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RI ARA

*Affiliated with the Rhode Island AFL-CIO
"Fighting for the future of our members,
NOW, more than ever"!!!!*



Publication 2015 / Issue 30
Published in house by the
RI ARA

August 3, 2015 E-Newsletter



Retirees Mark Medicare's Golden Anniversary with More Than 120 Events Coast to Coast

(Washington, DC) July 27, 2015-- Recognizing the essential role that Medicare has played in helping older Americans live healthier, longer and more financially secure lives, members of the Alliance for Retired Americans are pulling out all the stops to host nearly 120 events to celebrate and educate the public about the importance and necessity of the program on its 50th birthday on July 30.

Events are happening over the next two weeks from Hawaii to Florida and Maine to California ranging from teach-ins and rallies, to birthday parties with music and policy discussions with members of

Congress. For example, Peter Yarrow of Peter, Paul and Mary will perform at an event in Coho, New York on July 30. Rallies are planned in Oakland and Los Angeles and at the State Capitol building in Hartford. Smaller events are planned at local gathering spots in Cincinnati and numerous senior centers in other states.

In addition, members of the Alliance will join House and Senate leaders on Capitol Hill on July 29. A list of locations is available [here](#) and at www.medicare50th.org/events.

"Fourteen percent of Americans are over the age of 65. Thanks to Medicare, they have a high quality of life in retirement without sacrificing their standard of living or burdening their loved ones with medical bills," said Richard Fiesta, executive director of the Alliance for Retired Americans. "Medicare is a success story. It's improved and strengthened families, the U.S. health care system and the lives of older Americans and the disabled. We're encouraging our retiree members to speak out to make sure that it is preserved for future generations."

A recent Kaiser Family Foundation [poll](#) found that a strong majority of Americans and Medicare beneficiaries believe it is an important program and favor keeping it intact. Despite this bipartisan public support, Republicans in Congress have introduced dozens of bills that would reduce services and increase costs for beneficiaries, and the leading Republican presidential candidates have all signaled that they want to cut and/or change the fundamental nature of this earned benefit.

"Current and future retirees must be wary of those politicians who are seeking radical changes that would make it harder for seniors and disabled Americans to see a doctor or fill a prescription," said Fiesta. "Telling our stories about the difference Medicare has made in families' lives is important."

The Alliance has created a special website www.medicare50th.org which highlights a few Medicare stories from our members, provides information about anniversary events, and allows visitors to share their experiences with Medicare. It also includes an interactive timeline that highlights key dates in the history of the program.

"Affordable health care for seniors took years to make a reality and would not have happened without committed, grassroots activism. Today's Alliance members do not take these earned benefits for granted and will continue to speak out to ensure that Medicare remains strong for our children, and for our grandchildren.

RI ARA Celebration, August 14th, Johnston Senior Center

No cost-of-living adjustment for Social Security in 2016?



Lost in the news surrounding the release of the 2015 Social Security Trustees report is the likelihood that Social Security beneficiaries won't see a cost-of-living adjustment increase, or COLA, in 2016. According to the Trustees, Social Security beneficiaries can expect to receive a COLA increase of 0.0 percent. That's right ... a goose egg.

But first, let's review the more-discussed news from the report. While the outlook for Social Security's combined trust funds is slightly improved, the overall trend for program finances is still very negative. The Trustees report a one-year improvement in the estimated exhaustion dates for both Social Security's Old-Age and Survivors Insurance (OASI), or retirement, trust fund (from 2034 to 2035), as well as its combined OASI and Disability Insurance (DI) trust funds (from 2033 to 2034). The Trustees again project the disability trust fund will be depleted in the fourth quarter of 2016 — just in time for the general elections...[Read More](#)

In Honor of Medicare's 50th Anniversary, Alliance Members Hold Celebrations Nationwide

Retirees and allies around the country participated in more than 100 Medicare events celebrating 50 years of guaranteed health coverage for seniors this week. In Washington, DC, the Alliance for Retired Americans participated in a celebratory press conference with House Democratic Leader **Nancy Pelosi** (CA) and Reps. **Doris Matsui** (CA), **Jan Schakowsky** (IL), **Xavier Becerra** (CA), and **Joe Crowley** (NY) to honor the program's accomplishments and reiterate support for preserving it for the future. Alliance executive director **Richard Fiesta** and Alliance member **Susan Thomas** of Maryland spoke at the event. You can watch the video on [YouTube](#). Minutes later, U.S. Senate Democratic Leader **Harry Reid** (NV) led a Senate celebration.



