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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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RI ARA

Alliance for Retired Americans Community Advocacy Network Executive Board



On April 29, 2014, at the Alliance for Retired Americans Convention in Las Vegas, Nevada, Rhode Island Alliance for Retired Americans Vice-President, Director of Medical Programs & HealthLink Wellness, Dr. Joseph Boffa, was elected to one of the six Alliance for Retired Americans Community Advocacy Network Executive Board positions.

The mission of the Community Advocacy Network of the Alliance for Retired Americans is to bridge the missions of the Alliance itself to community-based organizations. The Alliance for Retired Americans fights to ensure social and economic justice and full civil rights for all citizens so that they may enjoy lives of dignity, personal and family fulfillment and security. The Community Advocacy Network will strive to broaden this fight to include not just our retired union brothers and sisters, but all older Americans with whom we share the brother and sisterhood of humanity, of a common cause.

The long-term goal of the Community Advocacy Network is to become an umbrella for progressive activism among older Americans. By bringing community-based organizations together to fight for vital political and social issues, the Community Advocacy Network will foster a culture of community and activism among seniors across America.

The Alliance and Community Advocacy Network believe that all older and retired persons have a responsibility to strive to create a society that incorporates these goals and rights, and that retirement provides them with opportunities to carry this torch in new and expanded ways. The Community Advocacy Network, therefore, will serve as a driving force to enroll and mobilize senior and community activists into a nationwide grassroots movement advocating a progressive political and social agenda - one that respects work and strengthens families.

In pursuit of these values, the Community Advocacy Network will:

- Build a strong organization of seniors with a viable structure, ample resources and clear objectives - a structure compatible with that of the labor movement and community-based groups at local, state and national levels.
- Create programs and membership organizations designed to promote a commitment by retired workers and older persons to the concept of lifelong activism, of continued fidelity to the notion that every American deserves a dignified retirement.

Encourage all segments of the senior population to act with unity on legislative, political, and policy issues of importance to retirees and their families in order to maximize their influence on federal, state, and local governments and on private organizations that affect their interests.

From all the RI ARA Affiliated members, CONGRATULATIONS on your new position!

Critics Say a Constitutional Convention Could Threaten Civil Rights

Saying that a state Constitutional Convention would open to the door to proposals targeting women's rights, gay rights, civil rights, minorities and immigrants, a coalition of groups held a news conference at the old Rhode Island State House Wednesday calling for defeat of the fall ballot question that would authorize a convention.

The news conference was called under the auspices of Citizens for Responsible Government, with speakers from the Rhode Island AFL-CIO, Planned Parenthood of Southern New England, the Rhode Island affiliate of the American Civil Liberties Union, Latino Public Radio and Rhode Island Pride.... [Read More](#)



**“Wealthy individuals can spend money to influence our constitution with little or no restrictions,”
asserted AFL-CIO president George Nee**

The RI ARA is a Coalition member

Alliance for Retired Americans 2014 Convention

Also at the ARA Convention there were three Resolutions that were submitted and passed that concern members. Two were offered in unity by the New England Alliance for Retired Americans affiliated chapters.

- **Elimination of the Unfair GPO and WEP Provisions of the Social Security Act**

The Government Pension Offset (GPO) and Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) penalize people who have dedicated their lives to public service, including many teachers, firefighters and police officers, by taking away benefits they, or their spouses, have EARNED.

- **Equal, Dignified Access for All Resolution**

Recognizing the need to improve physical access to many United States postal & federal buildings for all people in the United States in particular disabled citizens.

A third Resolution that was submitted by the Maryland ARA and passed concerned another issue that the New England ARA affiliated chapters are concerned about and have sent a support letter to Senator Whitehouse.

- **Support Senior Volunteers – Save The Senior Corps**

Stop any cuts to Corporation for National and Community Service that improve the lives of millions of our most vulnerable citizens by helping children learn to read, caring for seniors through their Senior Centers, rebuilding communities struck by disasters, helping veterans readjust to civilian life, and more.

