



© RI ARA 2014  
All Rights Reserved

# RI ARA

*“Fighting for the future of our members.  
NOW, more than ever!!!!”*

*Affiliated with the Rhode Island AFL-CIO*

**RI ARA HealthLink Wellness**

**August 11, 2014 E-Newsletter**



Published in house by the  
RI ARA  
Publication 2014 / Issue 32

## Social Security Celebrates its 79th Birthday



A limited form of the Social Security program began as a measure to implement "social insurance" during the Great Depression of the 1930s, when poverty rates among senior citizens exceeded 50 percent. The stock market crash of 1929 had destroyed the value of many Americans' retirement savings, and bank failures did further damage

The Social Security Act was enacted August 14, 1935. The Act was drafted during President Franklin D. Roosevelt's first term by the President's Committee on Economic Security, under Frances Perkins, and passed by Congress as part of the New Deal. 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. By signing this Act on August 14, 1935, President Roosevelt became the first president to advocate federal assistance for the elderly

On August 14, 2014, Social Security's will celebrate its 79th birthday. This is a joyful day for the seniors of America & Rhode Island! Thanks to Social Security, seniors can pay their bills, buy groceries, and maintain their independence. Last month we celebrated Medicare's 49<sup>th</sup> birthday.

According to the latest Social Security Trust Fund Report it projects Social Security's cumulative surplus to be roughly \$2.8 trillion in 2014, growing to about \$2.9 trillion around 2020. The report reaffirms that, without any changes, Social Security can pay full benefits until 2033 and three-quarters of benefits after that, unchanged from last year's report.

But retirees and workers should be very concerned over the drastic changes some of the elected officials want to make that would threaten the dream we all have for a safe and secure retirement.

These changes would include cuts to Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid – not to just one of these programs, but to all three! There are leaders who want to cut Social Security benefits by fooling with the cost of living adjustment; and some Governors actually refusing federal funds that would expand Medicaid in their states. And when it comes to Medicare, many want to pass costs onto seniors through benefit cuts, means testing, increasing the Medicare eligibility age, or privatization.

Today, as in 1930's, Americans are still burdened with the same problems, including old age, poverty, unemployment, and the burdens of widows and fatherless children.

Many of today's retirees are struggling to get by, but without Social Security, it would be much harder to make ends meet. As private pensions become a thing of the past, we need to make sure we preserve and strengthen these key ways to help older Americans.

As retirees celebrate Social Security's birthday, let's remember that it has been one of America's greatest success stories, keeping generations of Americans out of poverty. But yet for too many politicians, whenever they talk about budget deficits, they falsely blame Social Security. The fact is that Social Security is fully-funded by worker and employer taxes.

**We need to tell Congress, “DON'T CUT SOCIAL SECURITY, PROTECT, IMPROVE & INCREASE IT”.**

The RI ARA will celebrate Social Security, Medicare & Medicaid's birthdays on August 29, 2014 at the Salvatore Mancini Activity & Resource Center from 11 am to noon with two Birthday Cakes. See to flyer on page three for more details. Come help us CELEBRATE!!!!

## Message to Young People: Social Security Will Be There For You, Unless You Let Wall Street Take It Away From You

By Neil H. Buchanan, [verdict.justia.com](http://verdict.justia.com)



This week, the Trustees of the Social Security Administration issued their annual report on the state of Social Security's finances. This annual exercise is required by law, and it gives people who wish to do away with the system a yearly excuse to fulminate against our national retirement program.

Unfortunately for the fear-mongers, Social Security is not—and never was—facing a crisis. In fact, this year's Trustees' report was deemed to be so lacking in news value that The New York Times relegated its short article about the report to page A14 of the print edition. As things stand, any problems that might arise with the system are two decades away, and even those problems would be minor and easily manageable.

Although there are policy changes that could be adopted today to make even those problems less likely, there is no need to expend political capital doing so. After all, the only thing that Congress could do, even if it were not in total gridlock, is to reduce future benefits for today's younger workers. But if that were to become necessary, the changes could certainly be made when the need had become clear. And if changes are ultimately unnecessary, then we would have needlessly harmed future retirees by jumping the gun today.

Despite all of these facts, of course, the public has been bombarded by a decades-long campaign of misinformation, with conservative politicians claiming that Social Security is "going broke" and that the Baby Boom generation is somehow using Social Security to cheat the generations to follow. This is completely untrue, but the ceaseless blizzard of falsehoods has had an impact, especially in convincing younger people that Social Security is taking their payroll taxes now but will be long gone before they retire.

