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Statements by Retiree Leader Richard Fiesta on the Seniors and Veterans Emergency Benefits Act and the Trans-Pacific Partnership

***Bill would provide one-time payment of \$581 to Social Security beneficiaries and veterans,
help address 0% COLA in 2016, and eliminate CEO tax break***

The following statement was issued by Richard Fiesta, Executive Director of the Alliance for Retired Americans, regarding the introduction of the Seniors and Veterans Emergency Benefits Act by Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) on November 5th.



Rich Fiesta

"The Alliance for Retired Americans enthusiastically supports the Seniors and Veterans Emergency Benefits Act, introduced by Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) today. This legislation would provide a one-time payment in 2016 to Social Security beneficiaries, veterans and others of \$581, which is 3.9% of the average Social Security retirement benefit.

"Passage of this bill would help bring our economy into balance and make an important statement about fairness. Last year the average CEO pay increase was 3.9%, while retirees and people with disabilities will be going without any cost-of-living adjustment in 2016.

"It is wholly appropriate that these one-time payments to Social Security beneficiaries would be funded by eliminating the CEO performance pay tax break. The revenue gained from closing the tax loophole would be dedicated to Social Security, which would strengthen the long-range projected solvency of the Social Security Trust Fund.

"This bill is a one of series of measures needed to expand earned Social Security benefits for seniors who are struggling to make ends meet. Congress should also require the Social Security Administration to base future COLAs on the Consumer Price Index for the Elderly (CPI-E), which much more accurately reflects the cost of things retirees purchase, including health care and housing."

TPP Text Proves Seniors Have Been Right to Worry About Higher Prescription Drug Prices

The following statement was issued on November 5, 2015 by Richard Fiesta, Executive Director of the Alliance for Retired Americans, following the Obama Administration's release of the text of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) trade deal.

"Now that the final wording of the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade deal has been made public, we know that seniors are right to be worried about the agreement's effect on prescription drug prices.

"Indeed, the deal would keep lower cost generics drugs off the market and line the pockets of pharmaceutical industry executives.

"Prescription drug prices grew by 13% in the U.S. last year even without this impediment to affordability.

"Alliance for Retired Americans activists will join with others fighting this bad deal, including working families, public health advocates and environmentalists, to defeat the TPP."

**Call the RI Congressional Members or HERE for a list of congressional members.
Tell them YES on Seniors & Veterans Emergency Benefits Act / NO on TPP**

Senator Jack Reed: 1000 Chapel View Blvd # 290, Cranston, RI 02920 (401) 943-3100

Senator Sheldon Whitehouse: 170 Westminster St. Suite 1100, Providence, RI, 02903 (401) 453-5294

Congressman James Langevin: 300 Centerville Rd # 200, Warwick, RI 02886 (401) 732-9400

Congressman David N. Cicilline: 1070 Main St #300, Pawtucket, RI 02860 (401) 729-5600

What drives people to retire isn't what most think

Fidelity research busts key myths about retirement



Contrary to popular belief, nearly half of American workers plan to stop working on a specific date, regardless of how much they have saved for retirement. This is one of several myths debunked in new research from Fidelity Investments in collaboration with the Stanford Center on Longevity.

The survey, reported to be one of the largest of its kind, is based on responses from more than 12,000 retirement savers and recent retirees, age 55 or older and uncovers the most important financial, social and emotional factors that contribute to an individual's decision to retire or stay on the job.

The survey opens a new window into the non-financial factors that influence the retirement decision, such as how employees feel about their jobs and coworkers, their desire to spend time with family and grandchildren, and their overall health and the lifestyle they want when they leave the workforce.

"Fidelity has always had unmatched financial data to illustrate retirement trends and behaviors. This research complements our analytics and provides deeper insight on how people think and feel about the transition to retirement," said Jim MacDonald, president, Workplace Investing, Fidelity Investments.

