



© RI ARA 2014
All Rights Reserved

RI ARA

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

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



Published in house by the
RI ARA

March 10, 2014, 2014 E-Newsletter

President Obama Releases His 2015 Budget



President **Obama** released his 2015 budget on Tuesday. As expected, it did not include the chained CPI benefit cut to Social Security and other programs. The budget includes \$250 million to modernize customer service at the Social Security Administration in order to decrease wait times. Also, an increase in the Earned Income Tax Credit is expected to benefit 300,000 working seniors, and increased funding to the Department of Housing and Urban Development is slated to expand housing for seniors by 3,000 units. The budget also includes some cuts, especially to Medicare beneficiaries, that many seniors' advocates would rather not see. To read *The Washington Post's* budget write-up, go to <http://tinyurl.com/objbnjh>. For the National Coalition on Aging's take on the budget, go to <http://tinyurl.com/qalg8jo>. To see the White House's fact sheet on the budget and seniors, go to <http://tinyurl.com/p7evz3q>.

"Seniors continue to be thrilled with reports that came out in February that President Obama has removed the chained CPI cut to Social Security and other programs from his 2015 budget," said **Richard Fiesta**, Executive Director of the Alliance. "We would soon like to see a White House plan, 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), to expand Social Security."

Senators Introduce Legislation to Protect Medicare for Seniors

Sen. **Mark Pryor** (D-AR) is the lead on a bill that was introduced on Thursday to protect Medicare.

Co-sponsors include fellow Democrats **Sherrod Brown** (OH), **Jeanne Shaheen** (NH), **Jeff Merkley** (OR), **Al Franken** (MN), **Brian Schatz** (HI), **Tom Udall** (NM), **Kay Hagan** (NC), **Sheldon Whitehouse** (RI), and **Warren**. The Senators introduced the Medicare Protection Act, legislation expressing strong opposition to changes in Medicare that would reduce or eliminate guaranteed benefits or raise the eligibility age for hard-working seniors.

"We've seen an irresponsible few in Washington try to balance the budget on the backs of our seniors by recklessly voting to turn Medicare into a voucher system and raise the eligibility age for benefits," Sen. Pryor said. "I refuse to let that happen. That's why I'm proud to lead the charge on the Medicare Protection Act, a responsible solution that will protect the health, safety, and financial security of nearly 600,000 seniors in my state alone."



The Medicare Protection Act would amend the Congressional Budget Act to define any provision included in reconciliation legislation that makes changes to Medicare to reduce or eliminate guaranteed benefits or restrict eligibility criteria as extraneous and an inappropriate use of the reconciliation process. The bill would also express the sense of the Senate that 1) the Medicare eligibility age should not be increased, and 2) the Medicare program should not be privatized or turned into a voucher system. For a copy of the bill, click <http://tinyurl.com/oa29ghe>.

"This legislation would protect Medicare so that it is not turned into a voucher system, benefits are not slashed, and it is not privatized," said **Ruben Burks**, Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance.

Medicare Reports One Third of Skilled Nursing Patients Harmed in Treatment; Most Preventable

Medicare's inspector general of skilled nursing facilities reports nearly 22,000 patients were injured and more than 1,500 died in a single month - a higher rate of medical errors than hospitals.

By Marshall Allen, ProPublica



One-in-three patients in skilled nursing facilities suffered a medication error, infection or some other type of harm related to their treatment, according to a government report released today that underscores the widespread nature of the country's patient harm problem.

Doctors who reviewed the patients' records determined that 59 percent of the errors and injuries were preventable. More than half of those harmed had to be readmitted to the hospital at an estimated cost of \$208 million for the month studied — about 2 percent of Medicare's total inpatient spending.

Patient safety experts told ProPublica they were alarmed because the frequency of people harmed under skilled nursing care exceeds that of hospitals, where medical errors receive the most attention.

“(The report) tells us what many of us have suspected --- there are vast areas of health care where the field of patient safety has not matured,” said Dr. Marty Makary, a physician at Johns Hopkins Medicine in Baltimore who researches health care quality....[Read More](#)

House Budget Committee Chair Ryan Misrepresents Economists in Poverty Report

The House Budget Committee released a report, *The War on Poverty: Fifty Years Later*, on Monday, and the findings left several economists and social scientists bemused and angry, according to *The Fiscal Times*. Several experts who read it said that Committee Chair Paul Ryan (R-WI) either misunderstood or misrepresented their research. One of the study's authors, Jane Waldfogel, a professor at Columbia University and a visiting scholar at the Russell Sage Foundation, said that she was surprised when she read the paper, “because it seemed to arbitrarily chop off data from two of the most successful years of the war on poverty.” Barbara Wolfe, a professor at the University of Wisconsin at Madison, objected to Ryan's use of two of her studies: Ryan's paper erroneously claimed that one of Wolfe's studies found that only a minority of families alter their employment decisions in response to Medicaid's design. For analysis and a link to the report itself, go to <http://tinyurl.com/o23ysld>. “It is especially galling when the misinformation is used to attack the economically disadvantaged,” said Barbara J. Easterling, President of the Alliance.



Bridge Project Reports on the Conservative Money Trail



On Thursday, Bridge Project, an organization dedicated to “opposing the conservative movement's extreme ideology and exposing its often dishonest tactics,” released a new report shining a light on the money funding the conservative agenda. Coming on the first day of this year's Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC), the report, “Conservative Transparency: A Look at the Organized Right in 2014,” and its accompanying website give the public a window into the complex and often cloudy flow of money among conservative donors, organizations, and candidates. The full report is available at <http://tinyurl.com/k5av996>. The first of several planned state-based case studies was also released on Thursday: it details how North Carolina, since 2010, has pushed one of the most aggressive right-wing agendas in the country. The North Carolina case study is available at <http://tinyurl.com/qcvw5ms>. The group's accompanying website, www.ConservativeTransparency.org, tracks the flow of money among conservative donors, advocacy groups, political committees, and candidates. In the 2012 cycle, conservative outside groups spent more than \$800 million on federal elections.

