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RI ARA

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

Affiliated with the Rhode Island AFL-CIO

RI ARA HealthLink Wellness

May 26, 2014 E-Newsletter

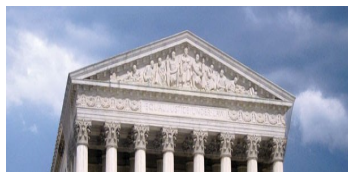


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Home Care Providers in the Crosshairs in Supreme Court Case, Harris v. Quinn

A Supreme Court case threatens quality home care.

By Olivia Sandbothe



Home care providers made great strides in recent years by organizing and fighting for respect. This critical—and growing—profession is often undervalued, but providers across the country are finding that when they stand together as a union, they can achieve progress. Improvements in wages, benefits and training through agreements with state governments have made it easier to recruit and retain home care workers. This translates into the vastly improved quality of care for seniors and those with disabilities, and allows them to remain in their homes and live with dignity, instead of being forced into institutionalized care.

And millions more seniors will want and seek home care assistance in the coming years. Continuing to build a trained and stable workforce of home care providers will be vital to meet this demand.

Unfortunately, a case pending right now before the Supreme Court has the potential to risk the ability of seniors and the disabled to get quality care. The case is called **Harris v. Quinn**. A ruling from the Supreme Court that says home care providers cannot collectively bargain jeopardizes the ability of seniors and people with disabilities to get the reliable care they need to remain at home. The court is expected to decide the case early this summer...[Read More](#)

What is the Supreme Court case Harris v. Quinn about?

The case, Harris v. Quinn, was brought by the National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation (NRTW), an extreme right-wing group with a political agenda to weaken the power of working people. The NRTW lawsuit started as an attack against Illinois home care workers, but has grown into a challenge of the right of those employed in the public service, including home care workers, to come together and form a union that will be their bargaining representative, to negotiate over matters that are commonly negotiated over, like wage, benefits and other conditions of employment, and to require that nonmembers pay their fair share of the cost of collective bargaining and representation of the workers.

The NRTW also is asking the Supreme Court to bar other independent providers, like family child care providers, from forming a union by arguing that independent providers are independent contractors—and not public service employees—who cannot bargain collectively. The lower courts have rejected this argument.

5 THINGS YOU NEED to KNOW ABOUT the ATTACKS on WORKERS' FREEDOMS

- 1. YOUR UNION FACES AN UNPRECEDENTED EFFORT TO ELIMINATE OUR RIGHTS.**
- 2. HARRIS V. QUINN DOESN'T JUST TARGET HOME CARE PROVIDERS – IT TARGETS ALL WORKERS.**
- 3. WARNING: THERE IS RADICAL CHANGE AHEAD.**
- 4. WOMEN ARE AT RISK.**
- 5. THESE ATTACKS ON WORKERS' RIGHTS ARE COORDINATED....[Read More](#)
IN RIGHT-TO-WORK STATES, YOU'RE MORE LIKELY TO...**



Earn less: Workers earn about \$1,500 less per year.

Be uninsured by your employer: The rate of employer-sponsored health insurance is 2.6 percentage points lower.

Be unemployed: Eight of the 12 states with the highest unemployment rates have right-to-work laws on the books.

Be killed on the job: The rate of workplace deaths is 52.9 percent higher in right-to-work states.

SOURCES: ECONOMIC POLICY INSTITUTE AND U.S. BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS

RIARA HealthLink Wellness

May is American Stroke Month



May is American Stroke Month which is the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association's annual campaign to increase stroke awareness and to educate Americans that stroke is largely preventable, treatable and beatable. While stroke is the No. 4 cause of death and leading cause of disability in the U.S., many Americans do not think of stroke as a major health concern. We have made a lot of progress, but we still have a ways to go to end stroke and need your help!

