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



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July 27, 2015 E-Newsletter

Statement by Retiree Leader Richard Fiesta on the 2015 Social Security and Medicare Trustees Reports

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



Rich Fiesta

“The Social Security and Medicare trustees today confirmed that Social Security and Medicare are not in crisis, and, in fact, continue to be in strong fiscal health.

“Throughout its history Social Security has never missed a payment, and that will continue to be the case until 2034 – one year more than last year’s projection. The Medicare Trust Fund is also strong, with sufficient funds to cover its obligations until 2030, unchanged from last year.

“Yet extremist politicians and Wall Street CEOs continue to try and manufacture crises and falsely claim that these systems are in danger. This is a cynical attempt to try and build support for unwanted, unneeded and risky changes to our earned benefits. In fact, time and again the American people have said that they support the Social Security and Medicare systems and that it is time to expand them.

“The projected deficit in the Social Security Disability Insurance Fund is serious but can be easily remedied with a technical fix. A reallocation between the trust funds has been done many times before under both Republican and Democratic leadership and would not impact the long-term solvency of Social Security. The refusal of Republican leadership to allow a simple fix – and instead put modest benefits for disabled Americans at risk – is simply shameful.

“Our country does face a retirement crisis – but that is not due to Social Security or Medicare. Sixty-two percent of households aged 55-64 have saved less than one times their annual salary, not nearly enough to sustain a family. For this reason expanding Social Security, which can be accomplished by making sure the top five percent of wage earners pay the same percentage in taxes on earnings as everyone else, is a top priority of the Alliance for Retired Americans.”

Good News, Bad News In Medicare Trustees Report

By Phil Galewitz

As Medicare approaches its 50th anniversary next week, the federal program got some welcome financial news Wednesday: Its giant hospital trust fund will be solvent until 2030, and its long-term outlook has improved, according to a report from the program’s trustees.

But the report warned that several million Medicare beneficiaries could see their Medicare Part B monthly premiums skyrocket by 52 percent in January — from \$104.90 to \$159.30. Medicare Part B, which is paid for by a combination of federal funds and beneficiary premiums, generally covers physician and outpatient costs.

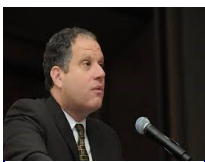
The huge rate hike is predicted because of a confluence of two factors: Medicare Part B costs increased more than expected last year, and Social Security is not expected to have a cost of living increase next year. By law, the cost of higher Medicare Part B premiums can’t be passed on to most Medicare beneficiaries when they don’t get a Social Security raise. As a result, the higher Medicare costs have to be covered by just 30 percent of Medicare beneficiaries. This includes the 2.8 million Medicare enrollees new to the program next year, 3.1 million Medicare beneficiaries with incomes higher than \$85,000 a year and 1.6 million Medicare beneficiaries who pay their premium directly instead of having it deducted from Social Security. An additional 9 million people affected by the higher rates are so called “dual eligibles” — those on Medicare and Medicaid. States pay the Medicare Part B premium for duals.

Medicare Part B premiums are set largely by a complicated formula written into law. The trustees’ predictions on premiums are typically close to the final rates that are announced each fall by the Department of Health and Human Services...[Read More](#)



Senate Highway bill deal, wrong for seniors.

Statement of Richard Fiesta, Executive Director, Alliance for Retired Americans, regarding the Senate Highway bill deal announced on July 22, 2015.



Rich Fiesta

“We are deeply troubled by this proposal. Although infrastructure investments are needed, this bill funds them the wrong way -- by robbing the Social Security trust fund.

“Americans contribute to Social Security throughout their lives and have the right to expect that those funds will not be used to fund other priorities. They are earned benefits not a piggy bank for Congress to raid at will. It is particularly galling that these cuts would come at a time when the Social Security Administration is having to close its own regional offices.

“Last month the House of Representatives tried to use Medicare funds to pay for Trade Adjustment Assistance. This recent pattern of seeking to balance the budget on the backs of older Americans is alarming and must stop.”

