

WEEKLY MARKET COMMENTARY

For the Week of October 14, 2019

THE MARKETS

Stocks ended higher Friday but lower than their session highs. On Thursday, President Trump announced a partial trade deal between China and the U.S. The positive news helped the S&P break a three-week losing streak. For the week, the Dow rose 2.37 percent to close at 26,816.59. The S&P gained 2.10 percent to finish at 2,970.27, and the NASDAQ climbed 2.35 percent to end the week at 8,057.04.

Returns Through 10/11/19	1 Week	YTD	1 Year	3 Year	5 Year
Dow Jones Industrials (TR)	2.37	17.14	9.65	16.69	12.87
NASDAQ Composite (PR)	2.35	21.43	9.93	15.38	13.51
S&P 500 (TR)	2.10	20.38	11.12	13.88	11.55
Barclays US Agg Bond (TR)	-0.91	8.23	10.50	3.04	3.12
MSCI EAFE (TR)	2.75	13.30	5.59	7.14	4.48

Source: Morningstar.com. *Past performance is no guarantee of future results. Indexes are unmanaged and cannot be invested into directly. Three- and five-year returns are annualized. The Dow Jones Industrials, MSCI EAFE, Barclays US Agg Bond and S&P, excluding "1 Week" returns, are based on total return, which is a reflection of return to an investor by reinvesting dividends after the deduction of withholding tax. The NASDAQ is based on price return, which is the capital appreciation of the portfolio, excluding income generated by the assets in the portfolio in the form of interest and dividends. (TR) indicates total return. (PR) indicates price return. MSCI EAFE returns stated in U.S. dollars.

Health Insurance — The average annual cost for health insurance coverage for a family plan in 2019 is \$20,576, with the employer paying 71 percent of the total (\$14,561) and the employee paying 29 percent (\$6,015). Ten years ago, the average cost was \$13,375, and the employer/ employee split was 74/26 (source: Kaiser FF, BTN Research).

Counting All Stocks — Through the close of trading on Sept. 30, the market capitalization of all U.S. stocks was \$32.3 trillion. At the start of the current bull market for stocks (an advance that began on March 10, 2009), the market capitalization of all U.S. stocks was \$7.6 trillion (source: Wilshire, BTN Research).

Final Quarter of the Year — Over the last 25 years, the S&P 500 stock index has gained an average of 4.3 percent (total return) over the final three months of the year. Nineteen of the last 25 fourth quarters (76 percent) have produced a positive total return gain (Source: BTN Research).

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WEEKLY FOCUS – Things to Know About Medicare Open Enrollment

If you're 65 or older and eligible for Medicare, now is the time to do your homework. Open Enrollment, Oct. 15 through Dec. 7, is the time to enroll, correct mistakes made previously on Medicare elections or upgrade your 2020 coverage. The following tips can help.

Medicare doesn't cover everything. It also has sizeable deductibles and copayments and doesn't cover services you expect from many insurance plans. You can supplement your coverage with a Medicare Supplement Plan (also known as a Medigap Plan) that pays for deductibles and copayments on the original Medicare plan. You could also choose to upgrade to Medicare Advantage, which provides managed, integrated healthcare. Both have advantages and disadvantages, so it pays to research which is the best option for you.

If you were diagnosed in 2019 with a serious illness and prescribed new, expensive drugs, you might want to compare your Medicare Part D Prescription Drug Plan to some alternatives. You should also compare Medicare Prescription Drug Plans if you already take more than one prescription drug and watch for medications your plan may have dropped.

If you're already in or are considering a Medicare Advantage Plan, take new health conditions into consideration. Make sure your plan's network includes the type of specialists you need. Also, if you've been accepted into an assisted living facility, there are Medicare Advantage plans specifically designed for residents of these facilities.

If you were enrolled in either a Medicare Advantage Plan or Supplement plan in 2019 and the plan makes changes to the 2020 coverage, they must let you know about them in writing. Read any mail your provider sends carefully to see if copayments have increased or coverage has been reduced. Plans can also drop doctors, so make sure your current physicians are still covered.

It pays to do your homework before enrolling in a Medicare Plan. It's also a good idea to review your financial situation. Call our office today. We can help you evaluate and make any changes to your financial plans and Medicare options to ensure the future you deserve.

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* The Standard & Poor's 500 (S&P 500) is an unmanaged group of securities considered to be representative of the stock market in general. The Dow Jones Industrial Average is a price-weighted index of 30 actively traded blue-chip stocks. NASDAQ Composite Index is an unmanaged, market-weighted index of all over-the-counter common stocks traded on the National Association of Securities Dealers Automated Quotation System. The Morgan Stanley Capital International Europe, Australia and Far East Index (MSCI EAFE Index) is a widely recognized benchmark of non-U.S. stock markets. It is an unmanaged index composed of a sample of companies representative of the market structure of 20 European and Pacific Basin countries and includes reinvestment of all dividends. Barclays Capital Aggregate Bond Index is an unmanaged index comprised of U.S. investment-grade, fixed-rate bond market securities, including government, government agency, corporate and mortgage-backed securities between one and 10 years. Written by Securities America, Copyright October 2019. All rights reserved. Securities offered through Securities America, Inc., Member FINRA/SIPC. SAI#2773493.1