Therefore, it is important that young people learn the truth, which is that Social Security will be there for them, and it will give them a foundation for living a dignified retirement. It is, of course, always a good idea for each person to save additional amounts for the future, but younger Americans should not fear that they will be denied Social Security benefits when they are ready to retire. - **See more at** [Thank you NH ARA for sharing this article.](#)

---

## Patient-Centered Medical Homes Reduce Costs for Medicare Patients

**Medicare costs for patients receiving care from PCMHs grew slower than for other Medicare patients, rates for emergency room visits, acute care hospitalizations lower, too**

By Stephanie Stephens, *HBNS Contributing Writer*

The patient-centered medical home (PCMH), introduced in 2007, is a model of health care that emphasizes personal relationships, team delivery of care, coordination across specialties and care settings, quality and safety improvement, and open access. As the number of PCMHs has increased, a new report in the journal *Health Services Research* finds the model offers a promising option to reduce health care costs and utilization of some health care services.

"When we looked at the literature, we found that the overall evidence is still fairly limited in terms of how well the model actually works," said corresponding study author, Martijn van Hasselt, Ph.D., of the nonprofit RTI International in Research Triangle Park, N.C.

"Among the more consistent findings is that PCMHs tend to be associated with improved quality of care and better patient experience with care. Evidence remains fairly mixed, however, with respect to the cost of care, hospital admissions or emergency room visits."

The study examined patterns of health care use and expenditures for Medicare fee-for-service beneficiaries from a sample of PCMHs recognized by the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) and a set of practices without that designation.

The use of a standard definition of a PCMH, with auditing by NCQA, has been lacking in many of the published studies on PCMHs to date.

The research team used data collected from fee-for-service beneficiaries between 2007 and 2010. "We thought that if any effect was present, it would likely be seen in the Medicare population, and in particular for patients who are in poorer health," he said....**[Read More](#)**





# Rhode Island Alliance *for* Retired Americans



**Save the Date, August 29, 2014**

**The RI ARA will Celebrate  
two great events,**



## **Social Security's 79th Birthday**

**The Social Security Act was signed into law  
on August 14, 1935 by President Roosevelt**

## **Medicare & Medicaid's 49th Birthday**

**The Medicare & Medicaid programs were  
signed into law on July 30, 1965  
By President Lyndon B. Johnson**

**At the Salvatore Mancini Recourse &  
Activity Center**

**2 Atlantic Blvd., North Providence, RI  
11:00 am to 12:00 noon**

**Come help us celebrate these historic events with:  
Alliance *for* Retired Americans Executive Director,  
*Rich Fiesta***

**RI Senators: *Jack Reed & Sheldon Whitehouse*  
RI Congressmen: *Jim Langevin & David Cicilline***

**We will serve Coffee & Birthday Cake**

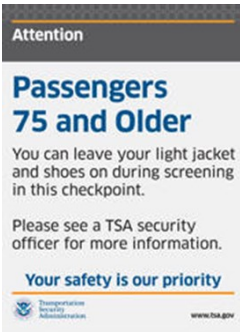
**There will be 10 Door Prizes  
Of \$10 CVS Gift Cards**



## Senior Citizens 75 and Older Can Now Board Airlines a Lot Easier

Transportation Security Administration helping elderly free but others can move through check-in lines even faster... but it cost money.

By Tucker Sutherland, editor, [SeniorJournal.com](#)



Most of us senior citizens who fly on commercial airlines wish for the good old days – the days before 9-11 - when airline boarding and travel was simple. Those days are gone forever but the Transportation Security Administration has taken steps recently to make air travel at least a little bit easier for senior citizens age 75 and older.

And it is totally free!

Passengers 75 and older receive modified screening procedures as part of TSA's "overarching risk-based security methodology." These procedures are similar to screening procedures for passengers 12 and under and improve screening by better focusing security resources on passengers who may be more likely to pose a risk...[Read the full article.](#)

## New Long-Term Treatment for COPD Approved by FDA

One of nation's biggest killers is most often found in senior citizens, current or former smokers, women

A new long-term treatment for the third largest killer of U.S. citizens - chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) – was approved today by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. Striverdi Respimat (olodaterol), an inhalation spray, is for the treatment of patients with COPD, including chronic bronchitis and emphysema that are experiencing airflow obstruction. Striverdi Respimat can be used once daily over a long period of time.