Update: Senate Republicans Back Down on Plan to Raid Social Security to Pay for Highways

Alliance executive director **Richard Fiesta** spoke out forcefully when a highway transportation bill that included cuts to Social Security Disability Insurance made its way toward the Senate floor Tuesday. By Wednesday afternoon Republican Majority Leader Mitch McConnell backed down and removed the Social Security cut from the bill.

Statement on Jeb Bush's Plan to Gut Medicare

July 23, 2015 For Immediate Release

The following statement was issued by Jane Lang, Vice President

of the New Hampshire Alliance for Retired Americans, regarding Jeb Bush's plan to gut Medicare

“Jeb Bush has declared war on seniors. By going after their earned Medicare benefits, he is putting our health and economic well-being at risk. Medicare was created 50 years ago this month to ensure that older Americans, who are most in need of health care services, would not have to choose between a hospital stay and keeping a roof over their head. Since then, all Americans have contributed to Medicare with the assumption that it would be there for them when they reached retirement age. We will fight against any attempt to take away our earned health care benefits and make sure that older Americans know who is on our side, and who is not.”

Statement on Jeb Bush's Plan to Gut Medicare. Watch You Tube Video



Save the Date, August 14, 2015
The **RI ARA** will **Celebrate** two great events,
Social Security's 80th Birthday
The Social Security Act was signed into law
on August 14, 1935 by President Roosevelt
Medicare & Medicaid's 50th Birthday
The Medicare & Medicaid programs were
signed into law on July 30, 1965
By President Lyndon B. Johnson
At the Johnston Senior Center

1291 Hartford Avenue

Johnston, RI 02919

11:30 am to 12:30 pm

Come help us celebrate these historic events with
Members of the Rhode Island Congressional Delegation
RI Department of Elderly Affairs Director

Charles Fogarty

Social Security Administration
Metropolitan Public Affairs Specialist
Catherine LeBlanc

RI AFL-CIO President

George Nee

Johnston RI Mayor

Joseph Polisena

We will serve Coffee & Birthday Cake

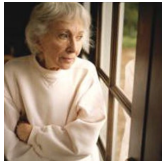
50 free Birthday event t-shirts

Door Prizes: 10 / \$10 CVS Gift Cards



Alzheimer's slams senior women much harder, more often than men

Almost two-thirds of American senior citizens with Alzheimer's disease are women



As women enter the ranks of senior citizens at age 65, their chances of developing Alzheimer's disease are much greater than that for men. And, those with mild cognitive impairment (MCI) have two times faster decline in cognition than men with MCI, according to new research reported at the Alzheimer's Association International Conference 2015.

In addition, women decline more dramatically than men in cognition, function and brain size after surgery and general anesthesia, according to another study reported at the conference.

MCI involves a slight but noticeable and measurable decline in cognitive abilities, including memory and thinking skills, but the changes are not severe enough to interfere with daily life or independent function. A person with MCI is at an increased risk of developing Alzheimer's or another dementia.

Women are at the epicenter of the Alzheimer's crisis. According to the Alzheimer's Association Alzheimer's Disease

Facts and Figures report:

- Almost two-thirds of American seniors living with Alzheimer's disease are women.
- Among those aged 71 and older, 16 percent of women have Alzheimer's and other dementias, compared with 11 percent of men.
- At age 65, women without Alzheimer's have more than a one in six chance of developing Alzheimer's during the remainder of their lives, compared with a one in 11 chance for men.
- Women in their 60s are about twice as likely to develop Alzheimer's disease over the rest of their lives as they are to develop breast cancer...[Read More](#)

Advocate For Alzheimer's Research Says Aging Baby Boomers Face Big Threat From Disease

By [Lisa Gillespie](#)

As the baby boomers age, the increasing number of patients with Alzheimer's disease will take a serious toll on caregivers and families, and the costs associated with that care are expected to weigh heavily on the nation's health care system. A new study projects that the disease will be responsible for 25 percent of all Medicare spending by 2040.

Alzheimer's is the most common form of dementia, and the number of cases is expected to balloon as people live longer: Today 5.1 million people 65 and older have it. By 2025, the number will rise to 7.1 million, a nearly 40 percent increase, the [Alzheimer's Association estimates](#). The projections have sounded an alarm amid a tightening federal budget and concerns that there won't be enough nursing facilities to take care of patients. Researchers and health policy experts are meeting in Washington this week at a [major conference](#) looking at the impact of the disease and efforts to combat it.