"It's critical that employers understand these factors and design benefits to either retain or help transition pre-retirees based on their workforce strategy."...[Read More](#)

CMS wants better discharge plans for Medicare, Medicaid patients

To improve patient quality of care, reduce complications, adverse events, readmissions

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) yesterday proposed to revise the discharge planning requirements that hospitals, including long-term care hospitals and inpatient rehabilitation facilities, critical access hospitals, and home health agencies, must meet in order to participate in the Medicare and Medicaid programs.

The proposed changes will modernize the discharge planning requirements by: bringing them into closer alignment with current practice; helping to improve patient quality of care and outcomes; and reducing avoidable complications, adverse events, and readmissions, according to CMS.

The proposed rule would also implement the discharge planning requirements of the Improving Medicare Post-Acute Care Transformation Act of 2014 (IMPACT Act), which will improve consumer transparency and beneficiary experience during the discharge planning process.

The IMPACT Act requires hospitals, critical access hospitals, and certain post-acute care providers to use data on both quality and resource use measures to assist patients during the discharge planning process, while taking into account the patient's goals of care and treatment preferences.

"CMS is proposing a simple but key change that will make it easier for people to take charge of their own health care. If this policy is adopted, individuals will be asked what's most important to them as they choose the next step in their care – whether it is a nursing home or home care," said CMS Acting Administrator Andy Slavitt.

"Policies like this put real meaning behind the words consumer-centered health care."...[Read More](#)



CMS issues rule to ensure Medicaid beneficiaries access to services

Response to Court decision that beneficiaries do not have private right of action to contest state-determined rates in federal courts



On Oct. 29, 2015, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) issued a final rule that it says allows states and CMS to make better informed, data-driven decisions when considering whether proposed changes to Medicaid fee-for-service payment rates are sufficient to ensure that Medicaid beneficiaries have access to covered Medicaid services.

Earlier this year, the Supreme Court decided in *Armstrong v. Exceptional Child Center, Inc.*, 135 S. Ct. 1378 (2015), that Medicaid providers and beneficiaries do not have a private right of action to contest state-determined Medicaid payment rates in federal courts.

...[Read More](#)

Ten Signs of Alzheimer's disease that seniors should know

Early detection can make a difference says Alzheimer's Association



The Alzheimer's Association has published the ten signs to watch for that may indicate the presence of Alzheimer's disease. They also advise that early detection is important.

Have you noticed any of these warning signs?

List any concerns you have and take this sheet with you to the doctor, advises the organization.

Note that the association says this list is for "information only and not a substitute for a consultation with a qualified professional."

- 1. Memory loss that disrupts daily life.** What's typical? Sometimes forgetting names or appointments, but remembering them later.
- 2. Challenges in planning or solving problems.** What's typical? Making occasional errors when balancing a checkbook.
- 3. Difficulty completing familiar tasks at home, at work or at leisure.** What's typical? Occasionally needing help to use the settings on a microwave or to record a television show.
- 4. Confusion with time or place.** What's typical? Getting confused about the day of the week but figuring it out later.
- 5. Trouble understanding visual images and spatial relationships.** What's typical? Vision changes related to cataracts.
- 6. New problems with words in speaking or writing.** What's typical? Sometimes having trouble finding the right word.
- 7. Misplacing things and losing the ability to retrace steps.** What's typical? Misplacing things from time to time, such as a pair of glasses or the remote control.
- 8. Decreased or poor judgment.** What's typical? Making a bad decision once in a while.
- 9. Withdrawal from work or social activities.** What's typical? Sometimes feeling weary of work, family and social obligations.
- 10. Changes in mood and personality.** What's typical? Developing very specific ways of doing things and becoming irritable when a routine is disrupted....**Read More to find out what's not typical for the above.**

Contact the Alzheimer's Association

If you have questions about any of these warning signs, the Alzheimer's Association recommends consulting a physician. Early diagnosis provides the best opportunities for treatment, support and future planning.

For more information, go to <http://alz.org/10signs> or call 800.272.3900

Memory complaints by older women may signal thinking problems decades later

Dementia-free women, average age of 70, asked same questions over 18 years

New research suggests that older women who complain of memory problems may be at higher risk for experiencing diagnosed memory and thinking impairment decades later.

