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RI ARA

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



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Senators Sanders, Warren Warn of Social Security Battle Ahead

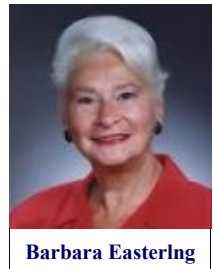


Sen. **Bernie Sanders** (I-VT) said that House Republicans have already fired a warning shot that they'll try to scale back future payouts under Social Security. Sen. Sanders mentioned the Alliance and made the statement in a report at <http://tinyurl.com/lbquhxd>. "Republicans are manufacturing a phony crisis in Social Security in order to cut the earned benefits of millions of the most vulnerable people in this country," Sanders said.

Sen. **Elizabeth Warren** (D-MA) sent a similar message to supporters on Wednesday. "We've known for years that Social Security Disability Insurance is set to run low in 2016, and most people assumed that another bipartisan reallocation was coming," Sen. Warren wrote. "But now, thanks to the Republican ideological war on our most important national safety net, disabled Americans could suddenly face a 20% cut in their Social Security checks next year."

The messages came in conjunction with a hearing on Wednesday, as top Republicans on the Senate Budget Committee challenged the White House plan to shift \$330 billion between the program's trust funds to avert deep cuts in disability payments, beginning at the end of 2016. **Carolyn Colvin**, acting commissioner for the Social Security Administration, urged senators to act first to avert the crisis at hand and then begin serious negotiations on finding a longer-term solution. She said the threatened cut in disability payments would be a "death sentence" for many of the poorest recipients.

"Rather than targeting the disabled community's lifeline, we need to expand Social Security," said **Barbara J. Easterling**, President of the Alliance. You can read more from *Politico* at <http://tinyurl.com/l77mmep>. More from *Bloomberg News* is at <http://tinyurl.com/lzv2htx>, and MSNBC's **Rachel Maddow's** comments are at <http://tinyurl.com/lamolum>.



Barbara Easterling

Alliance Members Visit Over 120 Congressional Offices during Lobby Week



Members of the Alliance visited over 120 Members of Congress and staff in their home states this week during the Presidents Day recess.

"Under the new 114th Congress, retirees issues are once again under attack from many directions including proposed trade agreements, Social Security and Medicare," said **Richard Fiesta**, executive director of the Alliance for Retired Americans. "I applaud all of the Alliance members who are taking their concerns directly to their Representatives."

Retirees are deeply concerned about the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) trade agreement and the Trade Promotion Authority (TPA) proposal, also known as "fast track." TPP has provisions that would impact prescription drug pricing, including patent extensions for biologics and medical devices. In addition, TPP could interfere with the government's ability to list and price prescription drugs and would allow pharmaceutical companies to challenge drug prices in public programs such as Medicare, Medicaid and the Veterans Administration.

Also concerning Alliance members are new rules for governing passed by the House Republicans, which included a provision prohibiting members from offering proposals to reallocate funds to the Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) fund. In addition, many in Congress have called for turning Medicare into a voucher program, raising the age of eligibility, means testing benefits, requiring home health co-pays, limiting Medigap coverage and restructuring or redesigning Medicare. Photos from the visits are at <http://tinyurl.com/ktbjhuo>. See the Alliance's updated fact sheets and Lobby Day materials at http://retiredamericans.org/issues/Lobby_Week_2015.

Because our Rhode Island Delegation is 100% in support of us, we sent e-mails thanking them.

Help Your Neighbors in Need Join Team Union Yes!



Rhode Island is in the midst of an epic winter. You can't turn on the TV or listen to the radio without hearing the impact the severe winter storms are having on our schools, roads, economy, and strained city and town budgets. What you don't hear is how this winter is impacting Rhode Island's most vulnerable residents - the elderly and disabled. Last week an 84 year old man called Serve Rhode Island after being trapped in his house for 19 days by the snow and running out of food. There are hundreds of Rhode Islanders in need of assistance digging out from the snow and ice, and with more snow predicted for this weekend there will be hundreds more.