Dr. Maria Carrillo, chief scientific officer at the Alzheimer's Association, which paid for the research on [Medicare projections that was released Monday at the conference](#), talked with Kaiser Health News staff writer [Lisa Gillespie](#) about what the growth of Alzheimer's will mean for the nation. The interview has been edited for length and clarity...[Read More](#)



Dr. Maria Carrillo

Boomers may break Medicare bank as 28 million expected to get Alzheimer's Ignites urgent need for treatments to delay or prevent AD

If there are no significant advances in Alzheimer's treatment or prevention, as the baby boomers with Alzheimer's age, there will be a shift toward more severe forms of the disease, leading to greater Medicare costs, says new analysis.

More than 28 million baby boomers will develop Alzheimer's disease between now and midcentury, and the cost of caring for them will consume nearly 25 percent of Medicare spending in 2040, according to new research reported today at the Alzheimer's Association International Conference 2015 in Washington, D.C.

In 2020, the projected Medicare costs of caring for baby boomers with Alzheimer's in the community (\$11.86 billion, in 2014 dollars) will be 2.1% of total Medicare spending. By 2040, when the baby boom generation is aged 76-94, the projected Medicare costs (\$328.15 billion, in 2014 dollars) increase to 24.2% of total Medicare spending, according to the new analysis...[Read More](#)

Top Oncologists Push Back On ‘Outrageous’ Costs Of Cancer Drugs



More than 110 doctors from cancer centers around the country called on drug makers to justify their soaring prices and for the government to put regulatory curbs in place. They noted that every new drug approved by the Food and Drug Administration in 2014 was priced at more than \$120,000 per year.

[The New York Times: Drug Companies Pushed From Far And Wide To Explain High Prices](#)

As complaints grow about exorbitant drug prices, pharmaceutical companies are coming under pressure to disclose the development costs and profits of those medicines and the rationale for charging what they do. So-called pharmaceutical cost transparency bills have been introduced in at least six state legislatures in the last year, aiming to make drug companies justify their prices, which are often attributed to high research and development costs. (Pollack, 7/23)

[The Wall Street Journal: Doctors Object To High Cancer-Drug Prices](#)

More than 100 oncologists from top cancer hospitals around the U.S. have issued a harsh rebuke over soaring cancer-drug prices and called for new regulations to control them. The physicians are the latest in a growing roster of objectors to drug prices. Critics from doctors to insurers to state Medicaid officials have voiced alarm about prescription drug prices, which rose more than 12% last year in the U.S., the biggest annual increase in a decade, according to the nation’s largest pharmacy-benefit manager. (Whalen, 7/23)

[The Washington Post: Cancer Experts Call For Curbs On Rising Drug Prices](#)

Top cancer experts called Thursday for steps to curb the rapidly escalating price of oncology drugs, warning that the current trajectory “will affect millions of Americans and their immediate families, often repeatedly.” The commentary in the journal Mayo Clinic Proceedings, signed by 118 physicians from cancer centers across the country, cited startling, if now familiar, evidence of the dramatic rise in cancer-drug prices. (Bernstein, 7/23)

[Reuters: Experts Support Call For Lower Drug Prices](#)

A group of 118 leading cancer experts have developed a list of proposals designed to reduce the cost of cancer drugs, and support a grassroots patient protest movement to pressure drug companies to charge what they deem a fair value for treatments. The experts include former presidents of the American Society of Clinical Oncology and the American Society of Hematology. (Steenhuysen, 7/23)

[Politico Pro: Top Cancer Docs Want Patients To Join Pushback On Drug Costs](#)

More than 100 of the country’s most prominent cancer doctors are calling for a mass mobilization of patients to fight the escalating cost of new cancer drugs, which are routinely topping \$100,000 a year. (Norman, 7/23)

[Click on each link above to read the full articles](#)

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

Petition Subject: Observation Status: “Current Hospital Issues in the Medicare Program” **Get The Message Out:**
SIGN THE PETITION!!!!

Petition Subject: House Concurrent Resolution 37 and Senate Concurrent Resolution 12 to get power doors installed in Post Offices and other federal buildings.

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.973 & S.1651

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