RI ARA President,
John A. Pernorio
Celebrating with
RI Congressional
Delegation

From Maine to Hawaii, Spokane to Miami, Alliance members celebrated in unique ways. Check out the pictures on our [Facebook page](#).

"Today's Medicare system is an enormous success that didn't happen on its own," said **Barbara Easterling**, President of the Alliance. "It took years of advocacy by older Americans, organized labor, and their allies to enact this program. Now we must continue to fight to strengthen and improve these earned benefits for future generations."

"Thank you to all of our members across the country who worked so hard to make this anniversary one we will all remember," added **Ruben Burks**, Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance.



Save the Date, August 14, 2015
The **RI ARA** will **Celebrate** two great events,
Social Security's 80th Birthday
The Social Security Act was signed into law
on August 14, 1935 by President Roosevelt
Medicare & Medicaid's 50th Birthday
The Medicare & Medicaid programs were
signed into law on July 30, 1965
By President Lyndon B. Johnson
At the Johnston Senior Center



**Come help us celebrate these historic events with
Members of the Rhode Island Congressional Delegation
RI Department of Elderly Affairs Director**



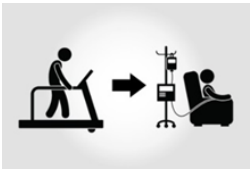
Charles Fogarty
Social Security Administration
Metropolitan Public Affairs Specialist
Catherine LeBlanc
RI AFL-CIO President
George Nee
Johnston RI Mayor
Joseph Polisena

We will serve Coffee & Birthday Cake
50 free Birthday event t-shirts
Door Prizes: 10 / \$10 CVS Gift Cards



To Boost Patient Health, Rehab Sometimes Starts Before Cancer Treatment

By Michelle Andrews



Cancer patients who do rehabilitation *before* they begin treatment may recover more quickly from surgery, chemotherapy or radiation, some cancer specialists say. But insurance coverage for cancer “prehabilitation,” as it’s called, can be spotty, especially if the aim is to prevent problems rather than treat existing ones.

It seems intuitive that people’s health during and after invasive surgery or a toxic course of chemo or radiation can be improved by being as physically and psychologically fit as possible going into it. But research to examine the impact of prehab is in the beginning stages.

Prehabilitation is commonly associated with orthopedic operations such as knee and hip replacements or cardiac procedures. Now there’s growing interest in using prehab in cancer care as well to prepare for treatment and minimize some of the long-term physical impairments that often result from treatment, such as heart and balance problems.

“It’s really the philosophy of rehab, rebranded,” says Dr. Samman Shahpar, a physiatrist at the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago....[Read More](#)

Just-Approved Cholesterol Drug Could Offer Millions A Pricy New Medication Option

The drug, Praluent, has demonstrated the power to drive down levels of LDL cholesterol to numbers almost never seen in adults. **Its cost is \$14,600 a year.**

USA Today: FDA Approves New Cholesterol Drug - At \$14,600 A Year

Up to 10 million Americans will soon have a new option for lowering their cholesterol – at a price of \$14,600 a year. The Food and Drug Administration surprised much of the medical community Friday by broadly approving a new cholesterol drug for a vast potential patient population. The agency approved Praluent for people with an inherited condition that causes very high levels of LDL, or bad cholesterol, as well as for the millions of Americans who have had heart attacks, strokes or other types of heart disease and whose LDL is higher than it should be...[Read More](#)



Trifecta that dramatically shortens life - diabetes, stroke, heart attack

Rate of death: doubles with 1, up 4 times with 2, 8 times with all 3

This is a trifecta you don’t want in any order – diabetes, stroke and heart attack. Your risk of death increases substantially with each additional condition. For example, a 60-year old senior with two of these has a reduced life expectancy of 12 years, says the new research.

