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# RI ARA

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NOW, more than ever!!!!”*

*Affiliated with the Rhode Island AFL-CIO  
HealthLink Wellness*



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RI ARA

## February 24, 2014 E-Newsletter

### **Liberals mobilize against potential Social Security cuts,** *By George Zornick*



President Obama’s budget is due early **next month**, and already progressives inside and outside Congress are pushing back against one potential line in the document — the Social Security cuts, in the form of “chained CPI,” that Obama has included in his budget several times in the past.

Late last week, 16 senators ranging from liberal independent Bernie Sanders to Democrat Mark Begich, who is facing a tough reelection in the red state of Alaska this fall, **signed a letter** to the White House asking the president not to include the cuts in his budget.

Meanwhile, progressive activists are getting aggressive on the issue. Campaign for America’s Future and Social Security Works **have teamed up** to urge progressives to tell the White House that chained CPI would be unacceptable.

Chained CPI is a change in how the government calculates inflation, which among other things would result in a slower rate of growth in Social Security benefits. Some economists **say that** chained CPI is a “more accurate” measure of inflation, but opponents of the policy **persuasively argue** that the elderly face a different sort of inflation, driven largely by spending on out-of-pocket health care, and that chained CPI cuts benefits when they should be expanded.

### **Seniors Celebrate Removal of Chained CPI Social Security Cut from President Obama’s Budget**

*The following statement was issued today*

*by Richard Fiesta, Executive Director of the Alliance for Retired Americans:*

“We are thrilled with reports that President Obama heard Alliance members from across the country and removed the chained CPI cut to Social Security and other programs from his 2015 budget.

“Our voices were heard. Nationwide, grassroots actions and people-powered politics worked. We applaud the President for doing the right thing: listening and keeping this unjust cut out of his budget proposal. A negotiating tactic or not, cuts to Social Security’s earned benefits will only serve to increase income inequality and hurt the most vulnerable members of our society.

“Now that the pesky chained CPI is out of the way, we can focus on the real task at hand, articulated well by members of Congress like Senators Tom Harkin (D-IA), Bernie Sanders (I-VT) and Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), as well as Rep. Linda Sanchez (D-CA), which is to expand Social Security so that it fits the retirement security needs of today.

“The Alliance for Retired Americans made eliminating the chained CPI our top priority of the past year. We held dozens of “Human Chain” events with thousands of Alliance members all across the country, and are elated that they paid off. To see more on those efforts, go to [http://retiredamericans.org/state-by-state/Human\\_Chain](http://retiredamericans.org/state-by-state/Human_Chain).

“The 4 million members of the Alliance for Retired Americans, together with our allies, will continue to do our part to educate, advocate and mobilize for retirement security for Americans who work hard and should be able to count on a secure retirement. We thank President Obama for listening to us.”



# HealthLink Wellness

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## Older Muscle Stem Cells Rejuvenated to Function Like Younger Cells, May Help Elderly Repair Muscle

Stanford researchers pinpoint why normal aging is accompanied by a diminished ability to regain strength and mobility after muscle injury

*By Krista Conger*



Researchers at the Stanford University School of Medicine have pinpointed why normal aging is accompanied by a diminished ability to regain strength and mobility after muscle injury: Over time, stem cells within muscle tissues dedicated to repairing damage become less able to generate new muscle fibers and struggle to self-renew.

“In the past, it’s been thought that muscle stem cells themselves don’t change with age, and that any loss of function is primarily due to external factors in the cells’ environment,” said Helen Blau, PhD, the Donald and Delia B. Baxter Foundation Professor.

“However, when we isolated stem cells from older mice, we found that they exhibit profound changes with age. In fact, two-thirds of the cells are dysfunctional when compared to those from younger mice, and the defect persists even when transplanted into young muscles.”

Blau and her colleagues also identified for the first time a process by which the older muscle stem cell populations can be rejuvenated to function like younger cells. “Our findings identify a defect inherent to old muscle stem cells,” she said. “Most exciting is that we also discovered a way to overcome the defect. As a result, we have a new therapeutic target that could one day be used to help elderly human patients repair muscle damage.” Blau, a professor of microbiology and immunology and director of Stanford’s Baxter Laboratory for Stem Cell Biology, is the senior author of a paper describing the research, published online Feb. 16 in *Nature Medicine*. Postdoctoral scholar Benjamin Cosgrove, PhD, and former postdoctoral scholar Penney Gilbert, PhD, now an assistant professor at the University of Toronto, are the lead authors...[Read More](#)

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## Loneliness in Older People May Increase Chance of Death by 14 Percent

Retiring to a warmer climate among strangers isn’t necessarily a good idea, if it means you are disconnected from the people who mean the most to you

*By William Harms*

Feeling extreme loneliness can increase an older person’s chances of premature death by 14 percent, according to research by psychologist John Cacioppo, one of the nation’s leading experts on loneliness.