Action Sessions Delve into ALEC, Social Security Scams and Other Threats

Several action sessions at the convention allowed the delegates in attendance to break out into smaller groups and form plans for future activism. In particular, sessions devoted to standing up to ALEC, and to addressing scams aimed at Social Security beneficiaries, were noted for opening delegates' eyes to the newest threats that retirees face. Materials from the sessions will be posted on the Alliance web site shortly.

Photos from the Convention

View convention photos at <http://tinyurl.com/ozcvnsq> (Flickr) or <http://tinyurl.com/oe6fmrn> (Facebook). For photos from the Hispanic seniors press event, go to <http://tinyurl.com/pkwusl6>.

May is Older Americans Month; Alliance Unveils Medicare Turns 50 Campaign

The Alliance is celebrating the fact that May is Older Americans Month with the announcement of its "Medicare Turns 50" campaign. Medicare is our most successful health care program in America's history. For nearly fifty years, it has given seniors the ability to see a doctor and fill a prescription – and it has kept them out of poverty. The Alliance for Retired Americans is leading the charge to celebrate Medicare's 50th birthday, beginning in 2014 and culminating in 2015. Join us! More at http://retiredamericans.org/members/Older_Americans_Month.



L—R Michael Connelly, Dr. Boffa,
Connie Donnelly &
ARA New England Field Organizer
Jennifer Kenny



L—R CT. ARA MaryAnn Goggin,
Bette Marafino, CT ARA President
Jennifer Kenny & Mary Eila



AFSCME Council 94
Retiree President /
RI ARA Vice-President
Michael Connelly

The Red States Health Care Deficit is Expanding

By John Perr for Daily Kos

Projected Red-Blue Health Care Gap After Obamacare For the Top 10 and Bottom 10 Ranked State Health Care Systems

State	Health System Ranking (1)	Healthy Lives Ranking (2)	Percent Uninsured (3)	Population Uninsured Before ACA in Thousands (4)	Population Uninsured If Opt-Out (4)	Population Uninsured If Opt-In (4)
Vermont	1	1	9%	53	42	29
Hawaii	2	2	8%	105	86	53
Iowa	3	20	11%	303	245	159
Minnesota	4	5	9%	487	397	250
Maine	5	9	10%	133	107	70
New Hamp.	6	3	11%	163	130	88
Mass.	7	4	4%	219	180	112
Connecticut	8	6	10%	303	242	162
North Dakota	9	12	11%	61	50	32
Wisconsin	10	16	10%	589	482	300
Illinois	42	30	15%	1,873	1,523	967
New Mexico	43	32	21%	399	328	201
Florida	44	34	20%	3,765	3,080	1,917
Kentucky	45	44	15%	621	512	311
Texas	46	40	24%	6,080	4,986	3,080
Nevada	47	38	22%	607	502	302
Arkansas	48	48	20%	508	420	308
Louisiana	49	49	20%	938	772	471
Oklahoma	50	43	17%	636	515	331
Mississippi	51	49	19%	476	395	236

1. Commonwealth Fund State Health Care Scorecard, 2009
2. America's Health Care Rankings, 2012
3. Kaiser Family Foundation, 2012
4. "The Uninsured After Implementation Of The Affordable Care Act," June 2013

Back in May 2009, the *Washington Post* touched on the greatest irony of the health care debate just beginning to grip the nation. "The Democrats' No. 1 domestic policy initiative," Alec MacGillis wrote, "is likely to help red America at the expense of blue." You didn't need a crystal ball to see why. The chasm in care and resources was due to "the disproportionate share of uninsured is in the South and the West, the result of employment patterns, weak unions and stingy state governments," MacGillis explained, rightly concluding that health care reform would ultimately "represent a substantial wealth transfer from the North and the East to the South and the West."

Unless, that is, the poorer, sicker and more Republican red states did the unthinkable and said no to the help from their blue state brethren.

