



### RI ARA Whitehouse Conference on Aging Real Retirement Security NOW Forum!



On Friday, May 22<sup>nd</sup>, at the AFSCME District Council 94, the Rhode Island Alliance *for* Retired Americans had a power point presentation by Jennifer Kenny, ARA New England Field Organizer, and a discussion Forum on what real retirement security means to you and how you can help to make sure the President and the White House protect Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, and Pensions to ensure ALL Americans enjoy a secure retirement.

This is a very important time to talk about Retirement Security. 2015 marks the 80th anniversary of Social Security and the 50th anniversaries of Medicare and Medicaid as well as the decennial White House Conference on Aging (WHCOA). Now is the time for retired and working Americans to join the fight for **REAL Retirement Security Now!**

This month there are regional White House Conference on Aging meetings happening where they are going to be discussing Retirement Security among other topics, like – healthy aging, elder justice and long term care. The White House is holding 5 of these regional events and they have a very limited invitation capacity (in Boston, we have 8 from New England) – only 200 at each one from all walks of life. So that’s why we decided to hold our event – we think having a secure retirement should be a right, **not a privilege**.

We have a retirement security crisis in America that threatens working and middle class families. Americans are less prepared for retirement today than in decades and the overwhelming majority of people are anxious about their ability to retire. Older workers are working longer and delaying their retirement, which means younger workers have far fewer opportunities for jobs and advancement. Many of today’s seniors rely on their children, who are already struggling to raise their own families. Others are forced to rely on public services. And most workers are simply trying to keep up, let alone put aside money for the future.

While many people refer to the “**three-legged stool**” of retirement security, a more apt analogy would be a pyramid with Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid forming the stable base; traditional guaranteed pensions as the critical middle layer; and individual savings playing a small role.

#### REAL RETIREMENT SECURITY MEANS:

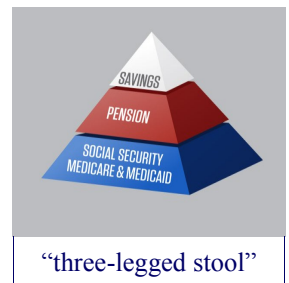
- ◆ EXPANDING SOCIAL SECURITY
- ◆ PROTECTING MEDICARE AND MEDICAID
- ◆ PROTECTING EMPLOYER SPONSORED PENSIONS
- ◆ PERSONAL SAVINGS—YOU CAN’T SAVE WHAT YOU DON’T EARN

Representatives from Senators Reed & Whitehouse and Congressman Cicilline were in attendance. They stated that our Congressional Delegation supports them 100%.

Congressman Langevin stopped in to address the 40 people that attended and stated:

**“As we celebrate the 80th anniversary of Social Security and the 50th anniversary of Medicare and Medicaid, I continue to pledge my support for retirement security for our seniors. We made a promise to them, and I intend to keep it. Thank you to the Alliance for Retired Americans for your advocacy on this issue and on all issues affecting seniors”.**

The RI ARA would like to thank AFSCME Council 94 for hosting the meeting and everyone that attended. Also the Eastside Market Place for the great food.



## Loss of muscle in senior citizens remains costly health problem with no clear solution

### Researchers see possible hope in right combination of exercise, diet to fight sarcopenia



Along the way from about age 40 to age 80, about 30 to 50 percent of your muscle mass just goes away. This terrible process is known as sarcopenia – it is common and clearly linked to frailty and poor health in senior citizens. New research from England suggests the combining exercise with proper diet may offer some hope but existing studies have produced inconsistent results.

The associated health care costs of sarcopenia are substantial. Exercise training and diet supplementation have been shown to be effective in preventing sarcopenia in some studies, but little has been known about the combined effects of training with supplements, particularly in older people.

Scientists at the University of Southampton, England, have found that although there are studies that have found diet can enhance the effects of exercise to prevent muscle loss in later life, the total current evidence about what works is inconsistent.

In the study, published in *Clinical Interventions in Aging*, scientists from the Medical Research Council (MRC) Lifecourse Epidemiology Unit at the University of Southampton carried out a review of combined diet and exercise training trials in men and women aged over 65 years old.

Almost 5,000 scientific articles were screened, with more than 100 reviewed in detail and 17 of these were included in the review. The review shows that findings differ across studies and suggests more research is needed.

