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RI ARA

Affiliated with the Rhode Island AFL-CIO
"Fighting for the future of our members,
NOW, more than ever!!!!"



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RI ARA

June 29, 2015 E-Newsletter

In Stead of Cutting Medicare, We Need Medicare for ALL.

Dear fellow MoveOn member,

The best shot we've got at saving our broken health care system is to expand Medicare for all Americans.

But first, we have to make something very clear: Medicare critics are wrong. They say that Medicare is a problem. In fact, Medicare is more efficient than private health insurance. It's the solution.

"If more Americans were allowed to join Medicare, it could become more efficient by using its growing bargaining power to get lower drug prices, lower hospital bills, and healthier people." - Robert Reich.

Please watch and share

The Medicare Solution to spread the word about what we can and must do to secure Medicare for all.

A SERIES PRODUCED BY
MOVEON.ORG AND ROBERT REICH



On Thursday, June 25, 2015

King v. Burwell Decision a Win for Those Aged 50 - 64

Supreme Court Ruling Keeps Premiums Affordable for those not Eligible for Medicare

The following statement was issued today by Richard Fiesta, Executive Director of the Alliance for Retired Americans following the U.S. Supreme Court decision in the case of King v. Burwell:



Rich Fiesta

"With its King v. Burwell decision, the U.S. Supreme Court today confirmed that the Affordable Care Act benefits older workers and retirees and could withstand attempts to take it apart piece-by-piece though legal challenges

"The court's decision is particularly helpful to older citizens who are not yet eligible for Medicare. The ACA provides subsidies to millions of workers 50 and older so that they can have access to affordable health care under both the state and federal exchanges. Adults in this demographic are more likely to face increased costs and risks, and the insurance industry has priced coverage out of their reach in many cases. The RAND Corporation has said that **34.9% of the current ACA market is comprised of 50-64 year olds, and of that cohort, 72.6% are subsidy-eligible**

"The ACA institutes numerous delivery system reforms that help reduce the cost of health care and is a legitimate way to expand health care coverage to millions. It also offers free preventive care to seniors, helps them with their prescription drug costs by closing the "doughnut hole" gap in coverage, and extends the life of the Medicare Trust Fund by at least 12 years.

"The Alliance will continue to vigorously oppose the legislative and judicial attacks that seek to destroy the important gains working Americans made through the ACA. Republican governors and legislatures that have blocked the ACA coverage expansions at every turn should change course and act to preserve their residents' access to coverage."

From Rich Fiesta:

Dear State Presidents, Regional and CAN Board, Retiree Directors, Staff and Consultants,

Some of you, after seeing a letter from the AFL-CIO to House members, called to inquire on whether the new TAA bill includes Medicare cuts. Allow me to clarify that.

As you know, the original TAA bills included \$950 billion in cuts to Medicare to pay for TAA. The \$700 million that would be cut from Medicare through the sequester to fund TAA has been taken out in the new version. There is a new pay-for that will come from an IRS rule that goes after tax cheats. There is still a \$250 million cut in Medicare coming from hospital dialysis centers. More specifically, the provision allows acute kidney dialysis patients to now get treatment at a freestanding dialysis treatment center, which receives a lower reimbursement rate from Medicare than hospital facilities. While we are not opposed to this provision, we feel that any savings in Medicare should stay in the Medicare program and not moved to non-Medicare programs. That being said, we are no longer opposing TAA.

From ssfairness: The New Senate Repeal Bill – S.1651

Senator Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio) has introduced a new bill, S.1651, that would repeal both the GPO and the WEP. This bill will be a companion to Rodney Davis' House bill, HR 973. We are delighted to see this! We have been waiting for this bill for months. We want to thank him and the other 11 Senators who have signed on as original sponsors.

They are: Sen. Whitehouse, Sheldon [D-RI], Warren, Elizabeth [D-MA], Sen. Collins, Susan M. [R-ME], Sen. Blumenthal, Richard [D-CT], Sen. Vitter, David [R-LA], Sen. Hirono, Mazie K. [D-HI], Sen. Franken, Al [D-MN], Sen. Heller, Dean [R-NV], Sen. Murkowski, Lisa [R-AK], Sen. Baldwin, Tammy [D-WI] & Sen. Udall, Tom [D-NM].

**If one or both of your Senators are there, please thank them!
If your Senators don't appear on this list, you have WORK to do!**



Save the Date, August 14, 2015

**The RIARA 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

More info to follow



Aging Americans need eyecare most but do they have benefits?



The 50-something is nowhere near retired, although she is nearing retirement age. And she has a message for people of her generation and older.

Get annual eye exams. Your life might depend on it.

John Lahr, OD, EyeMed Medical Director and a fellow baby boomer concurs.

“The single most important thing anyone 50 years or older can do for their vision and eye health is to book an annual eye exam,” he said. “Once you pass the 50-year mark, your risk for several serious eye diseases increases and the odds of you requiring vision correction also climbs. What’s more, your optometrist may see signs of a serious physical health condition you never associated with an eye exam.”