And, it is not surprising that with a history of all three, this older adult can expect their longevity to be about 15 years shorter.

The researchers estimated even greater reductions in life expectancy in patients with multimorbidity at younger ages, such as 23 years of life lost in patients with 3 conditions at the age of 40 years.

In this analysis that included nearly 1.2 million participants and more than 135,000 deaths, mortality associated with a history of diabetes, stroke, or heart attack was similar for each condition, and the risk of death increased substantially with each additional condition a patient

had, according to a study in the July 7 issue of JAMA.

The prevalence of cardiometabolic multimorbidity (a tongue-twister defined in this study as a history of 2 or more of diabetes mellitus, stroke or myocardial infarction (heart attack) is increasing rapidly.

The results suggest that estimated reductions in life expectancy associated with cardiometabolic multimorbidity are of similar magnitude to those previously noted for exposures of major concern to public health, such as lifelong smoking (10 years of reduced life expectancy) and infection with the human immunodeficiency virus (11 years of reduced life expectancy).

Considerable evidence exists about the mortality risk of having any of these conditions alone. However, evidence has been sparse about life expectancy among people who have 2 or 3 cardiometabolic conditions at the same time, according to background information in the article....[Read More](#)



Senior citizens should consider success of wireless health apps – life-saving idea

Apple leading with help of many others to promote better health through smartphones

By Tucker Sutherland, editor



Senior citizens, often not on the leading edge of using new technology, may want to push themselves a little to look at the rapidly growing use of health apps, often for smart phones, that thousands of seniors and others are using to achieve better health and avoid deadly events like heart attacks.

“Smartphone apps are the latest tools to emerge from the intersection of health care and Silicon Valley, where tech companies are also working on new ways of bringing patients and doctors together online, applying massive computing power to analyze DNA and even developing ingestible ‘smart’ pills for detecting cancer,” according to Brandon Bailey, a technology writer with the Associated Press.

He has just published a news report, [Software turns smartphones into tools for medical research](#), that reports “More than 75,000 people have enrolled in health studies that use specialized iPhone apps, built with software Apple Inc. developed to help turn the popular smartphone into a research tool,” he writes.

“Once enrolled, iPhone owners use the apps to submit data on a daily basis, by answering a few survey questions or using the iPhone's built-in sensors to measure their symptoms.”

Bailey features a 56-year-old Parkinson's disease patients working to “live a normal life” and is enrolled in a clinical trial, where she uses her iPhone together information about her condition, such as her walking gait.

Apple is deadly serious about the use of smart phones to achieve better health. ... [Read More](#)

Consumers' Satisfaction With Coverage Linked To Out-Of-Pocket Expenses

By [Michelle Andrews](#)

How much money people have to fork over when they go to the doctor can make a big difference in how satisfied they are with their health plan, a recent study suggests.

“It looks like it's boiling down to costs,” says Paul Fronstin, director of the Employee Benefit Research Institute's health research and education program and the author of the [report](#).

The annual online survey by EBRI/Greenwald & Associates of 3,887 people examined issues related to consumer-directed health care, generally defined as plans with high deductibles that are linked to savings accounts that consumers can use to pay medical expenses. Study participants were grouped into three categories: consumer-driven health plan members who had a deductible of at least \$1,250 for individual coverage or \$2,500 for family coverage and access to a health savings account or similar savings vehicle; high-deductible health plan members who had the same deductible thresholds but no savings account; and so-called traditional plan members who had plans with lower deductibles. ... [Read More](#)



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

Petition Subject: Observation Status: “Current Hospital Issues in the Medicare Pro-

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

**Petition Subject: House Concurrent Resolution 37 and Senate Concurrent Resolution 12 to get
power doors installed in Post Offices and other federal buildings.**

**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.973 & S.1651**

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

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