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# RI ARA

*"Fighting for the future of our members,  
NOW, more than ever!!!!"*

*Affiliated with the Rhode Island AFL-CIO*



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## December 15, 2014 E-Newsletter

### Solutions not Bailouts

#### A Comprehensive Plan from Business and Labor to

#### Safeguard Multiemployer Retirement Security, Protect Taxpayers and Spur Economic Growth.

On December 7, 2014, we observed the 73<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary of the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor by the Japanese. This was "A day in infamy for United States citizens".

On Wednesday December 9, 2014, pensioners witnessed their own surprise attack by the Congress of the United States, **A Comprehensive Plan from Business and Labor to Safeguard Multiemployer Retirement Security, Protect Taxpayers and Spur Economic Growth**, "A day in infamy for pensioners & spouses".

As lawmakers pressed on Monday, December 8<sup>th</sup>, to finalize the legislative language of a must-pass omnibus spending bill, labor unions and retiree groups were mobilizing to defeat what they are characterizing as a lame-duck sneak attack on the pensions of some already-retired workers.

At issue is an effort led by Reps. John Kline and George Miller, the top Republican and Democrat on the House Education and Workforce Committee, to bring reforms to troubled multi-employer pensions. The exact language of the proposal had not yet been announced, and it was not clear whether House leaders had in fact decided whether it would be attached to the spending bill.

Opponents—including the United Steel Workers union, the Laborer's International Union of North America, the AARP, and the Pension Rights Center—suggest that such a major decision by Congress should undergo hearings and other public airings and not be made in the waning days of a lame-duck session as an attachment to a spending bill. Some opponents have even issued alerts in recent days to their members to call their lawmakers.

December 9/2014, the deal is reached to allow pension plans to cut benefits. A bipartisan group of congressional leaders reached the deal Tuesday evening that would for the first time allow the benefits of current retirees to be severely cut, part of an effort to save some of the nation's most distressed pension plans.

The measure, attached to a massive \$1.01 trillion spending bill, would alter 40 years of federal law and could affect millions of workers; many of them part of a shrinking corps of middle-income employees in businesses such as trucking, construction and supermarkets.

This abrupt action has alarmed some pension rights advocates, who are concerned about a decline in retirement security for all Americans. They also worry about a creeping trend toward trimming pensions, citing retirement benefit cuts for government employees in Detroit and elsewhere.

### Congress sends Obama \$1.1-trillion spending bill

#### Congress cleared a \$1.1 trillion spending bill for President Barack Obama's signature late Saturday night

The pension provision was a bipartisan agreement that opens the door for the first time to benefit cuts for current retirees covered by multi-employer funds in shaky financial condition.

Supporters said it would protect retirement income to the maximum extent possible without also endangering the solvency of the government fund that guarantees multi-employer plans. Critics said it posed a threat to the pension recipients, and that it could also become a precedent for other pensioners.

"Once again, **THANK YOU RI CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION** for standing with & supporting Rhode Islanders. Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid and now **EARNED PENSIONS** are all under attack from both parties. When will this end, when we have only Wall Street, the Koch's & Walton's running this country?

This will open the flood gates for all pension funds to reduce pensions" said **John A. Pernorio, RI ARA President**

→ [Click here to read the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2015](#) ←

## Seniors Need to Understand Hospice, Palliative Care - Free Videos Online

**National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization expands its available video resources to focus on advance care planning, grief, caregiving and more**



Hospice and palliative care are things we seldom think about. So, many of us have just a foggy idea of what it is, and, too often, have to get a crash course when the need arises. Senior citizens and their caregivers need to be better informed and the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization is making it easier with a group of videos that can be viewed free online.

For more than forty years, hospices in the U.S. have been caring for patients and families at life's end and hospice has grown to serve more than 1.6 million terminally ill people every year. Yet, professionals in the field still see a need for basic information about hospice, advance care planning, caregiving and grief.

