



## April 27, 2015 E-Newsletter

### Senate Finance Committee Approves “Fast Track” Trade Promotion Authority Bill

The Senate Finance Committee **voted** 20-6 on Wednesday to approve the Trade Promotion Authority Bill (“fast track”) that would allow the President greater powers to negotiate the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). With these expanded negotiation powers, **President Obama’s** deal would only be subject to an up-or-down vote in the Senate, without the possibility to make amendments or open and full debate.

A companion bill in the House Ways and Means Committee also passed yesterday. Prior to the votes, the Alliance sent **letters** to members of the Ways and Means and Finance Committees urging them to oppose the deal.

The TPA Bill will face major scrutiny on the Senate and House floors, as both Congressional Democrats and Republicans are split on the fast track bill and the coming TPP. If passed, the TPP will likely decrease the availability of certain generic drugs and limit the ability of the federal government to secure discounted pricing for drugs under the Medicare and Medicare programs.

**Richard Fiesta**, Executive Director of the Alliance, said “We will continue trying to make inroads with Senators and House members to ultimately stop this bill from becoming law and raising prescription drug prices.”

### OFFICE OF CONGRESSMAN JIM LANGEVIN

*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: April 21, 2015*

*CONTACT: Meg Geoghegan 401-732-9400*

#### LANGEVIN STATEMENT ON FAST TRACK FOR TPP

Washington, D.C. - Congressman Jim Langevin (D-RI) issued the following statement in response to the introduction of legislation that would give the administration fast-track authority to negotiate the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) trade agreement:

"The United States has been working with TPP negotiating partners for more than three years. This agreement could greatly shift global trading patterns and accordingly deserves the highest level of scrutiny to ensure it does not displace U.S. jobs or undermine our country's competitiveness. While I favor expanding global trade, it is important that any free trade agreement places American workers and companies on an enforceable level playing field with foreign trading partners when it comes to labor rights, environmental regulation, intellectual property protection and other critical issues. For that reason, I am opposed to passing Trade Promotion Authority legislation with respect to the TPP.

"Congress has the responsibility to set trade policy, and 'fast track' procedures largely circumvent this important review. There is a better way to make decisions of this magnitude that significantly impact America's place in the global economy, and that must include robust debate and discussion from all partners, including Congress. I will continue to work to ensure that trade agreements protect American workers and consumers and do not undermine America's ability to compete in the global market."



### Republicans Split on Changes to Medicare

The Fiscal Year 2016 House budget includes a proposal to turn Medicare into a voucher system, a position long advocated by Rep. Paul Ryan (R-WI). Such a proposal would likely involve significant cuts to Medicare beneficiaries.

While many Republicans have long sought to “reform” Medicare by privatizing it or slashing it in other ways such as raising the eligibility age, many, particularly in the Senate, are concerned that this may put their seats at risk in the 2016 elections...[Read More](#)

## Deadly pancreatic cancer cells steered back into normal cells

Ability of treated cancer cells to form tumors greatly diminished in test with mice



Deadly pancreatic cancer cells were coaxed into reverting back toward normal non-cancerous cells by a protein called E47. The success of this new research provides hope for treatment of this disease that kills 40,000 a year in the U.S.

“For the first time, we have shown that overexpression of a single gene can reduce the tumor-promoting potential of pancreatic adenocarcinoma cells and reprogram them toward their original cell type. Thus, pancreatic cancer cells retain a genetic

memory which we hope to exploit,” said Pamela Itkin-Ansari, Ph.D., adjunct professor in the Development, Aging, and Regeneration Program at Sanford-Burnham and lead author of the study published today in the journal *Pancreas*.

### E47 turns the clock back

E47 binds to specific DNA sequences and controls genes involved in growth and differentiation.

The study, a collaborative effort between Sanford-Burnham, UC San Diego, where Itkin-Ansari holds a joint appointment, and Purdue University, generated human pancreatic ductal adenocarcinoma cell lines to make higher than normal levels of E47.

The increased amount of E47 caused cells to stall in the G0/G1 growth phase, and differentiate back toward an acinar cell phenotype.

In studies where the reprogrammed cancer cells were introduced into mice, their ability to form tumors was greatly diminished compared to untreated adenocarcinoma cells....[Read More](#)

## Breast Cancer to Make Big Jump in U.S. but Some Encouraging Research News

Cancer researchers hear fasting may lower risk, combo drug may break breast cancer resistance, more below; increase in senior women over 70

The bad news about breast cancer is there are expected to be a 50 percent increase in U.S. cases by 2013, compared to 2011, according to research presented at a meeting of the American Association for Cancer Research. But there was also a ton of good news among the many research reports being presented that have found encouragement in the fight against this killer of women – primarily senior women.

