avenue in Silver Spring just down the street to a larger space at 1010 Wayne Avenue. In addition, the company is currently expanding its service area coverage to include Anne Arundel and Howard Counties. Neal Kursban, formerly President of Family & Nursing Care, is now

Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Jeff Zukerman, previously the company's Chief Operating Officer (COO), has assumed the position of President. The company is celebrating throughout 2018 with current employees, caregivers, professional partners, and clients and their families.

"This is an exciting time for Family & Nursing Care," said Neal Kursban, Family & Nursing Care's CEO. "Our expansion will help us serve more families who can benefit from our unique approach to home care, and my transition to CEO will allow me to focus more on working directly with our professional partners to meet the evolving demands of the healthcare system."

According to Kursban,

strategic growth has been part of the company's plan since his mother, Sandy Kursban, started Family & Nursing Care in 1968. He says now is the time because private duty home care has shifted from being considered a luxury to becoming a necessity. The number of Americans aged 85 and older is projected to more than triple from 5.8 million in 2010 to over 19 million by 2050, so manageable, strategic growth in private duty home care is imperative. Eventually, the company has plans to expand across the mid-Atlantic region.

"Family & Nursing Care is well-positioned for innovation and expansion because of our flexibility," said Jeff Zukerman, the company's new President. "We are proactive, while

also maintaining a strong infrastructure and ensuring our partners' expectations are exceeded and clients continue to receive top-tier care."

Kursban and Zukerman are vocal about the moral imperative to grow the company because of the superior care they provide older adults. It is an opinion shared by the industry. In 2017 Family & Nursing Care was recognized as one of the top two best private duty home care agencies nationwide (out of 26,000+) by Decision-Health™.

Since 1968, Family & Nursing Care has been the premier provider of in-home care services for older adults, dedicated to and recognized for their passion and commitment to serve, help, and enhance the quality of life and well-being of others. The company refers and provides caregivers who assist with activities of daily life, companionship, and also skilled nursing care. For more information, visit www.familynursingcare.com.

Leadership Maryland Class of 2019 Applications Due October 31

By PRESS OFFICE
Leadership Maryland

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (October 10, 2018)—Leadership Maryland, the professional development program dedicated to building a better Maryland by harnessing the strength of its local business and community leaders, reminds potential applicants that all applications for the Class of 2019 must be submitted

online at www.LeadershipMD.org by 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, October 31, 2018.

Leadership Maryland's selection committee will choose 52 applicants to complete an eight-month hands-on learning program focused on the state's most vital social, economic and environmental issues. The Class of 2019 will be announced in early February 2019.

Applications are open to sen-

ior-level executives with significant achievements in their careers and/or their communities. Ideal Leadership Maryland applicants will have a desire to learn more about Maryland's most critical issues and a personal commitment to be a force for positive change in their organizations, their communities, and their state. The chosen class will reflect a cross-section of the state by including diversity of geographic location, profession, age, ethnicity and gender.

Full information regarding Leadership Maryland's appli-

cation instructions, selection process, tuition and financial assistance, 2018 program dates and locations, and attendance policy are available at www.LeadershipMD.org. Anyone with questions may contact Leadership Maryland at 410-841-2101 or Info@LeadershipMD.org.

Leadership Maryland is a professional development program dedicated to building a better Maryland by harnessing the strength of its local business and community leaders.

BGE Offers Tips to Help Customers 'Fall' into Savings During National Energy Awareness Month

Customers received more than \$37 million in bill credits during summer

By PRESS OFFICE
BGE

BALTIMORE (October 10, 2018)—October is National Energy Awareness Month and BGE reminds customers that taking steps to save energy and money now will pay off this winter. By following a few simple tips and making a few easy energy efficiency improvements, customers could save on their winter heating bills.

- **Maintain Heating Systems.** Most cold weather energy expenses are related to heating your home. Schedule service for your heating system to find

out what maintenance is required to keep your system operating efficiently.

- **Lower Water Heating Costs.** Water heating accounts for about 18 percent of the energy consumed in your home. Turn down the temperature of your water heater to the warm setting of 120 degrees Fahrenheit and save.

- **Adjust the Temperature.** When you are at home and awake, set your thermostat to as low a setting as is comfortable for you. When you are asleep or out of the house, turn your thermostat back 10 to 15 degrees for eight hours

and save approximately 10 percent a year on your heating bills. A programmable thermostat can make it easy to automatically adjust temperature settings. If you have a heat pump, maintain a moderate setting or use a programmable thermostat specially designed for use with heat pumps.

- **Take Advantage of the Sun's Heat.** Open curtains on your south-facing windows during the day to allow sunlight to naturally heat your home, and then close them at night to reduce the chill you may feel from cold windows.

- **My Account Online Tools.** Your BGE online account contains tools and detailed energy usage information. By tracking your energy usage, reviewing usage trends, and discovering the results of energy-saving practices, you can manage your energy more efficiently. Log onto BGE.com/MyAccount to get started.

BGE customers have opportunities to save on their energy bills all year long. In fact, it was a successful summer of savings for Energy Savings Days and PeakRewardsSM Air Conditioning program participants. More than 840,000 Energy Savings Day customers saved over 370 megawatts—equal to carbon dioxide emissions from more than 300,000 pounds of coal burned. For their energy-saving

efforts, Energy Savings Day participants were awarded more than \$16 million in bill credits, averaging \$14.46 per household. Additionally, more than 305,000 PeakRewardsSM Air Conditioning customers were awarded more than \$21 million in bill credits this past summer.

Looking for customized solutions to help you save energy and money? BGE offers rebates for these and other home efficiency improvements through the BGE Smart Energy Savers Program®.

The BGE Smart Energy Savers Program is a suite of programs that enable customers to control energy use, leading to more efficient use of electricity and lowering energy bills. The programs have provided \$537 million in rebates to BGE customers and have also helped

nearly 2.2 million residential and business participants save nearly 3.6 million MWh of electricity. Collectively, the programs help contain the cost of energy and improve reliability by reducing peak demand and slowing the growth in energy consumption. Energy-saving solutions are available to renters, homeowners, large and small business customers, nonprofits and institutional customers. More information can be found at BGESmartEnergy.com. EmPOWER Maryland programs are funded by a charge on your energy bill. EmPOWER programs can help you reduce your energy consumption and save you money. To learn more about EmPOWER and how you can participate, go to BGESmartEnergy.com.