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## DISABILITY PARTNERS EXPRESS



### OVER THE COUNTER HEARING AIDS

The Over-the-Counter Hearing Aid Act of 2017 would make certain types of hearing aids available over the counter to adults with mild to moderate hearing loss. In addition, the proposed legislation would require the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to regulate this new category of OTC hearing aids to ensure they meet the same high standards for safety, consumer labeling and manufacturing protection that all other medical devices must meet. This will give consumers the option to purchase a safe, high-quality FDA-regulated device at lower cost.

Now that the Over-the-Counter Hearing Aid Act of 2017 has been passed by both the House and Senate it will go to the president to sign into law. Once the bill is signed into law it will go to the FDA, who will begin drafting the rules and regulations for it. While the FDA has three years to complete that process we are hopeful that it will be done much sooner.



### New Medicare Cards

For starters, you'll be happy to know that the government is in the process of removing SSNs from Medicare cards. But with 58 million beneficiaries, it is a huge undertaking that will be implemented gradually. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services will start sending the new cards in April 2018, but it will take until December 2019 for SSNs to be removed from all cards.

Under the new system, a randomly generated 11-character Medicare Beneficiary Identifier will replace the SSN-based health claim number on your new Medicare card, but your Medicare benefits will not change.

You will receive information in 2018 letting you know about the new Medicare card with an explanation of how to use the new card and what to do with your old one. You can start using your new Medicare card and number as soon as you receive it. There will likely be a transition period in 2018 and 2019 when you can use either the old card or the new card.

Until your new Medicare card is issued, here is what you can do to protect your SSN on your current card. The Privacy Rights Clearinghouse, a national consumer resource on identity theft, recommends that you carry your Medicare card only when you visit a health care provider for the first time so the provider can make a copy for their files. Otherwise, make a photocopy of your card and cut it down to wallet size. Then take a black marker and black out the last four digits of your SSN and carry that with you instead.

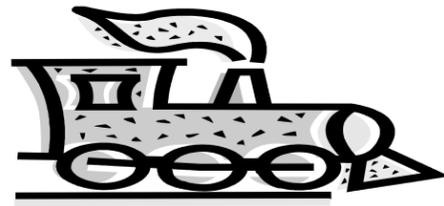
If your Medicare card does happen to get lost or stolen, you can replace it by calling the Social Security Administration at 800-772-1213 or by contacting your local Social Security office. You can also request a card online at [SSA.gov/MyAccount](https://www.ssa.gov/MyAccount). Your card will arrive in the mail in about 30 days.

If your Medicare card containing your SSN gets lost or stolen, you will need to keep an eye out for Medicare fraud. You can do this by checking your quarterly Medicare summary notices for services or supplies you did not receive. You can also check your Medicare claims online at [MyMedicare.gov](https://www.mymedicare.gov) (you'll need to create an account first) or by calling Medicare at

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**Medicare Cards (continued)**

800-633-4227. If you spot anything suspicious or incorrect, call the Inspector General's fraud hotline at 800-447-8477.

Also, watch for other signs of identity theft. For example, if someone uses your Social Security number to obtain credit, loans, telephone accounts or other goods and services, report it immediately to the Federal Trade Commission at IdentityTheft.gov or call 1-877-438-4338. This site will also give you specific steps you will need to take if your identity gets stolen.

**COLLEGE BOUND**

Now that summer is gone, there are a number of people young and old who are planning to go to college to earn a certificate or degree. If you are a student with a disability, do you know how the ADA affects postsecondary schools? It is crucial that students become knowledgeable about their rights and responsibilities in postsecondary education. Although protections exist, the student has considerably more responsibility to request and design their own accommodations. For many students with disabilities, good self advocacy skills will be a key to success along with knowing your rights.

Students are not required to disclose their disabilities unless you are requesting accommodations due to your disability. A school cannot provide any service, modification or accommodation when it does not know one is required. It is the responsibility of students to approach the Office for Students with Disabilities in advance about their need for accommodations.

Schools may request current documentation of a disability which is reasonable and appropriate in order to validate the need for accommodation for people with hidden disabilities. Documentation should be completed and signed by a professional familiar with the student and the student's disability such as a physician, psychologist or a rehabilitation counselor. If no current documentation exist, then it is the responsibility of the student to have new documentation prepared. If a person obviously uses a wheelchair or is blind or deaf, no further documentation is required.

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**College Bound (continued)**

Postsecondary schools provide accommodation in a number of ways and is based on the student's needs, whether providing architectural access, providing aids and services necessary for effective communication and by modifying policies, practices and procedures. Modifications of policies and practices are not required when it would fundamentally alter the nature of the service, program or activity.

Title II of the ADA covers state funded schools such a universities, community colleges and vocational schools. Title III of the ADA covers private colleges and vocational schools. If the school receives federal dollars regardless of whether it is private or public, it is also covered by the regulations of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act requiring schools to make their programs accessible to qualified students with disabilities. Private schools that do not receive any federal funding are not covered by the broader 504 or the ADA but they are still required to accommodate students with disabilities in similar ways.

**Ms. Wheelchair USA**

Ms. Wheelchair USA is an annual pageant that celebrates the achievement of women with disabilities. Ms. Wheelchair USA recognizes that all women, despite any disability, can be beautiful, feel glamorous and feel self confident. The pageant was founded 17 years ago as a state contest in Ohio. The pageant was so successful, others came from all over the country to watch the competition and encouraged its expansion. The national contest was launched and has crowned many winners.

Ms. Wheelchair NC, Madeline Delp, was recently crowned Ms. Wheelchair USA for 2017-2018. According to Madeline, "All I can say is, when one door closes, believe it will lead to something better. When you feel like you keep failing, give it one more try. When you feel like you don't have a voice, when you feel like you don't belong, when you feel alone, when you feel helpless, KEEP PUSHING FORWARD. Don't give up on your dream!"

Madeline is planning her year of traveling throughout the US representing Ms. Wheelchair USA along with telling her story that relays a strong positive message to people with and without disabilities. **Congratulations Madeline!**



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## FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 2017

### 2pm **What would you do....The Many Faces of Disability**

Join Alex in on an interactive session of how to respectfully interact with people with all types of disabilities.



### 3:30pm **Taco Night!**

DP will provide the taco filling; both meat and vegetarian options will be available. We will need hard/soft taco shells or tortilla chips, shredded cheese, sour cream, tomatoes, lettuce or salsa plus we will need beverages and yummy desserts!



## FRIDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2017

### 2pm **Financial and Physical Fitness**

Learn good financial strategies topped off with a session of mild exercises that can be practiced toward greater flexibility.



### 3:30pm **Healthy Finger Foods**

Ideas include nuts, hummus, avocado dip, sliced cucumbers, celery sticks w/ peanut butter, bean salads, grapes, melons, sliced apples any kind of sliced fruit or vegetable. Call Kathy at 828-298-1977 for more ideas.

## DISABILITY PARTNERS WILL BE CLOSED FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 10<sup>TH</sup> FOR VETERANS DAY NOVEMBER EVENTS WILL BE HELD ON FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2017

### 2pm **Holiday Card-Making Class**

Get a jump start with Kelly creating greeting cards for the holidays. Join in the fun and create a special card for friends and family. Supplies will be provided.



### 3:30pm **Chili Night**

Chili will be provided. A vegetarian option will also be available. Suggested items: Corn chips, cornbread, crackers, shredded cheese, sour cream, green onions, drinks, desserts.