HealthLink Wellness

Burst of Anger Greatly Increases Risk of Heart Attack, Stroke and Brain Aneurysm for Many

‘...Overall risk for people without other risk factors like smoking or high blood pressure is relatively small’



Warning people they are going to have a heart attack if they don't calm down is, perhaps, better advice than you have imagined. New research says the risk of a heart attack in the two hours following an outburst of anger is five times greater than when we are calm. And, the risk of a stroke jumps almost four times.

Call it what you will – getting red in the face, hot under the collar, losing your cool, blowing your top – we all experience anger. And while we know that anger is a normal, sometimes even beneficial emotion, we're also aware of the often harmful connection between anger and health. New research from Beth Israel Deaconess Medical shows an even more compelling reason to think about keeping anger in check.

"There has been a lot of research on anger; we already know it can be unhealthy, but we wanted to quantify the risk, not just for heart attack, but for other potentially lethal cardiovascular events as well," says lead author Elizabeth Mostofsky, MPH, ScD, a post-doctoral fellow in the cardiovascular epidemiological unit at BIDMC and an instructor at the Harvard School of Public Health....[Read More](#)

Lend Us Your Ears: Note Takers Help the Elderly at Their Doctor Visit

"There are four ears listening to what the doctor says"

By Susan Jaffe, Kaiser Health News

It used to be difficult for Edith Couturier, an 85-year-old resident of the District of Columbia, to explain to her adult children on the West Coast all the details of her medical appointments. But now she doesn't go alone — she takes along a volunteer "medical note taker."

"There are four ears listening to what the doctor says," said Couturier.

That second set of ears belongs to Sharon Wolozin, who takes notes the old-fashioned way – with pen and paper – and then reads some of the main points aloud to confirm them with the doctor. If the patient forgets a question she told Wolozin she planned to ask, Wolozin will remind her. But she is not an advocate and has no medical training.



"We don't get between the doctor and the patient," said Wolozin. Her role is only to create an accurate record of what happened at the appointment that she gives to Couturier, who can then share it with her children or others. Wolozin is a volunteer for the [Northwest Neighbors Village](#) in Washington, D.C., one of the more than 200 "villages" across the United States. These neighborhood membership organizations provide volunteers and other resources to help with everything from transportation and snow shoveling to hanging curtains and solving computer glitches....[Read More](#)

Alzheimer's Disease May Kill Many More in U.S. Than Currently Reported

Study finds death rate more than four times higher after a diagnosis of Alzheimer's in people age 75 to 84 and nearly three times higher in people age 85 and older



A new study suggests that Alzheimer's disease may contribute to almost as many deaths in the United States as heart disease or cancer, but the AD deaths are under-reported due to confusion by those completing the death certificates. Analysis of deaths among senior citizens points to vastly more deaths related to AD than reported, the study shows.

Currently, Alzheimer's disease falls sixth on the list of leading causes of death in the United States according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), whereas heart disease and cancer are numbers one and two, respectively. These numbers are based on what is reported on death certificates.

"Alzheimer's disease and other dementias are under-reported on death certificates and medical records," said study author Bryan D. James, PhD, of Rush University Medical Center in Chicago....[Read More](#)



The Alliance for American Manufacturing is a non-profit, non-partisan partnership formed in 2007 by some of America's leading manufacturers and the United Steelworkers. Our mission is to strengthen American manufacturing and create new private-sector jobs through smart public policies. We believe that an innovative and growing manufacturing base is vital to America's economic and national security, as well as to providing good jobs for future generations.

americanmanufacturing.org



Please Join U.S. Senator Jack Reed for a Keep it Made in America Event on Manufacturing and National Security.

THURSDAY, MARCH 20, 2014
6:00 P.M. (5:30 P.M. DOORS)
Pawtucket Armory
172 Exchange Street, Pawtucket, RI 02861

Please join the Alliance for American Manufacturing for a conversation about the value of manufacturing to our national and economic security.

ADDITIONAL SPEAKERS TO INCLUDE:
Brigadier General John Adams (U.S. Army, Ret.) • Scott Paul, Alliance for American Manufacturing • Melissa Thomas, Raytheon • Frank Hotchkiss, United Steelworkers • Ron Cheurning, The NanoSteel Company • Janet Raymond, Providence/Cranston Workforce Investment Board

THIS EVENT INCLUDES A BUFFET DINNER. PLEASE RSVP.

RSVP / rsvp@aamfg.org / 1-866-365-2203 (toll free)



APPLY FOR FUNDING
CAMPAIGN TIPS
ABOUT
DONATE

Form with fields: Name*, Email*, United States, Address, Address (cont.), City, State, ZIP Code*, Comment, and a SIGN THE PETITION button.

UPS Drivers Fired for Protesting??

Petition by Bill Lipson
To be delivered to UPS

UPS has told hundreds of drivers they are fired for protesting the termination of one of their fellow workers in NYC. Tell UPS it's the wrong turn for their employees, their customers and their brand.

There are currently 31 signatures. We need 50 signatures!

PETITION BACKGROUND

In Maspeth, NY, two weeks ago, UPS fired a driver and longtime union activist without the fair hearing he was entitled to. Outraged and aware that violating one worker's rights threatened them all, other drivers walked off of their job to stand in solidarity with their fellow worker.

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!!!!