Serve Rhode Island's Storm Assistance for the Elderly and Disabled (SAFE-D) has been doing tremendous work, but they need your help. Volunteers are needed for snow removal, telephone support, and transportation to help Rhode Islanders in need. **To help click here and be sure to enter "Team Union Yes!" in #3.**

The Rhode Island labor movement has a strong connection to Serve RI with Council 94 president Michael Downey serving as the organizations Chair and Rhode Island Federation of Teachers and Health Professionals' president Frank Flynn serving as vice-chair.

[Click here to sign up to help.](#)

Be sure to enter "Team Union Yes!" in #3.

White House Conference on Aging Kicks Off with Forum in Tampa



Richard Fiesta

Yesterday, the White House kicked off the 2015 White House Conference on Aging in Tampa, Florida with a panel on retirement security. Three Alliance members attended the conference sessions and others gathered offsite in Tampa and South Carolina to discuss the importance of strengthening Social Security, Medicare and Pensions – the three essential components to a secure retirement. “The White House Conference on Aging is a tremendous opportunity to make clear and address seniors’ biggest concerns,” said Alliance Secretary-Treasurer **Ruben Burks**.

The Alliance plans to present a petition in support of preserving, strengthening and expanding Social Security, strengthening Medicare and Medicaid, and protecting defined benefit pensions at the final White House Conference on Aging event in July. Please show your support and join us by signing our petition at <http://tinyurl.com/mppm5tm>. To read Mr. Fiesta’s *Huffington Post* column entitled *Don’t Let America’s Seniors Go Bankrupt*, go to <http://tinyurl.com/nydfmjp>.

Patient deaths from hospital-acquired conditions reduced by 50,000

Medicare blog points to success of Affordable Care Act,

Medicare’s stress on better care, HHS Partnership for Patients

By Patrick Conway, Deputy Administrator for Innovation and Quality and CMS Chief Medical Officer

Recently, a Department of Health and Human Services **report** showed that an estimated 50,000 fewer patients died in hospitals and approximately \$12 billion in health care costs were saved as a result of a reduction in hospital-acquired conditions from 2010 to 2013.

This progress toward a safer health care system occurred during a period of concerted attention by hospitals throughout the country to reduce adverse events.

These efforts were also due in part to provisions of the Affordable Care Act such as Medicare payment incentives to improve the quality of care and the HHS Partnership for Patients initiative. The Partnership for Patients, an initiative growing out of the Affordable Care Act, is a nation-wide public-private collaboration that began in April 2011 with two main goals: reduce preventable hospital-acquired conditions by 40 percent and 30-day readmissions by 20 percent.

More information about the Hospital Engagement Network solicitation may be found at FedBizOpps.gov.

CMS encourages competition from all qualified entities that will help continue to build on the successes we have made so far...**[Read More](#)**



Additional Information

- **[Partnership for Patients](#)**
- **[CMS Innovation Center](#)**

Human stem cells restore cognitive function after chemotherapy damage

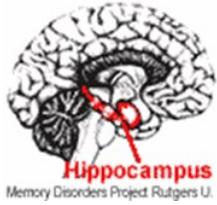
First solid evidence that transplantation of human neural stem cells can reverse chemo induced damage of healthy tissue in the brain

Human nerve system stem cell treatments are showing promise for reversing learning and memory deficits after chemotherapy, according to UC Irvine researchers.

In preclinical studies using rodents, they found that adult stem cells transplanted one week after the completion of a series of chemotherapy sessions restored a range of cognitive functions, as measured one month later using a comprehensive platform of behavioral testing. In contrast, rats not treated with stem cells showed significant learning and memory impairment.

The frequent use of chemotherapy to combat multiple cancers can produce severe cognitive dysfunction, often referred to as "chemobrain," which can persist and manifest in many ways long after the end of treatments in as many as 75 percent of survivors - a problem of particular concern with pediatric patients.

"Our findings provide the first solid evidence that transplantation of human neural stem cells can be used to reverse chemotherapeutic-induced damage of healthy tissue in the brain," said Charles Limoli, a UCI professor of radiation oncology...[Read More](#)



What is successful aging? Gerontologists still trying to reach agreement

Is the bottom line of 'successful aging' for many elderly Americans simply surviving with reasonable cognition and some mobility, or is it much broader

The debate over defining "successful aging" is raging again among the professionals in the field of gerontology. Despite books, years of research and numerous analytical articles in the past, there are 16 articles in the latest issue of *The Gerontologist*. One suggests those in the U.S. define it in more multidimensional terms than do most scholars.

