



### Social Security Expansion Advocates Target Presidential Candidates



As millions of Americans prepare this year for one of the biggest milestones in their lives – retirement – the program that they have come to most depend on in retirement its celebrating its own milestone. The Social Security program turns 80-years-old on August 14.

Ironically, the program that seniors next most depend on in retirement – Medicare – celebrates a major milestone of its own this year, and will turn 50 on July 30.

Signed into law by President Franklin D. Roosevelt as part of the New Deal, the Social Security program has assisted hundreds of millions of American seniors during that time. And the reasons for its passage may sound familiar to modern day workers.

"The Act was an attempt to limit what were seen as dangers in the modern American life, including old age, poverty, unemployment, and the burdens of widows and fatherless children," notes Wikipedia. "By signing this Act on August 14, 1935, President Roosevelt became the first president to advocate federal assistance for the elderly."...[Read More](#)

### Wealthy seniors to pay more for Medicare under bill passed to fix doctor pay

Medicare's troubled physician payment formula will soon be history,  
Congress passed bill and here is what it says

*By Mary Agnes Carey, Kaiser Health News*

As expected, the Senate easily passed legislation to scrap the formula, accepting a bipartisan plan muscled through the House last month by Speaker John Boehner and Democratic leader Nancy Pelosi. The Senate vote came just hours before doctors faced a 21 percent Medicare pay cut.

Under the bill, the current reimbursement schedule would be **replaced** with payment increases for doctors for the next five years as Medicare transitions to a new system focused "on quality, value and accountability." Existing payment incentive programs would be combined into a new "Merit-Based Incentive Payment System" while other alternative payment models would also be created.

"Passage of this historic legislation finally brings an end to an era of uncertainty for Medicare beneficiaries and their physicians — facilitating the implementation of innovative care models that will improve care quality and lower costs," said Dr. James L. Madara, chief executive officer of the American Medical Association. "Patients will be able to get the care they need and deserve."

The Senate voted 92 to 8 to approve the legislation, which the House passed 392-37.

It now moves to President Barack Obama, who — shortly after the Senate vote — said he would sign the bill, calling it "a milestone for physicians, and for the seniors and people with disabilities who rely on Medicare for their health care needs."

There's enough in the **wide-ranging measure** for both sides to love or hate. "Like any large bill it's a mixed bag in some respects, but I think on the whole it's a bill well worth supporting," Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., said Tuesday.

The bill includes two years of funding for an unrelated program, the Children's Health Insurance Program, or CHIP. GOP conservatives and Democrats are unhappy that the package isn't fully paid for, with policy changes governing Medicare beneficiaries and providers paying for only about \$70 billion of the approximately \$210 billion package. The Congressional Budget Office has said the bill would add **\$141 billion** to the federal deficit...[Read More](#)



## **A Rhode Island Alliance for Retired Americans HealthLink Wellness Report by Dr. Joseph Boffa**

*International Journal of Health Sciences*

*Published by American Research Institute for Policy Development  
CDC grant award H75DP002301-01 Healthy Aging Program*

### **The Physician, the Community and Health Care Reform©**



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Since 2000 the Rhode Island Alliance for Retired Americans fostered HealthLink Wellness a program committed to reducing the risk of chronic disease among retirees by promoting health screening, health education and exercise. Its strategy has been to develop partnerships that engage the retiree through their social networking. Starting in 2010 we added a network of primary care physicians who provided medical back up for community based outreach efforts. Essential to the communication process was the use of scientifically derived outcome measures as a means of monitoring both individual and total group health status.

One such measure used since the inception of the program is an estimate of the ten year probability of coronary heart disease developed by the Framingham Heart Study. In 2013 The American College of Cardiology/American Heart Association (ACC/AHA) established guidelines and health monitoring tools for the prevention of cardiovascular disease which includes both cardiac and blood vessel health. In this study we applied their new index to screening data collected at health fairs and participating physician offices in 2010 and 2011. We found it to be a quick and effective way for both community and medical office to compare on-going progress. Since the new index has the endorsement of both ACC and AHA it was readily accepted by our physician partners.

In addition to screenings that include blood glucose, blood pressure and cholesterol levels, we also asked retirees if they were currently being monitored for diabetes, hypertension and elevated cholesterol, all major contributors to chronic disease. We also asked if they were prescribed drugs for those same conditions. Results were that 87.1% of the retirees reported being monitored for any one of the three conditions. Of those monitored, 36.8% were monitored for one, 37.1% for two and 13.2% for all three conditions. In addition retirees exhibited a wide array of obesity concerns as measured by the BMI. The use of empirically derived health monitoring tools aided both HealthLink and medical offices to communicate on a real time basis and combine efforts in targeting both the individual and group.

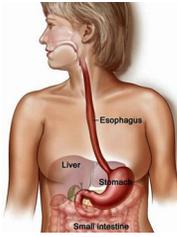
Future reform will require strong communication links among doctor, patient and community resource. But also the use of empirically derived outcome measures makes it possible to measure health as the ultimate outcome of healthcare delivery and not just the repair of disease once it occurs.

**To view the complete Report, go to: [http://www.health-link.com/aripd/ijhs/ijhsbofv3n1p1\\_7.pdf](http://www.health-link.com/aripd/ijhs/ijhsbofv3n1p1_7.pdf)**

## Senior men with history of reflux disease need test for Barrett's Esophagus

New treatment for common digestive condition Barrett's Esophagus also recommended by landmark study

By Tucker Sutherland, editor



Men over 60 with 10-year history of a serious form of reflux disease should be screened for Barrett's esophagus, which makes them more likely to develop a rare cancer called esophageal adenocarcinoma.

