



Statement by Retiree Leader Richard Fiesta on the 2014 Social Security and Medicare Trustees Reports

The following statement was issued by Richard Fiesta, Executive Director of the Alliance for Retired Americans, in response to Trustees reports issued today on the Social Security and Medicare Trust Funds:



Washington, DC –Monday, July 28, 2014, “The most important lesson from the 2014 Social Security Trustees Report is that Social Security has a large and growing surplus. Today’s report 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.

“The Medicare Trustees report reminds us once again that the Affordable Care Act is controlling health care costs. It is great news that the life of the Medicare Trust Fund has been extended by another four years to 2030. Attempts to repeal health care reform would only undo the progress we have made in controlling health care costs.

“Current and future retirees must be wary of those politicians who will use today’s Social Security and Medicare Trustees reports as political cover for radical changes that would put seniors, the disabled, and the families of deceased workers at risk. For instance, we do not need to cut Social Security to address the projected shortfall in the disability trust fund. Rather, we just need a technical adjustment. Congress should, as it has done multiple times before, simply reallocate income across these funds.”

“More and more politicians are actually advancing proposals to expand Social Security. One example, the Strengthen Social Security Act (S.567 and H.R. 3118), introduced by Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA) and Rep. Linda Sanchez (D-CA), would increase annual Social Security benefits by an average of \$800. That is an improvement to our retiree system, and we support it.

“The 49th anniversary of President Lyndon Baines Johnson signing Medicare into law will be this Wednesday, July 30. That means next year, Medicare turns 50 – and the Alliance for Retired Americans intends to make sure Medicare is still strong then, and for our children, and for our grandchildren.”

Medicare’s Hospital Trust Fund Flush Until 2030: Good News for Boomers, Seniors

News not so good on Social Security: projected to run out of disability benefit money in 2016, just two years from now, unless Congress intervenes

By Julie Rovner, KNH Staff Writer

Medicare’s Hospital Insurance Trust Fund, which finances about half the health program for seniors and the disabled, won’t run out of money until 2030, the program’s trustees said Monday. That’s four years later than projected last year and 13 years later than projected the year before the passage of the Affordable Care Act.

Unlike Medicare, however, the part of Social Security that pays for people getting disability benefits is in far more immediate danger. The Disability Insurance Trust Fund is projected to run out of money in 2016, just two years from now, unless Congress intervenes, the trustees said... [**Read More**](#)



Seniors Celebrate Medicare's 49th Birthday with More than 50 Events across the Country

Washington, DC – Wednesday, July 30, 2014, Seniors celebrated Medicare's 50th birthday on Wednesday with more than 50 events nationwide, including a Capitol Hill event with House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (CA), Democratic Caucus Chairman Xavier Becerra (CA), and Reps. Doris Matsui (CA) and Jan Schakowsky (IL).

Also speaking at the Capitol Hill event was Diane Fleming, a member of the Alliance for Retired Americans from Washington, DC. Medicare has been a lifeline for her since the airline that employed her for nearly four decades went bankrupt, and she lost much of her pension.

Other Alliance events around the country include fifteen celebrations at Social Security offices across the state of California; protests at the offices of Representatives who have voted to cut Medicare, such as Rep. Steve Southerland, in Tallahassee, Florida; and events at senior centers in places such as Oshkosh, Wisconsin.

"Medicare is the most successful health care program in America's history. This birthday celebration kicks off our Medicare Turns 50 Campaign, leading up to Medicare's 50th anniversary on July 30th, 2015," said Richard Fiesta, Executive Director of the Alliance.

"We are now the inheritors of Medicare. We are here to preserve and protect it, and make sure proposals such as those contained in the Paul Ryan budget - which would cut Medicare funding by turning it into a voucher program - never become law," Fiesta added.

Medicare Pilot Program Scraps Hospital Stay Requirement for Skilled Nursing Care



In a pilot program created under the provisions of the Affordable Care Act, some Medicare patients are being exempted from a controversial requirement that seniors be admitted to the hospital for at least three days in order to qualify for coverage of follow-up skilled nursing facility (SNF) care. The requirement has drawn scrutiny in recent months as thousands of Medicare patients have discovered they were ineligible for coverage of medically necessary skilled nursing care as a result of spending time in the hospital under "observation status." Patients held under observation status are considered outpatients during hospital stays. According to *The Washington Post*, in the last six years the number of observation status patients ineligible for Medicare-covered SNF care has increased by 88%. Medicare officials say that the pilot program may be expanded nationwide if it leads to improved care and cost savings. For more on the program, go to <http://tinyurl.com/nak9hgb>.

"The abuse of 'observation status' should not stand between seniors and medically necessary care. By removing the hospital stay requirement, this program will hopefully improve seniors' access to the Medicare benefits they have earned," said **Barbara J. Easterling**, President of the Alliance.

Medicare Experiment Could Signal Sea Change for Hospice Care

**What is hospice care? How does it differ from palliative care?
And, curative care? Being changes in care for oldest and sickest Americans**

By Michelle Andrews, KHN Writer

Diane Meier is the director of the Center to Advance Palliative Care, a national organization that aims to increase the number of palliative care programs in hospitals and elsewhere for patients with serious illnesses. Meier is also a professor of geriatrics and palliative medicine at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in New York City. We spoke about a recently launched pilot program under the health law that allows hospice patients participating in the pilot to continue to receive life-prolonging treatment. This is an edited version of that conversation.