**The NHPCO has added to its available video resources to offer new videos, touching on four timely topics:**

- **facts about hospice,**
- **advance care planning tips,**
- **understanding grief,** and
- **caregiver stress.**

The videos are available on **Moments of Life: Made Possible by Hospice** – NHPCO's national engagement campaign. Moments of Life is known for the many videos and stories of actual patients and families that share the ways that hospice has helped them live as fully as possible.

These new videos are instructional in nature and provide information about common experiences that people share when coping with issues at the end of life:

- **Understanding Hospice** – Shares ten facts about hospice care that people may not realize.
- **Grief: A Part of Living** – Helps explain grief and offers tips about coping with loss.
- **Planning for End-of-Life Care** – Discusses ways to start the important conversation with friends and family about end of life issues, including what to do when the worst happens.
- **Caregiver Stress** – Offers signs of caregiver burnout ideas about caring for the caregiver.

“The importance of patients and families understanding the range of options when facing a serious or life-limiting illness was highlighted in the recent Institute of Medicine report, ‘Dying in America,’ so we hope these videos will add to resources available to families,” said J. Donald Schumacher, NHPCO president and CEO.

NHPCO developed these new videos in collaboration with the Internet educator Knowlera, creator of the online information portal, MonkeySee.com. A previous series of videos explaining the basics of hospice care that was created in 2010 has reached millions of viewers online

- Visit **Moments of Life: Made Possible by Hospice** website, which features stories on people who have benefited from this service and provides more information about hospice and palliative care.
- The National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization (NHPCO) is the largest nonprofit membership organization representing hospice and palliative care programs and professionals in the United States. Visit **National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization** website
- More about preparing for the **end of life** at National Institutes of Health's Senior Health website.

## Dance helps people with Parkinson's, maybe healthy senior citizens, too

**Ballroom dancing could help people with Parkinson's improve their balance and mobility, and maybe do the same for other seniors**

*By Tucker Sutherland, editor, SeniorJournal.com*

Researchers at the University of Southampton, UK, recently announced that participants in their study who had Parkinson's and took part in ballroom dance lessons improved their balance, confidence and posture. They are not the first to discover that dancing can make life better and safer for Parkinson's patients, who are also almost exclusively senior citizens. Maybe seniors without PD should also consider how this exercise reduced falls in the PD group.

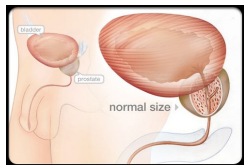
One clear risk factor for Parkinson's is age. The average age of onset is 60 years and the risk rises significantly with advancing age...**Read More**



**Watch video for better understanding of program for PD**

## Common prostate cancer treatment associated with decreased survival in older men

### Evidence growing that androgen deprivation therapy may lead to earlier death



A common prostate cancer therapy - androgen deprivation therapy (ADT) - should not be used in men whose cancer has not spread beyond the prostate, says a study led by researchers at Henry Ford Hospital. The findings are particularly important for men with longer life expectancies because the therapy exposes them to more adverse side effects, it is associated with increased risk of death and it deprives men of the opportunity for a cure by other methods.

In ADT an injectable or implanted medication is used to disrupt the body's ability to make testosterone. ADT is known to have significant side effects such as heart disease, diabetes, increased weight gain and impotence; however a growing body of evidence suggests ADT may in fact lead to earlier death.

Since the 1940s, the therapy has been a mainstay of treatment for prostate cancer that has metastasized, or spread beyond the prostate gland. Still other studies support the use of ADT when it is used as an adjuvant, or in addition to, radiation therapy for higher risk prostate cancer. No evidence exists to support the exclusive use of ADT for low risk or localized prostate cancer....[Read More](#)

## Protecting brain health of seniors is goal of new campaign

### Nearly 13% of seniors, age 60 plus, reported increased confusion and memory loss in last 12 months

A national campaign has been launched by the Eldercare Locator to better educate the public about the risks to brain health for senior citizens and simple strategies to help mitigate those risks.

The Eldercare Locator is a program established and funded by the Administration for Community Living (ACL) and administered by the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a).

In recent surveys of people over the age of 50, worry about the ability to stay mentally sharp is consistently ranked among the top concerns, surpassing such issues as having an adequate retirement fund or the ability to meet health care expenses.