Professor Sian Robinson, who led the review, says, “Poor diets and being physically inactive are common in older age. Understanding the benefits of maintaining sufficient levels of physical activity and diet quality to prevent sarcopenia is therefore a priority.

“Although some studies have found enhanced effects of exercise training when combined with diet supplementation, our review shows that current evidence is incomplete and inconsistent. Further research to determine the benefits of supplementation and exercise training for older people is therefore needed.”

**Professor Cyrus Cooper**, Professor of Rheumatology and Director of the MRC Lifecourse Epidemiology Unit, adds: “This study is part of an important programme of research at the MRC Lifecourse Epidemiology Unit that aims to improve our understanding of the effects of environment and lifestyle on musculoskeletal health and the process of ageing.” Professor Avan Aihie Sayer, Professor of Geriatric Medicine at the MRC Lifecourse Epidemiology Unit who oversaw the work, comments: “Sarcopenia is now recognized as a major clinical problem for older people. Gaining insights into the effects of lifestyle on losses of muscle mass and strength will be essential for the development of future public health strategies to promote better health in later life.” (**What is Sarcopenia, International Osteoporosis Foundation**)

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## Fat around girth increases your risk of developing cancer

### Latest studies show that young and postmenopausal women are particularly affected by this negative trend toward obesity

Cancer is more likely to develop in people who are very overweight (obese), because surplus body fat interferes with various hormone cycles and with glucose and fat metabolism. And, don't use BMI to measure your danger level – these Austrian researchers say only girth tells the story.

On the occasion of European Obesity Day this coming Saturday (16 May), metabolic expert Alexandra Kautzky-Willer, Comprehensive Cancer Center (CCC) at MedUni Vienna and Vienna General Hospital, draws attention to the fact that, even in Austria, more and more people are suffering from obesity. Several studies are therefore being conducted at CCC to investigate the links between obesity, metabolic disorders and cancer.

Obesity is very much on the increase in industrialized countries. Currently 15% of men and 10% of women in Austria are morbidly obese.

The latest studies show that young women and postmenopausal women are particularly affected by this negative trend. Adults are regarded as being obese if they have a Body Mass Index (BMI) of more than 30. A BMI of between 18.5 and 24.9 is considered normal but, at a BMI of more than 25, you are considered to be overweight.....[Read More](#)



## Elder Orphans' emerges to identify childless, unmarried, vulnerable baby boomers

22 percent of Americans over age 65 currently or at risk to remain unsupported, vulnerable while elderly, says new research



Great Neck, NY - With an aging Baby Boomer population and increasing numbers of childless and unmarried seniors, nearly one-quarter of Americans over age 65 are currently or at risk to become "elder orphans," a vulnerable group requiring greater awareness and advocacy efforts, according to new research by a North Shore-LIJ geriatrician and palliative care physician.

A case study and literature review by Maria Torroella Carney, MD, chief of geriatric and palliative medicine at the North Shore-LIJ Health System, zeroes in on staggering data on the prevalence and risks of a newly coined terminology of a vulnerable population, "elder orphans."

"We have a sense that this will be a growing population as society ages and life expectancy increases, and our government and society need to prepare how to advocate for this population," said Dr. Carney, senior author of the research, which was completed in collaboration with colleagues from the health system and Hofstra North Shore-LIJ School of Medicine.

"There is potentially no structure to address this population as this population is hidden right before us," added Dr. Carney, who calls the group elder orphans because they are aging alone and unsupported, with no known family member or designated surrogate to act on their behalf.

"Our goal is to highlight that this is a vulnerable population that's likely to increase, and we need to determine what community, social services, emergency response and educational resources can help them."

An abstract of Dr. Carney's paper was for presented at The American Geriatrics Society's 2015 Annual Scientific Meeting in Washington, DC, last week.

Dr. Carney and her team highlighted the case of "HB," a 76-year-old man living alone who presented at North Shore University Hospital in Manhasset, NY, after a failed suicide attempt for a multi-disciplinary approach to his pain and suffering. With his only existing family across the country in California, HB's case was complicated and prolonged by delirium, unclear decision-making capacity and lack of social support. He was discharged to a nursing facility for likely eventual long-term placement.

