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RI ARA

*Affiliated with the Rhode Island AFL-CIO
"Fighting for the future of our members,
NOW, more than ever"!!!!*



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October 5, 2015 E-Newsletter

Say No To The Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP)



Rich Fiesta

This past spring and summer, the Alliance for Retired Americans joined with our friends and allies in the fight to stop Trade Promotion Authority, also known as Fast Track, as a way to stop the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). Though we were unsuccessful in stopping Fast Track, our efforts to highlight the use of Medicare to offset the cost of Trade Adjustment Assistance resulted in significantly fewer cuts to Medicare when Fast Track eventually passed.

We believe that highlighting the threat the TPP poses to retirees and Medicare is the right strategy to slow down and defeat the TPP altogether. With the knowledge of the strength of our message and our collective voices, we have created this toolkit to assist you in our ongoing fight against the TPP.

This toolkit includes everything you will need to conduct a successful campaign against the passage of the Trans-Pacific Partnership, including a timeline and instructions for making it successful. We have also included fliers, sign-up sheets and background information on the TPP and how it affects retirees to help you organize your members.

Our communications team has included talking points, templates for press advisories and social media posts, as well as sample letters to the editor so you can lead a professional communications campaign in your own state.

Our Government Affairs and Field Departments have created a PowerPoint presentation that will educate, motivate, and empower your members on the issue, and we are working with the AFL-CIO to pass resolutions at local governments across the nation to build a strong message opposing the TPP.

These materials will be amended and updated as the campaign continues, to reflect emerging issues and opportunities. Our campaign has three phases:

- ◆ Phase 1 focuses on planning in each state, passing resolutions at the local level, preparing our activists for the fight ahead, and educating our members on the issue.
- ◆ Phase 2 will focus on building a TPP activist base, developing our earned media campaign, and advocating directly to targeted members of Congress.
- ◆ Phase 3 will focus on mobilizing our members to take action to raise the profile of the issue across the country.

The fight against the TPP will not be easy, but by working together we can defeat this trade deal once and for all. We ask that your first step be working with our Field Mobilization Department to schedule planning conference calls with each state's executive board and affiliate leadership. Sincerely,

Richard Fiesta, Alliance for Retired Americans Executive Director

The Rhode Island Alliance for Retired Americans along with all Rhode Island senior citizens urge Senators Reed & Whitehouse, Congressmen Langevin & Cicilline to stand with America's seniors and continue to oppose TPP.

Call the RI Congressional Members in support of this SAY NO TO THE TPP!!!!

RI Congressional Delegation Information

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

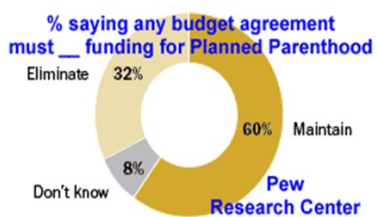
Congressman James Langevin: 300 Centerville Rd # 200, Warwick, RI 02886 (401) 732-9400

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



Most Americans, other than senior citizens, say budget must fund Planned Parenthood

New Pew Research survey finds strong 60% public support for Planned Parenthood; blame Republicans for conflict



For senior citizens it should not be a surprise that Americans age 65 and older are the least likely to support maintaining federal funding for Planned Parenthood. Surprisingly, however, the percentage of seniors in favor is substantially larger than the number who want to eliminate the funding, according to the Pew Research Center.

“With the prospect of a government shutdown apparently decreasing, the public by a wide margin says that any congressional budget agreement must maintain funding for Planned Parenthood,” says the survey report released today by Pew.

The latest national poll by the Pew Research Center, conducted Sept. 22-27 among 1,502 adults, finds that 60% say that any budget deal must maintain funding for Planned Parenthood, while 32% say that any agreement must eliminate funding for the organization.

If lawmakers fail to agree on a budget and the government does shut down, more say the Republicans (40%) than the Democrats (26%) would be more to blame; about a quarter (23%) volunteer that both sides would be equally to blame.

Before the previous government shutdown in October 2013, when asked whether Republicans or the Obama administration would be more to blame if no budget agreement was reached, 39% said Republicans would be more to blame and 36% said the Obama administration (17% said both equally).

There are stark partisan divides in attitudes about the Planned Parenthood issue and in views of a budget compromise more generally. About eight-in-ten Democrats (83%) and 64% of independents say any budget agreement must maintain funding for the group....[Read More](#)

GAO: More Oversight Needed Over Medicare Advantage Provider Networks

By *Phil Galewitz*

The federal government needs to increase its oversight over private Medicare health plans to make sure seniors have adequate access to doctors and hospitals, according to a report released this week by congressional auditors.

The General Accountability Office study found the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, which administers Medicare Advantage plans, primarily relies on complaints from consumers to determine if they are having trouble getting appointments with providers.

The government reviews less than 1 percent of the information filed annually by provider networks for adequacy and accuracy. It looks only at the networks of plans entering new markets and not at those in existing markets, the GAO said.

The congressional watchdog also found that the government approves more than 90 percent of requests from health plans for exemptions from federal rules on network adequacy, which determine how far a consumer has to go to find a doctor.

About 16 million seniors are in **Medicare Advantage plans, HMO's**, 30 percent of the Medicare population. Unlike traditional Medicare which allows consumers to see any provider, those in Medicare Advantage must see a doctor or facility in the plan's network. **Medicare Advantage, HMO's**, enrollees are **locked into their health plan for a year....**[Read More](#)



Can Feds Do A Better Job Negotiating Drug Prices Than Insurers?

CNN Money examines the pros and cons of the government gaining bargaining power with pharmaceutical companies. In other drug industry news, The Boston Globe reports on biotech firms' adoption of a Hollywood model for developing new medicines while The Associated Press looks into the complicated formulas that drive drug costs.