This increase in cases is driven mostly by a marked increase in cases of women older than 70 and in estrogen receptor (ER)-positive tumors, according to research presented here at the American Association for Cancer Research ([AACR Annual Meeting 2015](#)). Interestingly, proportion of new breast cancer cases among women ages 50 to 69 is expected to decrease.

“Managing this clinical burden will present a huge challenge,” said [Philip S. Rosenberg, PhD](#), a senior investigator in the division of cancer epidemiology and genetics at the [National Cancer Institute](#) (NCI).

“The one silver lining is that we expect fewer ER-negative tumors, which include the most difficult-to-treat HER2-positive and triple-negative subtypes.”

According to Rosenberg, during the next several decades, 40 million American women who were born between 1946 and 1964 will face high absolute risks for postmenopausal breast cancer, which for the average woman is estimated to be 2 percent to 4 percent over a 10-year period....[Read More](#)

Table 1. Estimated New Female Breast Cancer Cases and Deaths by Age, US, 2013\*

Age (Yrs)	In Situ Cases	Invasive Cases	Deaths
<40	1,900	10,980	1,020
<50	15,650	48,910	4,780
50-64	26,770	84,210	11,970
65+	22,220	99,220	22,870
<b>All ages</b>	<b>64,640</b>	<b>232,340</b>	<b>39,620</b>

\*Rounded to the nearest 10.

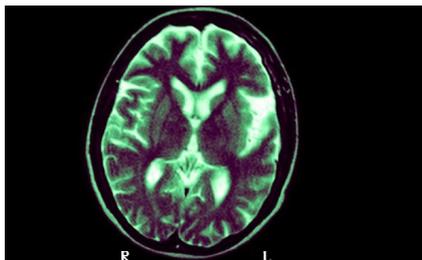
Source: Total estimated cases are based on 1995-2009 incidence rates from 49 states as reported by the North American Association for Central Cancer Registries. Total estimated deaths are based on data from US Mortality Data, 1995-2009, National Center for Health Statistics, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

American Cancer Society, Surveillance and Health Services Research, 2013

## Alzheimer's 'breakthrough': Addenbrooke's Hospital recruits first humans for testing diabetes drug

Patients over 50 with early Alzheimer's recruited for research in Cambridge after study finds drug Liraglutide might reverse some damage caused in later stages of disease

By Laura Donnelly, Health Editor



MRI of an Alzheimer disease

Men and women with early Alzheimer's disease are being recruited to a trial for a drug which could be the first treatment to reverse progression of the condition. Scientists say that if the £5m study is successful, it will herald the most significant breakthrough in the treatment of dementia for more than 30 years.

A landmark study last autumn on mice found that the drug Liraglutide, which is already used in the treatment of diabetes – appeared to reduce the damage caused by dementia and result in memory improvements.

Mice with late-stage Alzheimer's given the drug performed significantly better on an object recognition test and their brains showed a 30 per cent reduction in the build-up

of toxic plaques.

The new study, led by Imperial College London, will recruit more than 200 men and women in their 50s, with early onset Alzheimer's disease, to a year-long trial during which their brains will be scanned and their memory function tested.

If the drug is found to reverse damage to the brain, or to stall disease progression, the drug could be the first treatment to prevent Alzheimer's disease, and offered more widely within five years, scientists said.

Alzheimer's disease is the most common cause of dementia; it is predicted there will be more than 520,000 people in the UK with the disease in 2015....[Read More](#)

## Medicare accountable care medical groups cover almost two-thirds of U.S.

Now 424 ACOs dedicated to better care for seniors, others in Medicare fee for service

Almost 70 percent of the U.S. population now lives in communities served by accountable care organizations (ACOs), which were created by Obamacare to provide Medicare patients with better coordinated and higher quality health care. A new analysis also shows that 44 percent live in areas served by two or more ACOs.

The figures come from [new research](#) by the consulting firm Oliver Wyman, based on the Department of Health and Human Services' announcement of the latest class of ACOs approved to participate in Medicare's ACO programs.

