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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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Senior Citizen Political Wish List Prepared for Congress by NCOA

Aging program funding, Medicare low-income protections, senior hunger top list

While reminding members of Congress that about one-quarter of the voters this November are expected to be senior citizens (age 65 or older), the National Council on Aging is has released a senior wish list for Congress. It suggests five ways Congress can help seniors – “especially those in greatest need.”

Following is the list from the NCOA.

1. Restore funding for and modernize aging services

The Older Americans Act (OAA) funds critical services that help seniors stay healthy, independent, and economically secure in their own homes. These include programs like senior nutrition, prevention, caregiver support, and transportation.

2. Protect low-income Medicare beneficiaries

The Medicare Qualified Individual (QI) program pays Medicare Part B premiums for beneficiaries whose incomes are 120-135% of poverty—about \$13,700-\$15,300 per year. Without this assistance, these seniors would not be able to afford doctor visits.

3. Renew the Farm Bill to help fight senior hunger

Editor’s Note: The list was issued before the Farm Bill was passed late yesterday after years of battle in Congress. It is expected to be signed by President Obama on Friday.

The Farm Bill renewal is poised to boost funding for the nation’s food banks, transition the Commodity Supplemental Food Program to a seniors-only program, and test using the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) for nonprofit grocery delivery programs for seniors.

4. Introduce long-term care legislation

The number of Americans needing long-term services and supports will more than double as the boomers age. Medicare does not cover them, and private insurance is unaffordable for most people. The current system places enormous burdens on family caregivers and forces seniors to spend-down their life savings into poverty before getting help from Medicaid. A recent Long-Term Care Commission report included recommendations to improve the system.

5. Pass immigration reform

Comprehensive immigration reform would strengthen the direct care workforce, 20-23% of whom are foreign born. Direct care workers provide home care and other services that allow seniors to stay independent. Reform also would produce economic benefits to Medicare and Social Security by increasing the number of younger workers paying into these funds....[Read More](#)



Scammers Using MySocialSecurity Solicitation to Get Personal Information

Social Security Q&A also has instructions on how to get your retirement estimate online

The “my Social Security” account has been receiving considerable attention lately, including a complaint from the Social Security Advisory Board that it should not replace the annual mailed paper statement. It has also become a tool for crooks to try to grab personal information from senior citizens online, according to this week’s Social Security Q&A column. There is also information at how to get your retirement estimate online. (Click to [complaint by Advisory Board](#) or see link in sidebar.)

Links to Social Security websites will always begin with <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/> or <https://secure.ssa.gov/> (the slash after ".gov" is important)...[Read More](#)



CMS Slams Door on New Home Health, Ambulance Suppliers in Some Areas to Fight Fraud, Abuse

Patient access uninterrupted in current and new counties in agency's fraud fighting efforts

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services slammed the door yesterday on the enrollment of new home health agencies or ground ambulance suppliers in several cities and extended for six months the current enrollment moratoria in others as part of its fraud fighting efforts. The moratoria extension and imposition of the new moratoria were announced in a notice issued yesterday in the Federal Register.

"Our first use of the moratoria put fraudsters on notice that we are using all available tools, including these moratoria, to combat fraud, waste and abuse in our health care programs, while maintaining patients' access to care," CMS Administrator Marilyn Tavenner said. "Today's announcement shows we are continuing our intense fight against fraud, waste and abuse in these vital health care programs."

CMS is extending for six-months the current enrollment moratoria of home health agencies in Chicago and Miami and for Houston area ground ambulance supplier enrollments in its Medicare, Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) operations. This is the second wave of the agency's use of this powerful tool to fight fraud and safeguard taxpayer dollars while ensuring patient access to care is not interrupted.

The extension of the current moratoria applies to new enrollments for home health agencies in the Miami and Chicago metropolitan areas and to new enrollments for ground ambulance suppliers in the Houston metropolitan area (see the full list of new and extended moratoria counties below).

Existing providers and suppliers can continue to deliver and bill for services, but no new provider and supplier applications will be approved in these areas...[Read More](#)

"...the moratoria put fraudsters on notice that we are using all available tools, including these moratoria, to combat fraud, waste and abuse in our health care programs.