The impact of loneliness on premature death is nearly as strong as the impact of disadvantaged socioeconomic status, which Cacioppo and his University of Chicago colleagues found increases the chances of dying early by 19 percent. A 2010 meta-analysis showed that loneliness has twice the impact on early death as obesity does, he said.

Cacioppo, the Tiffany & Margaret Blake Distinguished Service Professor in Psychology, joined other scholars at a seminar on “The Science of Resilient Aging” this last weekend at the American Association for the Advancement of Science’s annual meeting in Chicago...[Read More](#)



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## Connecting Families with Long-Forgotten Cremated Remains Is Goal of New Website

Thousands of cremated remains stacked up around the country go unclaimed

Thousands of cremated remains in the U.S. go unclaimed each year and line the storage shelves of funeral homes, cremation providers and government agencies across the country. A new website, founded by Michael Neal, a funeral director in Washington, Pa., is aimed at linking these remains with their loved ones....[Read More](#)



Name: Marie Abner  
Age: 50 years old  
Died: January 7, 1938  
Address: Oregon  
Funeral Home Name: Oregon State Hospital  
Funeral Home Address: 2600 Center St.  
Ne, Salem, Oregon, 97301  
[See full details](#)

## Death of Partner Linked with Increased Risk of Heart Attack, Stroke in Seniors for 30 Days

### Large study concludes bereavement does greatly increase risk but it is still small



A large study has confirmed what many have suspected – the risk of a heart attack or stroke increases during the 30 days following the death of a partner, at least for seniors. But, the good news from this large study is that only a small fraction of surviving partners suffers these potentially deadly events. The bad news is that the risk is about double of that for those not suffering from this bereavement.

Bereavement has been recognized as a risk factor for death and associated with cardiovascular events but not confirmed by a study of this size.

Iain M. Carey, M.Sc., Ph.D., of St. George's University of London, and colleagues compared the rate of myocardial infarction (MI, heart attack) or stroke in 30,447 older patients (60 to 89 years of age) whose partner died to that of 83,588 individuals whose partners were still alive during the same period...[Read More](#)

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## Disabled Veterans to Receive Faster Claims Processing by Social Security

### Veterans must have a VA disability compensation rating of 100% P&T \ and show proof of their disability rating with their VA Notification Letter

Social Security announced yesterday a new initiative to expedite disability claims for veterans with a Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) disability compensation rating of 100% Permanent & Total (P&T). Under the new process, Social Security will treat these veterans' applications as high priority and issue expedited decisions, similar to the way the agency currently handles disability claims from Wounded Warriors. The program begins March 17.

“Our veterans have sacrificed so much for our country and it is only right that we ensure they have timely access to the disability benefits they may be eligible for and deserve,” said Carolyn W. Colvin, Acting Commissioner of Social Security, who was joined by Congressman John Sarbanes (D-MD).

“Social Security worked with Veterans Affairs to identify those veterans with disabilities who have a high probability of also meeting our definition of disability. I am proud of our collaboration and happy to announce this new service for America's vets,” added Colvin...[Read More](#)



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## Quality Ratings Added to Physician Compare Website for Medicare, Medicaid Patients

### Diabetes and heart disease measures among new quality ratings

The Physician Compare website designed to help Medicare and Medicaid patients make informed choices in finding physicians and other health care professionals, has been enhanced by the addition of quality measures to indicate the performance achieved by hundreds of thousands of these care providers in treating specific conditions.

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) said this is the first time quality measures have been added to Physician Compare, helps consumers make informed choices about their care.

In the first year, 66 group practices and 141 Accountable Care Organizations (ACO) now have quality data publicly reported on Physician Compare. The data are reported at the group practice and ACO level.

The quality measures being added include:

- ◆ Controlling blood sugar levels in patients with diabetes.
- ◆ Controlling blood pressure in patients with diabetes.
- ◆ Prescribing aspirin to patients with diabetes and heart disease.
- ◆ Patients with diabetes who do not use tobacco.

...[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!!!!!!**

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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

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