High blood pressure, another important stroke risk factor, was more common in those with migraine. But the association between migraine and silent brain infarction was also found in participants with normal blood pressure. Because Hispanics and African-Americans are at increased stroke risk, researchers from the Northern Manhattan Study (NOMAS) – a collaborative investigation between the University of Miami and Columbia University – studied a multi-ethnic group of older adults (41 percent men, average age 71) in New York City. About 65 percent of participants were Hispanic. Comparing magnetic resonance imaging results between 104 people with a history of migraine and 442 without, they found:

- A doubling of silent brain infarctions in those with migraine even after adjusting for other stroke risk factors;
- No increase in the volume of white-matter hyperintensities (small blood vessel abnormalities) that have been associated with migraine in other studies;

Migraines with aura — changes in vision or other senses preceding the headache — wasn't common in participants and wasn't necessary for the association with silent cerebral infarctions.

"While the lesions appeared to be ischemic, based on their radiographic description, further research is needed to confirm our findings," Monteith said...[Read More](#)

Bacteria in mouth may diagnose pancreatic cancer

Patients with pancreatic cancer have a different and distinct profile of specific bacteria in their saliva compared to healthy controls and even patients with other cancers or pancreatic diseases, according to research presented today at the annual meeting of the American Society for Microbiology. These findings could form the basis for a test to diagnose the disease in its early stages.



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"Our studies suggest that ratios of particular types of bacteria found in saliva may be indicative of pancreatic cancer," says Pedro Torres of San Diego State University who presented the research.

In the United States, approximately 40,000 people die every year due to pancreatic adenocarcinoma, making it the fourth leading cause of cancer related death. Patients diagnosed in the early stages of pancreatic cancer have a 5-year survival rate of 21.5%. Unfortunately symptoms do not appear until after the cancer has become untreatable in the vast majority of cases, says Torres.

In the study, Torres and his colleagues compared the diversity of saliva bacteria across 131 patients, 63 female and 68 male, being treated at the University of California, San Diego (UCSD) Moores Cancer Center. Of these patients, 14 had been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, 13 with pancreatic disease, 22 with other forms of cancer and 10 disease free. Results showed that patients diagnosed with pancreatic cancer had higher levels of two particular oral bacteria, *Leptotrichia* and *Campylobacter*, when compared to any other healthy or diseased state including non-cancerous pancreatic disease. Those with pancreatic cancer also had lower levels of *Streptococcus*, *Treponema* and *Veillonella*.

"Our results suggest the presence of a consistently distinct microbial profile for pancreatic cancer," says Torres. "We may be able to detect pancreatic cancer at its early stages by taking individuals' saliva and looking at the ratios of these bacteria.

The American Society for Microbiology is the largest single life science society, composed of over 39,000 scientists and health professionals. ASM's mission is to advance the microbiological sciences as a vehicle for understanding life processes and to apply and communicate this knowledge for the improvement of health and environmental and economic well-being worldwide.

Health, United States, 2013 includes special section on prescription drugs

Most common prescription drugs among adults are those for cardiovascular disease and high cholesterol



About half of all Americans reported taking one or more prescription drugs in the past 30 days during 2007-2010, and 1 in 10 took five or more, according to Health, United States, 2013, the government's annual, comprehensive report on the nation's health.

This is the 37th annual report prepared for the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Center for Health Statistics. The report includes a compilation of health data from state and federal health agencies and the private sector.

This year's report includes a special section on prescription drugs. Key findings include:

