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RI ARA

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

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



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Advocates Join Rep. Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) to Speak Against Medicare Cuts, Release 150,000 Petitions



(Washington, DC) March 19, 2014, U.S. Rep. Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) co-hosted a telephone press conference call with the Medicare Rights Center and Social Security Works releasing 150,000 petition signatures against means testing Medicare and urging President Obama to drop support of Medicare cuts. Alliance for Retired Americans activist Charlie Hogan explained on the call what Medicare cuts, including further means testing Medicare, would mean for retirees in America and nationwide.

Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky explained that her constituents and most Americans receiving Medicare are in no position financially to afford further means testing of the program. She noted “At least one in five seniors are already cutting back on health care because they can’t afford it.”

Charlie Hogan, Alliance for Retired Americans member and President of AFSCME Retiree sub-chapter 161 from Chicago said, “If we didn't have Medicare, if we didn't have insurance at work, we'd lose our homes, we'd lose everything.” Mr. Hogan, a veteran, stressed that the retirees of today and tomorrow contributed to our Medicare and Social Security and they are an earned benefit and a promise that shouldn't be broken.

Stacy Sanders, Federal Policy Director for the Medicare Rights Center explained three important facts about further means testing Medicare:

- 1) Medicare is already means-tested. In other words, wealthy Medicare beneficiaries are already paying more for their Medicare premiums;
- 2) Further means-testing means higher health care costs for the middle class; and
- 3) More means testing would undermine the universality and integrity of Medicare.

Dr. Ben Veghte, Research Director for Social Security Works, pointed out that the average senior's Social Security benefits are equivalent to a minimum wage income, about \$15,000/year. He also said, “Indirectly, Social Security benefits have been cut by rising out-of-pocket health care costs over the last two decades. Today, out-of-pocket health care costs eat up over a third of the Social Security check of the average senior.” He added, “Our health care system is currently twice as expensive as most other Western countries’, there are a number of proposals that would reduce health care costs, not just shift costs onto seniors,” and further means testing Medicare is “bad public policy in all respects.”

Spanish Friday Alert now Available

The *Friday Alert* will now be available each week in Spanish! To see last week's *Alerta Semanal*, go to <http://tinyurl.com/mq7gpry>. For the Alliance's Spanish language page, which includes fact sheets and other translated documents from the main site, go to <http://tinyurl.com/nllcz6n>. More outreach from the Alliance to the Hispanic elder community will be coming in the next few months.

HealthLink Wellness

Dementia Symptoms May Not Be Alzheimer's; Caregivers Unmask Lewy Body Dementia

The number two dementia often identified too late for thousands of seniors
see video by Whoopi Goldberg in story.

Whoopi Goldberg volunteers to make video to spread the word about Lewy Body Dementia.



← Click on the picture to view the video.

“You don’t even know the battle is upon you, until the invasion is well underway,” says Ms. J, a caregiver for a person with dementia. Ms. J is just one of many caregivers who learn that debilitating symptoms begin to take their toll on loved ones before they even discover their diagnosis. It’s Lewy body dementia (LBD), the second most common form of progressive dementia that affects 1.3 million Americans, primarily seniors.

More than 5 million Americans suffer from Alzheimer’s disease, the most common form of degenerative dementia. Many will discover, however, it’s not Alzheimer’s that impairs their function, according to the Lewy Body Dementia Association.

“Early and accurate diagnosis is critical,” says Angela Taylor, director of programs, Lewy Body Dementia Association. “In fact, it may be life-saving.”

Taylor warns, “Unlike Alzheimer’s disease, people with undiagnosed LBD may be exposed to medications that can be very harmful to them. Misdiagnosis or lack of diagnosis also delays comprehensive symptom management that could improve their quality of life.”

Understanding LBD

LBD is associated with abnormal protein deposits in the brain, called Lewy bodies, and affects thinking, movement, behavior and mood. It’s difficult to diagnose LBD, because its early symptoms resemble symptoms found in Alzheimer’s and Parkinson’s disease.

Lewy body dementia, a complex but surprisingly common brain disease, refers to two related diagnoses: Parkinson’s disease dementia (PDD) and dementia with Lewy bodies (DLB). The difference is in the presentation of two symptoms based on the “one-year rule.” With DLB, cognitive symptoms that interfere with daily living appear before or within a year of symptoms resembling Parkinson’s. With PDD, dementia does not develop until at least a year after movement problems begin...[Read More](#)

Senior Women Are Epicenter of Alzheimer’s as Most Likely Victims, Care Givers

Alzheimer’s Association reports senior women twice as likely as men to get Alzheimer’s;
twice as likely to get AD as breast cancer

Women are the “epicenter of Alzheimer’s disease” according to a new report from the Alzheimer’s Association that finds senior women at age 65 almost twice as likely as senior men to develop the disease. And, women in their 60s are about twice as likely to get AD in older age as they are breast cancer. But, that is not all of the burden for women: they about 2.5 times more likely than men to provide full-time care for AD victims.



“Through our role in the development of *The Shriver Report: A Woman’s Nation Takes on Alzheimer’s* in 2010, in conjunction with Maria Shriver, we know that women are the epicenter of Alzheimer’s disease, representing majority of both people with the disease and Alzheimer’s caregivers. Alzheimer’s Association *Facts and Figures* examines the impact of this unbalanced burden,” said Angela Geiger, Chief Strategy Officer of the Alzheimer’s Association.