Click on the links below for more information

CNN Money: Here's One Fix For High Drug Prices

The Boston Globe: Pharma Gives Drug Development The Hollywood Treatment

The Associated Press: Multiple Factors Cause High Prescription Drug Prices In US

The Washington Post: The Drug Industry Wants Us To Think Martin Shkreli Is A Rogue CEO. He Isn't.

The New York Times: Drug Companies Hire New Lobbyist To Answer Critics

October 1 to October 31 2015 is National Breast Cancer Awareness Month



(NBCAM) celebrated its 31th anniversary. Since its inception, **NBCAM** has been at the forefront of promoting awareness of breast cancer issues and has evolved along with the national dialogue on breast cancer. Today, NBCAM recognizes that although many great strides have been made in breast cancer awareness and treatment, there remains much to be accomplished. As NBCAM celebrates its 31th anniversary, they remain dedicated to educating and empowering women to take charge of their own



breast health by practicing regular self-breast exams to identify any changes, scheduling regular visits and annual mammograms with their healthcare provider, adhering to prescribed treatment and knowing the facts about recurrence.

The third Friday in October each year is National Mammography Day, first proclaimed by President Clinton in 1993. On this day, or throughout the month, women are encouraged to make a mammography appointment. In 2015, National Mammography Day will be celebrated on October 16.

October

National Breast Cancer Awareness Month

More Information

Guide to Breast Cancer

En Español: Cáncer de mama

Liver Cancer Awareness Month

More Information

Guide to Liver Cancer

En Español: Cáncer de hígado

October 13, 2015 - Metastatic Breast Cancer Awareness Day

More Information

[ASCO Answers Fact Sheet - Metastatic Breast Cancer \(pdf\)](#)

October 16, 2015 - National Mammography Day

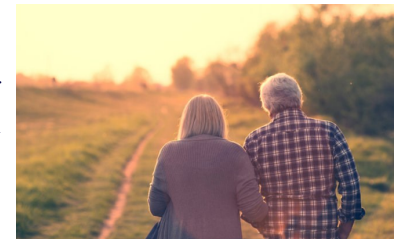


Falls in the Elderly: Deadly But Preventable

Here are steps you can take to reduce your risk.

By Ronan Factora, M.D.

One sentinel event often overlooked in **aging individuals** is a fall. About 1 in 3 individuals who are over the age of 65 will **experience a fall** in one year. Individuals in this age range who fall and fracture their hip have a 25 to 30 percent chance of dying after one year. Additionally, these individuals often cannot regain their prior level of functional independence. Falls are the most common reason for **nursing home placement**.



Given the problems associated with falls, the American Geriatrics Society recommends any individual age 65 or older be evaluated if he or she has a fall or complains of difficulty with balance. This evaluation is meant to prevent the next fall or a fall related to balance difficulty. Both of these problems typically have multiple contributing factors. Factors may include problems with vision (cataracts, macular degeneration, diabetic eye changes and **glaucoma** are the most commonly encountered problems in this population), uncontrolled pain (due to **arthritis**, particularly in the back, hips or knees), muscle weakness (often related to prolonged periods of inactivity), medications (risk of falls increases with the number of medications an individual takes; lightheadedness, particularly when getting up from laying down or seated, can be an indicator that blood pressure medications are too strong; psychotropic medications like antidepressants and antipsychotic medications all increase the danger of falls). By addressing these issues, the possibility of falls can be reduced.

There are some risk factors for falls, though, that cannot be changed. These include age-specific medical conditions such as dementia, **Parkinson's disease**, peripheral neuropathy, prior fall and the need to use an assistive device to ambulate...**Read More**

3 Innovative Options That Make Aging in Place Possible



The old standard of retiring and shuffling off to a retirement community is being re-written by baby boomers who want to enjoy their homes, embrace their communities and age in place as long as they can. By renovating their homes, engaging in the "Village" model, and finding innovative solutions like the Golden Girls Network's Home Companion program, it's now possible for baby boomers to stay in their homes longer.

Only 7 percent of retirees have moved into a retirement community, according to a recent **study**, and 85 percent of retirees hope that when the time comes for long-term care, they can receive it at home. Why is aging in place more attractive to baby boomers than seeking the kinship and services of a retirement community?

* Two-thirds of retirees say they are living in the best home of their lives. With work and family obligations no longer weighing on them, retirees have more freedom to choose the home and location that meets their wants instead of their needs.

* Many retirees want to use their free time to re-connect with their communities and a majority of them (67 percent) want that community to be diverse in age rather than homogenous.

* With family members living in different parts of the country, half of retirees are keeping their larger homes instead of downsizing to make it possible to welcome family back for vacations and holidays.

And to make staying in their homes more feasible, retirees are developing creative solutions...[Read More](#)

Mild memory and thinking issues: What helps, what doesn't? Experts weigh the evidence

New guide based on comprehensive review of recent studies may help you navigate mild cognitive impairment – links to the latest research below report

For up to one in five American senior citizens – those age 65 and older - aging brings memory and thinking problems - along with the embarrassment of not being as "sharp" as we once were, and the frantic worry that it will get much worse.

They might just call it "getting older". But officially, when memory or cognitive problems don't interfere significantly with daily living, doctors call them "mild cognitive impairment," or MCI.

What can be done to prevent or slow MCI? And how much should seniors fear that their thinking or memory problems will get much worse?

A pair of doctors from the University of Michigan Medical School and VA Ann Arbor Healthcare System have put together a definitive look at the evidence, based on a thorough review of recent studies about MCI.

Published in this week's issue of the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, their review article should help doctors and the seniors they treat....[Read More](#)



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

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

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

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