*"Marilyn Tavenner,
CMS Administrator*

First Guidelines for Reducing Stroke Risks in Women Presented by AHA

American Heart/Stroke Associations see unique risk for women:

influenced by pregnancy, birth control pills, migraine headaches with aura and other factors.



For the first time, guidelines have been developed for preventing stroke in women, according to a new scientific statement published in the American Heart Association journal *Stroke*.

"If you are a woman, you share many of the same risk factors for stroke with men, but your risk is also influenced by hormones, reproductive health, pregnancy, childbirth and other sex-related factors," said Cheryl Bushnell, M.D., M.H.S., author of the statement.

The guidelines outline stroke risks unique to women and provide scientifically-based recommendations on how best to treat them, including:

Women with a history of **high blood pressure before pregnancy** should be considered for low-dose aspirin and/or calcium supplement therapy to lower preeclampsia risks.

- ◆ Women who have **preclampsia** have twice the risk of stroke and a four-fold risk of high blood pressure later in life. Therefore, preeclampsia should be recognized as a risk factor well after pregnancy, and other risk factors such as smoking, high cholesterol, and obesity in these women should be treated early.
- ◆ **Pregnant women with moderately high blood pressure** (150-159 mmHg/100-109 mmHg) may be considered for blood pressure medication, whereas expectant mothers with severe high blood pressure (160/110 mmHg or above) should be treated.
- ◆ Women should be screened for high blood pressure before taking **birth control pills** because the combination raises stroke risks.
- ◆ Women who have **migraine headaches with aura** should stop smoking to avoid higher stroke risks.
- ◆ Women **over age 75** should be screened for atrial fibrillation risks due to its link to higher stroke risk.
- ◆ High blood pressure, migraine with aura, atrial fibrillation, diabetes, depression and emotional stress are stroke risk factors that tend to be stronger or more common in women than in men...[Read More](#)

Former Providence Mayor Vincent 'Buddy' Cianci Jr., is being treated at Miriam Hospital for rectal cancer. In an interview he encouraged people that "if they hadn't already done so, to get a very safe preventative colonoscopy test done today". He wished he had done it earlier to prevent what he is now going through to be cured.

RI ARA Healthlink Wellness medical staff, Dr. Boffa, Dr. Shawger & Dr. Sud also encourage members to make an appointment with a Gastroenterology Specialists to schedule a Colonoscopy.

What Is Colorectal Cancer?

What is colorectal cancer? How do you know if you have it? Here you'll find answers about colorectal cancer, including risk factors and prevention for colon cancer.

Colon cancer and rectal cancer are known together as colorectal cancer. Get started here learning the basics of these cancers.

Colon Polyps and Cancer

Many colon cancers start at colon polyps, a growth on the inside of the colon. Learn more about colon polyps so you know what to watch out for.

Causes of Colon Cancer

The exact cause of colorectal cancer is unknown, but several factors are thought to play a role.

Are You at Risk? Colon Cancer Risk Factors

Are you at risk for colorectal cancer? Actually, everyone is. Learn about key risk factors here, including diet and other lifestyle factors.

[Click here for the Colorectal Cancer Risk Factor Quiz](#)

Answer these six questions and determine your risk of colon cancer.

Family History of Colon Cancer

People who have a family history of colorectal cancer are more likely to develop the cancer themselves, particularly if you have certain gene mutations. Learn more here.

Prevention

Colon Cancer Prevention

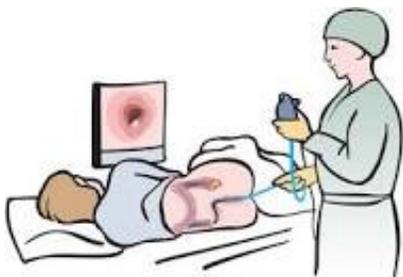
Diet and exercise, aspirin, and the right tests all have a role in colon cancer prevention. Find out what you need to know.

Colon Cancer Prevention Diet

Find out which foods can help prevent colon cancer and which foods are best to eat in small quantities.