- ◆ About half of all Americans in 2007-2010 reported taking one or more prescription drugs in the past 30 days. Use increased with age; 1 in 4 children took one or more prescription drugs in the past 30 days compared to 9 in 10 adults aged 65 and over.
- ◆ Cardiovascular agents (used to treat high blood pressure, heart disease or kidney disease) and cholesterol-lowering drugs were two of the most commonly used classes of prescription drugs among adults aged 18-64 years and 65 and over in 2007-2010. Nearly 18 percent (17.7) of adults aged 18-64 took at least one cardiovascular agent in the past 30 days.
- ◆ The use of cholesterol-lowering drugs among those aged 18-64 has increased more than six-fold since 1988-1994, due in part to the introduction and acceptance of statin drugs to lower cholesterol.
- ◆ Other commonly used prescription drugs among adults aged 18-64 years were analgesics to relieve pain and antidepressants.
- ◆ The prescribing of antibiotics during medical visits for cold symptoms declined 39 percent between 1995-1996 and 2009-2010.
- ◆ Among adults aged 65 and over, 70.2 percent took at least one cardiovascular agent and 46.7 percent took a cholesterol-lowering drug in the past 30 days in 2007-2010. The use of cholesterol-lowering drugs in this age group has increased more than seven-fold since 1988-1994.
- ◆ Other commonly used prescription drugs among those aged 65 and older included analgesics, blood thinners and diabetes medications.
- ◆ In 2012, adults aged 18-64 years who were uninsured for all or part of the past year were more than four times as likely to report not getting needed prescription drugs due to cost as adults who were insured for the whole year (22.4 percent compared to 5.0 percent).
- ◆ The use of antidepressants among adults aged 18 and over increased more than four-fold, from 2.4 percent to 10.8 percent between 1988-1994 and 2007-2010.
- ◆ Drug poisoning deaths involving opioid analgesics among those aged 15 and over more than tripled in the past decade, from 1.9 deaths per 100,000 population in 1999-2000 to 6.6 in 2009-2010.
- ◆ The annual growth in spending on retail prescription drugs slowed from 14.7 percent in 2001 to 2.9 percent in 2011.

Health, United States, 2013 features 135 tables on key health measures through 2012 from a number of sources within the federal government and in the private sector. The tables cover a range of topics, including birth rates and reproductive health, life expectancy and leading causes of death, health risk behaviors, health care utilization, and insurance coverage and health expenditures.

The full report is available at www.cdc.gov/nchs.

FDA requiring lower starting dose for sleep drug Lunesta

Risk of impairment the morning after use of sleep aid drugs

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration today announced it required the manufacturer of the sleep drug Lunesta (eszopiclone) to change the drug label and lower the current recommended starting dose. Data show that eszopiclone levels in some patients may be high enough the morning after use to impair activities that require alertness, including driving, even if they feel fully awake....[Read More](#)



Seven Things You Can Do to Avoid Alzheimer's, Boost Brain Health

International researchers identify dietary and lifestyle guidelines for Alzheimer's prevention; special feature in *Neurobiology of Aging*



Seven points of advice on dietary and lifestyle guidelines that will boost brain health and lower your risk of Alzheimer's were made available today by *Neurobiology of Aging* in advance of their publication of a special supplement on this advice.

"Alzheimer's disease isn't a natural part of aging," notes lead author Neal Barnard, M.D., president of the nonprofit Physicians Committee and an adjunct professor of medicine at the George Washington University School of Medicine.

"By staying active and moving plant-based foods to the center of our plates, we have a fair shot at rewriting our genetic code for this heart-wrenching, and costly, disease."

Alzheimer's Disease International predicts Alzheimer's rates will triple worldwide by 2050. The Alzheimer's Association predicts long-term care costs start at \$41,000 per year...[Read The seven guidelines to reduce risk of Alzheimer's disease](#)

Report on Senior Health Finds Americans More Active, Less Hospitalizations, Nursing Care Better

Minnesota healthiest state for seniors, Mississippi the least

Senior citizens are showing encouraging gains in key health measures and taking more steps to improve their own health, according to the second edition of United Health Foundation's America's Health Rankings Senior Report: A Call to Action for Individuals and Their Communities.

Minnesota is the healthiest state for seniors for the second year in a row. Hawaii ranks second, followed by New Hampshire (3), Vermont (4) and Massachusetts (5). Mississippi is the least healthy state for seniors, followed by Louisiana (49), Kentucky (48), Oklahoma (47) and Arkansas (46).

Key findings include:

- ◆ Seniors are more active compared to last year, with physical inactivity declining from 30.3 percent of the senior population to 28.7 percent.
- ◆ Preventable hospitalizations dropped from 66.6 discharges per 1,000 Medicare beneficiaries to 64.9 discharges. Nursing home care improved, with quality nursing home beds rising from 42 percent of beds rated four or five stars to 46.8 percent....[Read More](#) To see the [State Rankings](#) online.



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.

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.

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

Get The Message Out:

SIGN THE PETITION!!!!

ADD YOUR NAME

ADD YOUR NAME