There's a lot of confusion about how hospice care differs from palliative care. Maybe we should start by clearing up what those terms mean....[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**



Fish Oil May Help Protect Alcohol Abusers from Dementia

Up to 90% less inflammation, death in brain cells of drinkers after exposure to omega-3 DHA



Anything that reduces the risk of dementia is of high interest to most senior citizens. New research says one way – at least for those who drink alcohol regularly - is to take omega-3 fish oil. The researchers discovered it will protect against inflammation and neuronal cell death that damages the brain in alcohol abusers and can lead to dementia.

The study was conducted by Michael A. Collins, PhD, Edward J. Neafsey, PhD, and colleagues at Loyola University Chicago Stritch School of Medicine, and collaborators at the University of Kentucky and the National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA). It was published in the journal *PLOS ONE*.

Collins and colleagues exposed cultures of adult rat brain cells over several days to concentrations of alcohol equivalent to about four times the legal limit for driving – a concentration seen in chronic alcoholics. These brain cultures were compared with cultures exposed to the same high levels of alcohol, plus a compound found in fish oil called omega-3 docosahexaenoic acid (DHA).

Researchers found there was up to 90 percent less neuroinflammation and neuronal death in the brain cells exposed to alcohol plus DHA than in the cells exposed to alcohol alone...[Read More](#)

Therapy for Alzheimer's Disease

Previous work with mice found cognition improved, nerve cell loss was reduced when microtubule protein stabilized

Scientists are reporting new progress on a set of compounds initially developed for cancer treatment that shows promise as a potential oral treatment for Alzheimer's disease. Currently, no cure exists for the devastating neurological disease that affects more than 5 million Americans – primarily senior citizens.

In a healthy brain, the protein known as tau binds to and stabilizes microtubules, which are cellular components made of protein inside cells. Microtubules are critical for performing many processes in the cell, such as growth and division.

In the brain, they are particularly important for transporting molecules or other "cargo," such as nutrients. But in people with Alzheimer's disease, tau doesn't bind well to microtubules and clumps up in the brain. That leaves microtubules in disarray.

Scientists believe that this process leads to the mental problems associated with Alzheimer's disease, including memory loss, dementia and ultimately nerve cell death...[Read More](#)



Senior Citizens Who Walk Slowly Can Expect Dementia to Catch Up with Them

Series of research reports in recent years have dire predictions for slow walking seniors, including a shorter life



If you are a senior citizen and you walk very slowly, you have some things to worry about. The latest is a report from a study of 27,000 seniors age 60 or older that declares it can predict dementia in the future of those who walk slowly and have cognitive complaints. Another study early this year says slow walking seniors are less happy and have shorter longevity. In fact, a study of seniors in 2011 says how fast they walk is a better gage of how long they will live than trying to do a more complicated analysis of their medical condition and history.

The new study involving older adults on five continents found that nearly 1 in 10 met criteria for pre-dementia based on a simple test that measures how fast people walk and whether they have cognitive complaints.

People who tested positive for pre-dementia were twice as likely as others to develop dementia within 12 years. The study, led by scientists at [Albert Einstein College of Medicine](#) of Yeshiva University and [Montefiore Medical Center](#), was published online on July 16, 2014 in *Neurology*®, the medical journal of the American Academy of Neurology...[Read More](#)

False Memories May Be Result of Not Getting Enough Sleep

Findings raise questions about reliability of eyewitnesses who may have experienced long periods of restricted or deprived sleep



Numerous recent studies have grabbed the attention of senior citizens with results showing that lack of adequate sleep can cause people – seniors in particular – numerous problems with cognition, memory and even disease. Now the scientist say lack of sleep can even cause us to create false memories. The possible good news for seniors is this study was with college students.

In this study, published in *Psychological Science*, a journal of the Association for Psychological Science, sleep-deprived people who viewed photographs of a crime being committed and then read false information about the photos were more likely to report

remembering the false details in the photos than were those who got a full night's sleep.

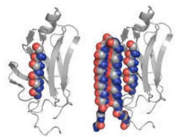
Previous research has demonstrated that failing to get your full eight hours interferes with cognitive functioning. But psychological scientist Steven J. Frenda of the University of California, Irvine noticed a gap in the literature when it came to sleep and memory...[Read More](#)

Alzheimer's, Other Diseases a Step Closer to Treatment with New Protein Structure

Stops harmful changes of body's normal proteins into state linked to diseases such as Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, heart disease, Type 2 diabetes and Lou Gehrig's disease

Michelle Ma, University of Washington

There is no cure for Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia, but University of Washington bioengineers are one step closer to finding a treatment. They have designed a peptide structure that can stop the harmful changes of the body's normal proteins into a state that's linked to widespread diseases such as Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, heart disease, Type 2 diabetes and Lou Gehrig's disease.



The synthetic molecule blocks these proteins as they shift from their normal state into an abnormally folded form by targeting a toxic intermediate phase...[Read More](#)

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
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**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!!!!**