"These memory complaints may be a very early symptom of a gradual disease process such as Alzheimer's disease," said study author Allison Kaup, PhD, with the San Francisco VA Medical Center and University of California San Francisco.

"Other studies have shown this association, however, our study followed women for longer than most other studies, following these women over the course of nearly 20 years."

Kaup said the memory complaints were enough to be noticeable to the women, but not significant enough to show up on a standard test.

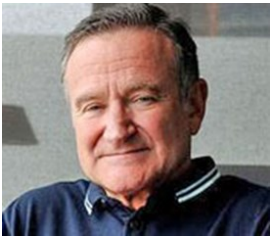
For the study, 1,107 dementia-free women with an average age of 70 were asked several times over 18 years the same question: "Do you feel you have more problems with memory than most?"

At the end of the study, women completed tests of thinking abilities to diagnose whether they had memory or thinking impairment. Other important factors such as years of education, depression, high blood pressure, diabetes, stroke and heart disease were considered....**Read More**



Robin Williams may have killed himself due to Lewy body dementia

Lewy body disease is one of the most common causes of dementia in the elderly



Actor Robin Williams, who had been diagnosed with Parkinson's disease, died without knowing he was actually stricken with Lewy body dementia (LBD), his wife, Susan Williams, said today on Good Morning America. The original diagnosis did not cover all of his symptoms and she believes the effects of LBD led him to take his own life.

Lewy body disease is one of the most common causes of dementia in the elderly, according to the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke.

The NIH reports, "Dementia is the loss of mental functions severe enough to affect normal activities and relationships. Lewy body disease happens when abnormal structures, called Lewy bodies, build up in areas of the brain. The disease may cause a wide range of symptoms, including....

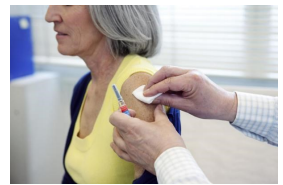
- ◆ **Changes in alertness and attention** ◆ **Hallucinations** ◆ **Problems with movement and posture**
- ◆ **Muscle stiffness** ◆ **Confusion** ◆ **Loss of memory....** [Read More](#)

Effect of statins on flu vaccine questioned by studies

Two recent studies show lower levels of antibodies in older people being treated for high cholesterol with statins.

By Stephen Feller

Two new studies question whether the flu vaccine is less effective for older people taking statins to control cholesterol, raising concern about the vaccine's ability to prevent flu and serious respiratory illness.



About 40 percent of the United States' population over the age of 65 is prescribed statins, which have a known negative effect on the immune system. The drugs have had a significant effect at preventing cardiovascular events by lowering cholesterol in patients.

While the results of the two studies, both of which are published in the Journal of Infectious Diseases, show decreasing effectiveness of flu vaccine in patients being treated with statins and are cause for concern, researchers do not suggest a change in treatment for anybody.

"Instead, the results of these studies should be viewed as hypothesis-generating and should prompt further investigations into whether statins reduce inactivated influenza vaccine immunogenicity and, if so, the mechanisms by which immune responses and associated vaccine effectiveness are adversely affected," **wrote the authors of a commentary published in the Journal of Infectious Diseases** with the two studies.

A **study on the influence of statins on flu vaccine in elderly patients** focused on about 7,000 adults over age 65.

The analysis showed that, three weeks after being vaccinated, people on statins had significantly fewer level of antibodies in their blood for flu strains targeted by the vaccine than people not using statins. The effect, researchers wrote, was most dramatic in people taking synthetic, rather than naturally -derived, statins....[Read More](#)

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

Petition Subject: Observation Status: "Current Hospital Issues in the Medicare Program"

ADD YOUR 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.

ADD YOUR NAME

**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.973 & S.1651

ADD YOUR NAME

**Get The Message Out:
SIGN THE PETITION!!!!**