The new facts are in the Alzheimer’s Association *2014 Alzheimer’s Disease Facts and Figures* report released yesterday.

The strain of caring for someone with Alzheimer’s is also felt in the workplace. Among caregivers who have been employed while they were also caregiving:

- 20% of women vs. 3% of men went from working full-time to working part-time while acting as a caregiver.
- 18% of women vs. 11% of men took a leave of absence
- 11% of women vs. 5% of men gave up work entirely
- 10% of women vs. 5% of men lost job benefits[Read More](#) Go To www.alz.org for more information.

Pancreatic Cancer Linked to Diabetes in Large Review of International Research

Researchers suggest new diabetics should be tested for pancreatic cancer

Researchers, combing through massive data included in 88 international studies, have claimed the discovery of a link between pancreatic cancer and diabetes. And, they suggest it may be important to consider screening all newly diagnosed diabetics for pancreatic cancer.

In a new study published today in *Annals of Surgical Oncology*, clinicians worked with mathematicians to review data from 1973 to 2013 to conclude there was a time-dependent link between being diagnosed with diabetes and pancreatic cancer...[Read More](#)



Colon Cancer Rate Takes Big Drop, Particularly for Senior Citizens

Larger declines among Medicare-eligible seniors likely reflect higher rates of screening because of universal insurance coverage

Colon cancer incidence rates have dropped 30 percent in the U.S. in the last 10 years among adults 50 and older due to the widespread uptake of colonoscopy, with the largest decrease being in senior citizens over age 65. Colonoscopy use has almost tripled among adults ages 50 to 75, from 19 percent in 2000 to 55 percent in 2010.

Death rates from colon cancer have also declined rapidly within the last decade. The report says even more deaths could be avoided if everyone got their screening tests on time.

[Read More: Colon Cancer Information for Patients by American Cancer Society](#)



Cheers for the 'Age-Adjusted' Cutoff Making Pulmonary Embolism Test Work for Senior Citizens

Is this a break-through in health care adjusting to meet the demands of an aging society that is different than the one we grew up in?

By Tucker Sutherland, editor, *SeniorJournal.com*

Probably more common sense should be applied to the medical care of older people. A study released today by the prestigious *Journal of the American Medical Association* (JAMA) lauds the accomplishment of international doctors who solved the problem of a blood test for pulmonary embolism (blood clot in lungs) that was no longer working for senior citizens. Seniors seem to find themselves increasingly excluded from certain medical testing due to their advanced age.

In this particular case, measuring D-dimer - a breakdown product of a blood clot - levels is one way doctors exclude a diagnosis of pulmonary embolism (PE). The problem was that several studies had revealed that D-dimer levels increase with age. So, it was becoming increasingly difficult to use this blood test for older people to determine if they had suffered a

blood clot in their lungs...[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!!!!**

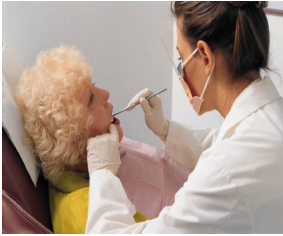
Elimination of the Unfair GPO and WEP Provisions of the Social Security Act to make sure the Congress of the United States enacts legislation, HR 3118 & S 896

ADD
YOUR
NAME

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RI ARA/HealthLink Wellness Discounted Services for Members Dental Care Program

THE FOLLOWING IS A DESCRIPTION OF THIS BENEFIT: MEMBER & SPOUSE



- (1) Choose a participating provider from the list below.
- (2) When you call to make your appointment, tell the receptionist you are a RI ARA affiliated member or a Healthlink Wellness member. when you arrive for your appointment, you must show this flyer.
- (3) No forms or vouchers are needed. This is not an insurance policy, you will be charged for all work at the adjusted rate.

Davis Vision Eye Care Plan Benefit: MEMBER & SPOUSE

For this benefit you must have a HealthLink Wellness ID number



- Discounted pricing
- Eyewear is fabricated at Davis Vision laboratories for consistent quality
- One year unconditional breakage warranty is provided for all eyeglasses completely supplied by Davis vision
- No claim forms
- Exciting optional enhancements at the discounted prices
- A large selection of frame sizes, shapes, and colors for from the exclusive Davis Vision Tower Collection
- Glass or plastic lenses (plastic Photo Gray \$65.00 extra)
- Single vision, bifocal, or trifocal lenses in any prescription range including Photo Gray, post-cataract and oversize lenses.

Ocean State Hearing Aid Benefit: MEMBER & SPOUSE

For this benefit you must have a HealthLink Wellness ID number

Hearing Benefit Program includes:



- Discounted pricing up to 40%- 65% off retail price
- One year supply of batteries included with the purchase of a hearing aid at no additional charge
- Three year repair warranty
- Free 45 day trial at no cost or obligation
- Free Hearing Exams *if not covered under member health plan*
- Free Three Year unlimited hearing aid checkups
- 20% discount on all hearing aid accessories

These discounted services are offered through the New England Association of Labor Retirees, Inc. HealthLink Wellness program and are available to all RI ARA member organization members. These discounted benefits are provided with no monthly premium. Benefit covers member & spouse. For a complete list of participating providers and more information, go to www.ri-ara.org.

To register for HealthLink Wellness and receive a HealthLink Wellness ID number, go to [Register for HealthLink Wellness](#) fill in the form and click submit.

You can also contact John A. Pernorio, RI ARA President at 401-722-2770 or riarajap@hotmail.com.