"With an enhanced understanding of what successful aging is, we will be in a stronger position to develop interventions that will enable more people to age successfully," stated *The Gerontologist* Editor Rachel Pruchno, PhD, in the issue's opening editorial...[Read More](#)



Seniors face high risk of Alzheimer's, dementia from anticholinergic drugs

Senior citizens often take anticholinergic drugs, which are commonly prescribed for a wide range of common health conditions

There is nothing that strikes fear in the hearts of senior citizens more than the risk of dementia, and Alzheimer's disease in particular. A recent study found, however, a significantly increased risk for developing dementia, including Alzheimer's disease from taking commonly used medications with anticholinergic effects, which are taken frequently by older adults, often unknowingly. They even include nonprescription medicines like Benadryl.

But the stern warning about anticholinergics significantly increasing this risk among seniors failed to get the attention it probably deserves.

Senior citizens often take anticholinergic drugs, which are commonly prescribed for a wide range of health conditions. Among the most widely used anticholinergics are antihistamines, including over-the-counter allergy and cold preparations and sleeping aids used regularly by elderly people.

"Older adults should be aware that many medications - including some available without a prescription, such as over-the-counter sleep aids - have strong anticholinergic effects," said **Shelly Gray, PharmD, MS**, the first author of the report.

And the greater the use of the drugs, the higher the potential risk, according to the researchers.

"Efforts to increase awareness among health care professionals and older adults about this potential medication-related risk are important to minimize anticholinergic use over time," they said in their conclusion.

JAMA Internal Medicine published the online report, called "**Cumulative Use of Strong Anticholinergics and Incident Dementia**." The National Institute on Aging (NIA) supported the research...[Read More](#)



Type 2 Diabetes patients should exercise after dinner

Study is particularly helpful for health care providers

who have patients who exercise every day but are not seeing benefits



Individuals with Type 2 diabetes have heightened amounts of sugars and fats in their blood, which increases their risks for cardiovascular diseases such as strokes and heart attacks. Exercise is a popular prescription for those suffering from the symptoms of Type 2 diabetes, but most research has focused the benefits of different exercise methods. A news study, however, decided to look at the difference in benefits based on the time of the exercise. Doing it after dinner is best, they say.

“This study shows that it is not just the intensity or duration of exercising that is important but also the timing of when it occurs,” said Jill Kanaley, professor in the University of Missouri

Department of Nutrition and Exercise Physiology. “Results from this study show that resistance exercise has its most powerful effect on reducing glucose and fat levels in one’s blood when performed after dinner.”...[Read More](#)

Senior citizens with limited mobility reduce heart risks with just a little activity

Every minute of physical activity may lower risk of heart attack for seniors

even in their 80s and with limited mobility; amount of activity more important than the intensity

This is great news and it leaves senior citizens, even those in their 80s, and those with already limited mobility, no excuse not to try a little physical activity. A new study finds they can lower their risk of a heart attack – and coronary death – for every minute they spend in a just light physical activity.

“Reducing time spent being sedentary even by engaging in low-intensity activities could have important cardiovascular benefits for older adults with mobility limitations,” said Thomas W. Buford, Ph.D., senior author of the study and director of the Health Promotion Center of the University of Florida Institute on Aging in Gainesville, Florida....[Read More](#)



Older women active a few times weekly lower risk of heart disease, stroke, blood clot

Activities associated with reduced risk included walking, gardening, and cycling

Just a little exercise by older women is better than none, at least when it comes to lowering the risk of heart disease, stroke and blood clots. Being active just a few times a week is all it takes. Researchers were surprised to find that more frequent physical activity didn’t result in further reductions in risk. In the study published in the American Heart Association journal *Circulation*:

Women who performed strenuous **physical activity**— enough to cause sweating or a faster heart beat — two to three times per week were about 20 percent less likely to develop heart disease, strokes or blood clots compared to participants who reported little or no activity....[Read More](#)



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
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NAME

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