Five years later, that tragedy is exactly what has come to pass. While as many as **23 million Americans** obtained health insurance during the first enrollment period for the Affordable Care Act, millions more were needlessly left without coverage in the reddest of red states. Because 24 GOP-controlled states **rejected Obamacare's Medicaid expansion** that virtually pays for itself, seven million residents remain insured. Up to 17,000 of them are projected to needlessly die—every year. By refusing to run their own exchanges, blocking the outreach of "navigators" that

Medicare has used with great success for more than 20 years and turning to **myriad other obstructionist tactics**, states like Rick Perry's Texas, Bobby Jindal's Louisiana and Nathan Deal's Georgia have accomplished what five years ago seemed impossible....[Read a Lot More Interesting Information.](#)

Most Retirees Fear Running Out of Money, Continue to Draw Down Savings for Living Costs

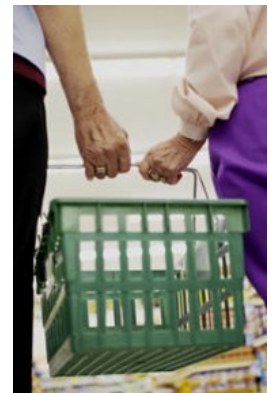
Senior citizens more likely to withdraw from savings, most do it to cover living expenses finds new survey

More than half of retired Americans (53%) are concerned about running out of money and 52% have also been drawing money from their retirement savings – 59% to cover everyday living expenses, according to the *Perspectives of Retirement* survey conducted twice a year by PNC Financial Services Group. It also finds older senior citizens are more likely to withdraw from savings.

Retirees are more likely to withdraw money as they age (61 percent of 65-75 year olds), but nearly 40 percent of young retirees (64 or younger) are already drawing down from savings. Almost two-thirds (63 percent) are concerned that Social Security or pensions will not be enough to cover expenses and needs in retirement, according to the telephone survey conducted in February and March.

"Most retirees don't have a plan for drawing down savings and that is a concern," said Joseph Jennings, senior vice president of Wealth Management with PNC. "Using savings to cover expenses indicates that retirees may not have a retirement income strategy in place and are putting themselves at greater risk of outliving their funds."

One-third (35 percent) say the amount of money they use in retirement is about what they expected, but nearly as many (31 percent) had no specific expectations with the remainder split evenly between those who are spending more and those who are spending less....[Read More](#)



HealthLink Wellness

A Senior Delight: Drink More Coffee, Become More Resistant to Diabetes, Says Harvard Study

Those who decreased their coffee consumption by more than a cup per day increased their type 2 diabetes risk by 17%



New research from Harvard School of Public Health will make most senior citizens very happy. It finds that those who increase their consumption of coffee – the favorite drink for seniors – had a lower risk of developing type 2 diabetes, a debilitating disease that most often strikes older people.

The researchers say people who increased the amount of coffee they drank daily by more than one cup over a four-year period had a 11% lower risk for type 2 diabetes than those who made no changes to their coffee consumption. On the other hand, the study found that those who decreased their coffee consumption by more than a cup per day increased their type 2 diabetes risk by 17%.

“Our findings confirm those of previous studies that showed that higher coffee consumption was associated with lower type 2 diabetes risk,” said Shilpa Bhupathiraju, lead author and research fellow in the Department of Nutrition at HSPH. “Most importantly, they provide new evidence that changes in coffee consumption habit can affect type 2 diabetes risk in a relatively short period of time.”

The study appears online Thursday, April 24, 2014 in *Diabetologia* (the journal of the European Association for the Study of Diabetes)...[Read More](#)

Hunger Among Seniors a Growing Problem in the U.S.

Senior citizens dealing with hunger are also facing negative health and nutrition consequences

In a country as wealthy as the United States, it may come as a surprise that one in 12 seniors do not have access to adequate food due to lack of money or other financial resources. They are food insecure, according to researchers at the University of Illinois and University of Kentucky.

Using data from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) the study revealed that the seniors who are dealing with hunger are also facing negative health and nutrition consequences.