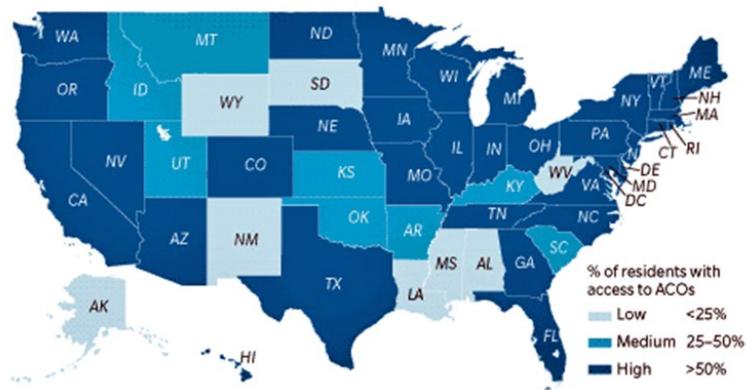
The latest round of approvals in January brings the total of Medicare ACOs to 426, up from 368 in January 2014 and 134 in 2013. Oliver Wyman has identified an additional 159 ACOs, bringing the estimated total to 585, an increase of 12 percent from the previous year.

"One of the key reforms in the Affordable Care Act is creating Accountable Care Organizations (ACOs). ACOs, are groups of doctors, hospitals, and other health care providers that have agreed to work together to give their Medicare patients better coordinated, high quality care," according to the [CMS blog](#) at the time of the last announcement in January.

"To the extent that they succeed in providing more effective and efficient care, they can share in the savings to the Medicare program. Interim financial results for 114 ACOs that began work in 2012 show that they generated \$128 million in savings for the Medicare trust fund in the first year —while maintaining high quality patient care.

"Additionally, initial results from an independent evaluation of 23 Pioneer ACOs, which are those that have more experience with coordinated care, show that they saved the Medicare program \$147 million in their first year of operation."...[Read More](#)

Access to ACOs varies widely by geography, but in more than half of states, a majority of the population could receive care from an ACO

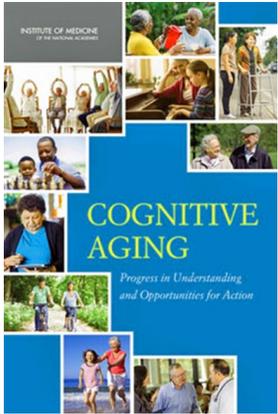


Source: Oliver Wyman analysis  
owy.mn/ACOUupdate2015

# Senior citizens need to understand Cognitive Aging – not Alzheimer's or dementia

New free report from Institute of Health is a good source for understanding the mental challenges of aging

By Tucker Sutherland, editor-publisher, SeniorJournal.com



As one who for years nursed a mother as she faded into the abyss of Alzheimer's and has written extensively on senior citizen topics, I am stunned at how little we know about "cognitive aging." Still, AD and memory problems come up almost every time two or more senior citizens get together. A new book that is available free from the Institute of Medicine has already made me a whole lot better informed on cognitive aging and I hope it gets wide distribution.

It is actually a new report just released by the IOM that does a good job of explaining the public health dimensions of cognitive aging as separate from neurodegenerative diseases, such as Alzheimer's and other dementias.

Besides being packed with information, the authors of **Cognitive Aging: Progress in Understanding and Opportunities for Action** call for increased research on assessing and maintaining cognitive health in older adults.

The term "cognitive aging" is relatively new, the book says, and therefore the public is less familiar with it than with terms for brain diseases such as dementia and Alzheimer's disease. The level of awareness of Alzheimer's disease is very high – generally well above 90 percent in older Americans.

But most seniors still have little understanding about the topic of dementias and tend to assume all cognitive problems – memory in particular – are related to dementia, as opposed to a normal aging process...[Read More](#)

## Seniors 75 and older may find statins guard against heart attack, stroke

...but should they be given to senior citizens not already taking them to protect against cardiovascular events

By Michelle Klampe

Statins could be a cost-effective tool for preventing heart attacks and other cardiovascular incidents in adults over age 75, but the benefits would need to be weighed against potential side effects, a study being published this week in the Annals of Internal Medicine has found.

"Statins look promising as an intervention for this population, but there are concerns about potential physical or cognitive side effects," said the study's lead author, **Michelle Odden**, an assistant professor of epidemiology in OSU's College of Public Health and Human Sciences.

"It's not all good or all bad; we're in a gray area," said Odden, who is affiliated with OSU's **Center for Healthy Aging Research**.

"That's where patient preference becomes important. People who are concerned about the side effects should have a conversation with their health care provider."...[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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