This recommendation was published by U.K. researchers who also found that invasive procedures are often not the best option to treat and diagnose patients suffering from Barrett's.

While Barrett's esophagus doesn't cause symptoms, many people with Barrett's have **gastro esophageal reflux disease** (GERD), which does cause symptoms. GERD is a more serious, **chronic** form of **gastro esophageal reflux**, a condition in which **stomach** contents flow back up into your **esophagus**. Refluxed stomach acid that touches the lining of your esophagus can cause **heartburn** and damage the cells in your esophagus. [Read More about Barrett's Esophagus below news story.](#)

## Tango may not cure Parkinson's but puts new step in their walk

Study looked at changes in patients' motor abilities following a 12-week tango course

A little tango dancing for patients with Parkinson's disease (PD), who are usually senior citizens over 60, may not have improved their motor functions but it did significantly improve their balance and functional mobility. Maybe most importantly, it seemed to encourage greater appreciation of their therapy, improve cognitive functions and reduce fatigue.

The study looked at changes in patients' motor abilities following a 12-week tango course, and is also the first study to assess the effect that tango has on non-motor symptoms.

[Read More: More about Parkinson's disease.](#) • [Parkinson's Disease Also called: Paralysis agitans, Shaking palsy](#)



## Alzheimer's study points finger of blame at immune system

Search for treatment, cure seems headed in new direction today after Duke study

The search for a cure or treatment of Alzheimer's disease appears to be going in a new direction today. New research points the finger of blame away from "plaques" and "tangles" and toward a failure of the immune system.

A Duke University study published in the *Journal of Neuroscience* found that cells in the immune system that normally protect the brain from infection will begin to consume a key nutrient, arginine, during the early stages of Alzheimer's.

The researchers blocked this process in lab mice with a small-molecule drug, difluoromethylornithine (DFMO), which prevented the brain plaques and the loss of memory. This stopped the damage caused by arginase, an enzyme which breaks down arginine.

"Plaques and tangles in the brain are two of the main features of Alzheimer's disease," according to the [National Institute on Aging](#). "The third is the loss of connections between nerve cells (neurons) in the brain."...[Read More](#)



## A Great Story on Eddie Beard, A true Champion for the Elderly.

Mark Patinkin: A visit with Eddie Beard, former congressman battling Parkinson's

Edward P. Beard has been out of the public eye for over a decade, since retiring from his longtime job as Providence's director of senior affairs. Then last month, a news story mentioned Beard showed up at a public hearing to speak against Medicaid cuts.

Eddie Beard, a former three-term congressman and longtime Providence director of senior affairs, lives in the Elmhurst Extended Care Center in Providence. "My mind is still clear," he says of living with Parkinson's disease. "My body's failing me"

..... [Read the full story](#)



*The Providence Journal/Bob Thayer*  
By Mark Patinkin, Journal Staff Writer

## Tylenol kills the pain but also keeps you from enjoying it too much

‘Rather than just being a pain reliever, acetaminophen can be seen as an all-purpose emotion reliever’ - popular with many senior citizens; used often for arthritis pain

by Jeff Grabmeier, Ohio State



Researchers studying the commonly used pain reliever acetaminophen found it has a previously unknown side effect: It blunts positive emotions.

In the study, participants who took acetaminophen reported less strong emotions when they saw both very pleasant and very disturbing photos, when compared to those who took placebos.

Acetaminophen, the main ingredient in the over-the-counter pain reliever Tylenol, has been in use for more than 70 years in the United States, but this is the first time that this side effect has been documented.

Previous research had shown that acetaminophen works not only on physical pain, but also on psychological pain. This study takes those results one step further by showing that it also reduces how much users actually feel positive emotions, said Geoffrey Durso, lead author of the study and a doctoral student in social psychology at The Ohio State University.

“This means that using Tylenol or similar products might have broader consequences than previously thought,” Durso said.

“Rather than just being a pain reliever, acetaminophen can be seen as an all-purpose emotion reliever.” Durso conducted the study with Andrew Luttrell, another graduate student in psychology at Ohio State, and Baldwin Way, an assistant professor of psychology and the Ohio State Wexner Medical Center’s Institute for Behavioral Medicine Research. Their results appear online in the journal *Psychological Science*....[Read More](#)

## Dramatic rise in cost of long term care may shock seniors and their children

New Genworth cost of care study has some good news – home health care cost increasing slower than facility care

For senior citizens it may be hard to not get depressed when reading the latest report from Genworth on the cost of long term care in the U.S. It just keeps on climbing at a pace well above inflation or the growth in Social Security benefits. The 2015 Cost of Care study has one bit of better news, however, the cost of home health care, which most seniors seem to prefer, is rising more gradually than the cost of care in nursing homes or assisted living facilities.

“There is something very difficult about facing some of the challenges and issues that come with aging, including the high costs of long term care services,” said Tom McInerney, president and chief executive officer at Genworth. This twelfth annual report was released in New York....[Read More](#)



The New England ARA state affiliates are actively pursuing these Petitions.

**Petition Subject: Observation Status: “Current Hospital Issues in the Medicare Program”**

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**Petition Subject: House Concurrent Resolution 67 and Senate Concurrent Resolution 26 to get power doors installed in Post Offices and other federal buildings.**

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**Petition Subject: Elimination of the Unfair GPO and WEP Provisions of the Social Security Act to make sure the Congress of the United States enacts legislation, HR 3118 & S 896**

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