A literature search and review estimating the prevalence of elder orphans and their risks was done using Google Scholar, PubMed, CINAHL, and Health Reference databases.

U.S. Census data from 2012 showed that about one-third of Americans aged 45 to 63 are single, a 50% increase from 1980; nearly 19% of women aged 40 to 44 have no children, as compared to 10% in 1980.

Additionally, the University of Michigan's Health and Retirement Study (HRS) indicated that 22% of people over age 65 currently are, or at risk to become, elder orphans. This group is vulnerable to a wide range of negative outcomes that include functional decline, mental health issues and premature death, Dr. Carney said.

"This is a population that can utilize expensive healthcare resources because they don't have the ability to access community resources while they're well but alone," she said.

"If we can provide earlier social services and support, we may be able to lower high healthcare costs or prevent the unnecessary use of expensive healthcare. With greater awareness and assessment of this vulnerable population, we can then come up with policies to impact and manage better care for them."

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## Mentally challenging work could protect the mind in old age

Mentally challenging work may, at times, feel draining and tough, yet professionals whose jobs involve a variety of challenging work tasks may be better protected from memory and cognitive decline in old age than others, according to a new study.

The research, published in *Neurology*, suggests that workers who are required to speak more, develop strategies, manage others and resolve conflict may be better off than their co-workers as time progresses.

"Our study is important because it suggests that the type of work you do throughout your career may have even more significance on your brain health than your education does," explains study author Francisca Then from the University of Leipzig, Germany. "Education is a well-known factor that influences **dementia** risk."...[Read More](#)



Challenging work involving public speaking and strategy development could benefit long-term cognitive health.

## Will the self-driving car preserve mobility for senior citizens?

### Google launching more self-driving cars onto California streets



When most people hear or read about the progress of the driverless car they surely conjure up a vision of young people clamoring to get on board. Maybe they should give this a second look and imagine grandpa and grandma in the back seat. The loss of the mobility and independence seniors have enjoyed with being able to drive is one of the most crushing events of aging. Maybe the driverless car will end this misery.

“When we started designing the world’s first fully self-driving vehicle, our goal was a vehicle that could shoulder the entire burden of driving,” writes Chris Urmson, Director, Google Self-Driving Car Project.

“Vehicles that can take anyone from A to B at the push of a button could transform mobility for millions of people, whether by reducing the 94 percent of accidents caused by human error (PDF), reclaiming the billions of hours wasted in traffic, or bringing everyday destinations and new opportunities within reach of those who might otherwise be excluded by their inability to drive a car.”

Is he talking about senior citizens - "excluded by their inability to drive a car." Sure sounds like it.

In a news posting by Google, he announced their self-driving car is leaving the test track and hitting the streets.

“This summer, a few of the prototype vehicles we’ve created will leave the test track and hit the familiar roads of Mountain View, Calif., with our safety drivers aboard,” he says.

California has been issuing permits for testing self-driving cars since September of 2014.

These new prototypes use the same software as the self-driving Lexus SUV’s that have logged nearly a million “autonomous” miles on the roads. They have recently been driving about 10,000 miles per week.

Over the 6 years since the start of this project, the Google cars have been involved in 11 minor accidents (light damage, no injuries) during those 1.7 million miles of autonomous and manual driving with safety drivers behind the wheel, and not once was the self-driving car the cause of the accident, according to Google.

To learn more, watch videos and keep up with the Google car, click here to the [Google Blog](#).

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## 6 Signs It's Time to Stop Driving

*By Krisha McCoy, Reviewed by Lindsey Marcellin, MD, MPH*

**Running stop signs and getting lost are indicators it may be time to give up your driver's license.**

Getting older doesn't automatically mean that you shouldn't be behind the wheel; however, regularly monitoring your driving abilities is an important part of maintaining senior health because there comes a point for nearly everyone when reflexes slow and vision deteriorates, making driving no longer safe for you and others on the road. This is especially true for people who have **age-related health conditions**, such as **dementia**...[Read More](#)



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

**Petition Subject: Observation Status: “Current Hospital Issues in the Medicare Program”**

ADD  
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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.**

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**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 3118 & S 896**

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SIGN THE PETITION!!!!**