The number of reported cases of brain health-related conditions is expected to rise with the aging of the baby boomer population. In a 2011 survey conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), nearly 13 percent of respondents, age 60 and older, reported increased confusion and memory loss in the preceding 12 months. Of that number, over 35 percent said they experienced functional difficulties that might require services and supports now, or in the future.

A brochure entitled, Brain Health: You Can Make a Difference is the centerpiece of the campaign, containing recommendations and resources to help older adults take charge of their brain health as they age. The information in the publication draws from materials developed by ACL, in partnership with the National Institutes of Health and the CDC....[Read More](#)



**Brain Health**  
You Can Make a Difference!

## Powerhouse vegetables and fruits for your healthy menu choices

### Watercress leads the list, red pepper best fruit – failing to make list:

#### raspberry, tangerine, cranberry, garlic, onion, and blueberry



Senior citizens who want to eat healthy, and most do, should probably put more emphasis on eating watercress. It was ranked number one among 41 “powerhouse” fruits and vegetables in a study published earlier this year in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention journal “Preventing Chronic Disease.”

Watercress, Chinese cabbage, chard, beet greens and spinach top the list of the healthiest vegetables and fruits, according to research conducted by Jennifer Di Noia, PhD, an associate professor of sociology at William Paterson University in Wayne, N.J.

The top four fruits are red pepper, pumpkin, tomato and lemon.

The federal government’s [Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2010](#) recommend consuming a variety of vegetables each day because different vegetables are rich in different nutrients. Research as shown that higher consumption of vegetables may protect against some diseases, including some types of cancer.

National nutrition guidelines consistently emphasize consumption of powerhouse fruits and vegetables (PFV), foods most strongly associated with reduced chronic disease risk; yet efforts to define these PFV has been lacking before this study....[Read More](#)

## Bad signs on horizon although flu season off to slow start

Early check of dominant viruses indicate a severe season,  
less protection from vaccine, but better than nothing for seniors

The good news about the 2014-15 flu season is that so far influenza activity is slow. This, however, is swamped by the potential bad news – it is looking like this could develop into a rough season with a high death rate and this season's flu vaccine may not been the best match to beat back the viruses that are showing up. Still, senior citizens should get a flu shot! You will fair better than without it.

“It's too early to say for sure that this will be a severe flu season, but Americans should be prepared,” said Centers for Disease Control and Prevention director Tom Frieden, M.D., M.P.H.

“We can save lives with a three-pronged effort to fight the flu: vaccination, prompt treatment for people at high risk of complications, and preventive health measures, such as staying home when you're sick, to reduce flu spread.”

The CDC urges immediate vaccination for anyone still unvaccinated this season and recommends prompt treatment with antiviral drugs for people at high risk of complications who develop flu....[Read More](#)



## Cold, flu meds risky for senior citizens with high blood pressure

Some over-the-counter meds can have negative impact on hypertension

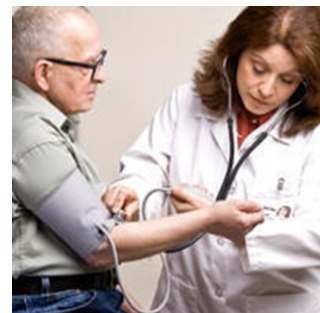
It is the season for colds and flu. Most of us seniors do not hesitate to seek quick relief from an over-the-counter (OTC) medication. Not so fast, says the American Heart Association, most senior citizens also have hypertension. Some medications taken over the counter can have a negative impact on blood pressure.

The prevalence of hypertension increases with age and is a problem for about 65 percent of Americans age 60 and older.

### The First Step

“The first step is for people with high blood pressure to know which products could cause variations in blood pressure,” says Willie E. Lawrence, Jr., M.D., a spokesman for the American Heart Association and chief of cardiology at Research Medical Center in Kansas City, Missouri....[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://tinyurl.com/mq7gpry>. For the Alliance's Spanish language page, which includes fact sheets and other translated documents from the main site, go to <http://tinyurl.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 Status: “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!!!!**