Colon Cancer Screening

Colon cancer often has no symptoms until its later stages -- when it's more difficult to treat. Therefore, your best bet to beating colon cancer is to catch it early with screening tests...[Read More](#)



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

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!!!!!!**

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!!!!!!**

Medicare Achieves Significant Savings, Quality Improvements from Delivery System Initiatives

Medicare Accountable Care Organizations, Pioneer ACOs save \$380 million



Today, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) released findings on a number of its initiatives to reform the health care delivery system. These include interim financial results for select Medicare Accountable Care Organization (ACO) initiatives, an in-depth savings analysis for Pioneer ACOs, results from the Physician Group Practice demonstration, and expanded participation in the Bundled Payments for Care Improvement Initiative. Savings from both the Medicare ACOs and Pioneer ACOs exceed \$380 million, CMS says.

“These innovative programs are showing encouraging initial results, while providing valuable lessons as we strive to improve our nation’s health care delivery system,” HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius said.

“Today’s findings demonstrate that organizations of various sizes and structures across the country are working with their physicians and engaging with patients to better coordinate and deliver high quality care while reducing expenditure growth.”

While ACOs are designed to achieve savings over several years, not always on an annual basis, the interim financial results released today for the Medicare Shared Savings Program ACOs show that, in their first 12 months, nearly half (54 out of 114) of the ACOs that started program operations in 2012 already had lower expenditures than projected.

Of the 54 ACOs that exceeded their benchmarks in the first 12 months, 29 generated shared savings totaling more than \$126 million – a strong start this early in the program. In addition, these ACOs generated a total of \$128 million in net savings for the Medicare Trust Funds. ACOs share with Medicare any savings generated from lowering the growth in health care costs while meeting standards for high quality care. Final performance year-one results will be released later this year...[Read More](#)

Patients, Caregivers Will Have Direct Access to Lab Test Results Due to New Rule by HHS Agencies

Now patients and their designated care-givers can not only get info from physicians, but also directly from laboratories

Patients or someone they designate will soon have direct access to completed laboratory test reports from the lab performing the test. As part of an ongoing effort to empower patients to be informed partners with their health care providers, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and two other agencies in the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) joined forces to issue the new rule.



While patients can continue to get access to their laboratory test reports from their doctors, these changes give patients a new option to obtain their test reports directly from the laboratory while maintaining strong protections for patients’ privacy.

“The right to access personal health information is a cornerstone of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) Privacy Rule,” said HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius. “Information like lab results can empower patients to track their health progress, make decisions with their health care professionals, and adhere to important treatment plans.”...[Read More](#)

Clue to Why Cancer Risk Increases With Age Discovered by NIH Study

Age-related methylation may disable the expression of certain genes, making it easier for cells to transition to cancer



We have known for years that the risk of getting cancer increases with age but the reason for this has not been established. Now, researchers suspect that the accumulation of age-associated changes in a biochemical process that helps control genes may be responsible for at least some of the increased risk of cancer seen in seniors, according to a National Institutes of Health study.

They suspect that DNA methylation, or the binding of chemical tags, called methyl groups, onto DNA, may be involved. Methyl groups activate or silence genes, by affecting interactions between DNA and the cell’s protein-making machinery....[Read More](#)

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P-BRUINS VS. PORTLAND PIRATES

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**FREE P-BRUINS HAT FOR
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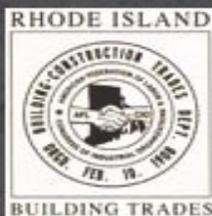
\$2 PER TICKET BACK TO BIG BROTHERS

TO ORDER TICKETS PLEASE CONTACT:

JOHN PERNORIO AT

RIARAJAP@HOTMAIL.COM

DEADLINE TO PURCHASE IS MARCH 6, 2014



- Special group rate price of only \$17 per ticket for all members, family and friends for great lower level seating!
- A free Providence Bruins hat for every child in attendance
- \$2 back to the Big Brothers of RI
- Tickets for the group will be in the lower level of the arena, usually in the corners and ends of the arena or in the 200 level center ice sections depending on availability.

This is a great event that supports our local unions and a great cause in The Big Brothers of Rhode Island!

The deadline to purchase is currently set for March 6th.