"In 2011, 8.35 percent of Americans over age 60 faced the threat of hunger - that translates to 4.8 million people," said Craig Gundersen, University of Illinois soybean industry endowed professor in agricultural strategy in the Department of Agricultural and Consumer Economics and executive director of the National Soybean Research Laboratory who led the data analysis on the study.

Hand-in-hand with hunger goes a lower intake of calories, vitamins, and other nutrients, which puts them at risk for a wide variety of ailments, according to the report.

"Seniors who are food insecure reported higher incidence of diabetes, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, heart attack, gum disease, and a host of other health problems than adults their age who are food secure," Gundersen said.

"In addition, food-insecure seniors have worse general health outcomes, more daily activity limitations, and are more likely to suffer from depression....[Read More](#)



Senior Citizens Fighting Insomnia Increase Nightly Sleep Over an Hour with Tart Cherry Juice



It was small study but dramatic results get attention for LSU researchers. Insomnia is a common health problem for senior citizens ages 65 and older. About one-third of seniors are estimated to suffer from this sleep problem. A study presented today at Experimental Biology 2014 found that drinking Montmorency tart cherry juice twice a day – morning and evening - for two weeks helped increase sleep time by nearly 90 minutes among older adults with insomnia...

A morning and evening ritual of tart cherry juice may help you sleep better at night, suggests a new study presented today at the Experimental Biology 2014 meeting. Researchers from Louisiana State University found that drinking Montmorency tart cherry juice twice a day for two weeks helped increase sleep time by nearly 90 minutes among older adults with insomnia....[Read More](#)

It Just Takes Light Activity Daily to Help Older Adults Avoid Disability

Researchers claim to be first to find health, aging benefits of light activities

By Erin White



Pushing a shopping cart or a vacuum doesn't take a lot of effort, but enough of this sort of light physical activity every day can help older people with or at risk of knee arthritis avoid developing disabilities as they age, according to a new Northwestern Medicine study.

It is known that the more time people spend in moderate or vigorous activities, the less likely they are to develop disability, but this is the first study to show that spending more time in light activities can help prevent disability, too.

"Our findings provide encouragement for adults who may not be candidates to increase physical activity intensity due to health limitations," said Dorothy Dunlop, professor of medicine at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine and lead author of the study.

"Even among those who did almost no moderate activity, the more light activity they did, the less likely they were to develop disability."...[Read More](#)

Differences Between Centenarians and Senior Citizens Explored by Census Bureau

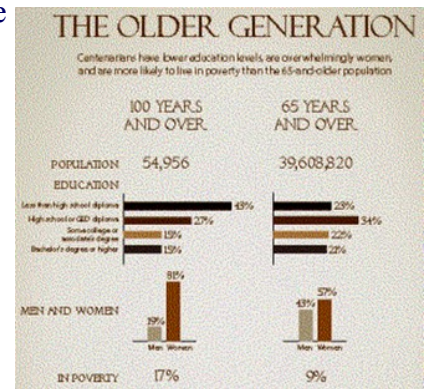
Women dominate both age groups, 100 plus less educated, more likely living in poverty

Centenarians have lower education levels, are overwhelmingly women and are more likely to live in poverty than the 65-and-older population, according to a new U.S. Census Bureau report. The report, "The Centenarian Population: 2007-2011," analyzes characteristics of centenarians and how they compare with those 65 years and older.

"Centenarians are a small group who are a significant indicator of American life," said Brian Kincl, a statistical analyst in the Census Bureau's Age and Special Populations Branch and the report's author.

"By living a century or more, they have seen great changes in the American landscape and their education levels reflect social and economic conditions in the 1920s and earlier. Today, their situations may vary based on many factors, and the statistics in this report begin to tell their story."

The report, based on results from the American Community Survey, compares social and economic differences between the 55,000 centenarians in the U.S. and the 40 million people 65 and older....[Read More](#)



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

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SIGN THE PETITION!!!!