COPD, which is most prevalent among senior citizens, especially those age 65 to 74, is a serious lung disease that makes breathing difficult and worsens over time. Symptoms include wheezing, cough, chest tightness, and shortness of breath. Cigarette smoking is the leading cause of COPD.

According to the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, COPD is the third leading cause of death in the United States.

"The availability of this new long-term maintenance medication provides an additional treatment options for the millions of Americans who suffer with COPD," said Curtis Rosebraugh, M.D., M.P.H., director of the Office of Drug Evaluation II in the FDA's Center for Drug Evaluation and Research...[Read More](#)



## Aging Immune System May Get Kick-Start from Discovery of Molecular Defect

'Old stem cells are not just sitting there with damaged DNA ready to develop cancer, as it has long been postulated'



There's a good reason seniors over 60 are not donor candidates for bone marrow transplantation. The immune system ages and weakens with time, making the elderly prone to life-threatening infection and other maladies, and a UC San Francisco research team now has discovered a reason why.

"We have found the cellular mechanism responsible for the inability of blood-forming cells to maintain blood production over time in an old organism, and have identified molecular defects that could be restored for rejuvenation therapies," said Emmanuelle Passegué, PhD, a professor of medicine and a member of the Eli and Edythe Broad Center of Regeneration Medicine and Stem Cell Research at UCSF.

Passegué, an expert on the stem cells that give rise to the blood and immune system, led a team that published the new findings online July 30, 2014 in the journal *Nature*. Blood and immune cells are short-lived, and unlike most tissues, must be constantly replenished. The cells that must keep producing them throughout a lifetime are called "hematopoietic stem cells." ...[Read More](#)

"The decline of stem-cell function is a big part of age-related problems. Achieving longer lives relies in part on achieving a better understanding of why stem cells are not able to maintain optimal functioning."

Emmanuelle Passegué, PhD

## Simple Telephone Support a Great Relief for Caregivers of Dementia Patients

Program potentially less expensive than in-person treatment options, more convenient for many caregivers



Caregivers for dementia patients must deal with enormous stress and many suffer depression. A new study has found, however, that a support program simply by telephone can significantly reduce depression and other problems for informal caregivers, such as family or friends, and is as effective as face-to-face intervention programs.

"Those caring for people with Alzheimer's disease or other forms of dementia are often under a great deal of pressure," said principal investigator Geoffrey Tremont, Ph.D, of the division of neuropsychology in the department of psychiatry at Rhode Island Hospital.

"This pressure and stress can lead to depression in the caregiver, or to negative reactions, or even to behavior problems exhibited by the individual with dementia."

The study by Rhode Island Hospital researchers is published online in advance of print in the journal *Alzheimer's & Dementia*. . . . [Read More](#)

## Surgeon General Issues Call to Action to Prevent Increase in Skin Cancer

**Skin cancer rates are rising, major reason is it primarily strikes seniors and that population group is increasing rapidly**

Skin cancer, the most commonly diagnosed cancer in the U.S., is a major public health problem that requires immediate action, according to a new Call to Action released today by the U.S. Surgeon General. Melanoma, the deadliest skin cancer, primarily strikes and kills senior citizens. The damage that causes the cancer, however, is usually done by ultraviolet radiation exposure while victims are younger.

Even though most skin cancers can be prevented, rates of skin cancer, including melanoma, are increasing in the United States. Nearly 5 million people in the U.S. are treated for skin cancer every year, at an average annual cost of \$8.1 billion. It is also one of the most common types of cancer among U.S. teens and young adults. . . . [Read More](#)



Surprisingly, melanoma skin cancer can occur in strange places, like the bottom of your foot.

[Read the Call to Action to learn how to prevent skin cancer –](#)

## Spanish Friday Alert now Available

The *Friday Alert* will now be available each week in Spanish! To see last week's *Alerta Semanal*, go to <http://tinurl.com/mq7gprv>. For the Alliance's Spanish language page, which includes fact sheets and other translated documents from the main site, go to <http://tinurl.com/nllcz6n>. More outreach from the Alliance to the Hispanic elder community will be coming in the next few months.

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

**Petition Subject: Observation Stays: "Current Hospital Issues in the Medicare Program"**

ADD YOUR NAME

**Get The Message Out:  
SIGN THE PETITION!!!!**

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

ADD YOUR NAME

**Get The Message Out:  
SIGN THE PETITION!!!!**

**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**

ADD YOUR NAME

**Get The Message Out:  
SIGN THE PETITION!!!!**