Nobody knows better than Beall. Two years ago she went for a routine eye exam near her home outside Dayton, Ohio, not knowing that her life was about to change forever.

“I didn’t really suspect anything was wrong,” Beall said. “Maybe I was getting a little older. I thought I might need reading glasses; maybe my eyes were getting a little tired.”

Beall’s optometrist noticed an area off the side of the retina that looked unusual. After dilating her eyes, he noted what he thought was a detaching retina. Considering it an ocular emergency, her optometrist referred her to an ophthalmologist who specialized in retinal diseases. She saw that doctor later the same day and was told she had choroidal melanoma, a potentially fatal form of cancer. Doctors treated Julie with radioactive plaque therapy...[More](#)

In-Home senior project achieves better care, lower cost for Medicare

Independence at Home practices introduced with Affordable Care Act improving care, lowering costs for thousands of seniors

For years, older Americans have expressed a strong desire to stay in their homes as they age, even if they need personal care. A major step in that direction was just announced by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

Positive and promising results were achieved for senior citizens in the first year of performance of the Independence at Home Demonstration, including both higher quality care and lower Medicare expenditures. The program provides chronically ill Medicare beneficiaries with primary care services in the home setting. In the first performance year, 17 participating practices served over 8,400 Medicare beneficiaries.

"These results support what most Americans already want-- that chronically ill patients can be better taken care of in their own homes. This is a great common sense way for Medicare beneficiaries to get better quality care with smarter spending from Medicare," said CMS Acting Administrator Andy Slavitt.

"The Independence at Home Demonstration is one of the tools of the Affordable Care Act that can bring down the long-term cost of care in a patient-centered manner."

The CMS analysis found that Independence at Home participants saved over \$25 million in the demonstration’s first performance year – an average of \$3,070 per participating beneficiary – while delivering high quality patient care in the home.

CMS will award incentive payments of \$11.7 million to nine participating practices that succeeded in reducing Medicare expenditures and met designated quality goals for the first year of the demonstration....[Read More](#)



California Caps What Patients Pay For Pricy Drugs. Will Other States Follow?

By [April Dembosky](#)



Expensive specialty medicines used to treat cancer and chronic illnesses have forced some very ill Americans to choose between getting proper treatment and paying their rent.

To ease the financial burden, the California agency that governs the state’s Affordable Care Act marketplace issued landmark rules recently that will limit the amount anyone enrolled in one of those plans can be charged each month for high-end medicine.

Retired California school teacher Mikkel Lawrence has hepatitis C and has struggled to afford the medicine he needs to treat it...[Read More](#)

Is sexual intimacy between unmarried senior citizens sinful?

Rabbi guest writer for Grand Rapids Press asks fellow religious leaders their opinions



An 82-year-old widow asked in a letter to Rabbi David Krishef, "How far can we go?" She is referring to the relationship with her new found love, an 81 year old widower. The two had long marriages and do not wish to marry now. So, Rabbi Krishef put the question to other religious leaders, too.

The responses, along with many opinions from readers, is published online in MLive. "Engaging in a consensual, mature, committed relationship that included physical intimacy, especially at your ages, would be far from inappropriate," said the minister from a Hindu Temple in the conclusion of his response.

A United Church of Christ minister added, "The capacity to love and to fall in love certainly doesn't diminish with age. For many, the desire to express that love in physical intimacy doesn't either. It seems to me that Jesus' statements regarding marriage have fidelity (and the protection of the women) as their bottom line (Matthew 19:3-12). For me, that should be the measuring stick for your relationship."

Rev. Sandra Nikkel, head pastor of Conklin Reformed Church, responds, "This question sounds more like people who want to have their cake and eat it too. When she says, 'Some people we know just live together — not for us,' what I hear her saying is: We are better than that. It is obvious that she knows what the right thing to do is. Yet, she wants to find a way around it. Isn't that what we all often do? We want to calm our conscious but we also want what we want. We can't have it both ways."

A law professor writes in messages... "Sex between seniors will land you in hell? Really? Really? Is this kindergarten? Many of my students read this column. The response often is "are that that shallow?" It's time for this column, which could be a real teaching tool, to be taken over by someone with the courage to wade into the deep water of RELEVANT moral conflict and import. Something that appeals to involved citizens, the educated, and the well informed."

Another writer says..." If two older people like that want some intimacy that's only human. Leave them be!"

When should you take the car keys from an aging parent?

It's the conversation no adult child wants to have, the family dynamic few want to discuss publicly. But the pain pours out on an Alzheimer's help line, where middle-aged sons and daughters call crying, afraid to tell mom or dad it's time to stop driving, and equally afraid not to.

"That role reversal is overwhelming," said Ronda Randazzo, the manager of care consultation for the [Alzheimer's Association's Massachusetts/New Hampshire chapter](#). [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 37 and Senate Concurrent Resolution 12 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.973 & S.1651

ADD
YOUR
NAME

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