

FRIDAY ALERT



Alliance for Retired Americans

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Medicaid Cuts Endanger Ability of Seniors to Age at Home

The **Paul Ryan-Donald Trump backed** American Health Care Act (AHCA) would significantly harm the health coverage of millions of Americans, including retirees. While much of the media attention has been on the loss of protections for people with pre-existing conditions, the bill also puts the health and well-being of seniors at risk. The practice of allowing Medicaid to be used to provide home health care and [support services](#) to seniors in their homes rather than a nursing home may be curtailed if the bill passes the Senate in its current form.

For the first time in 2014, a larger percentage of Medicaid's long-term care dollars were spent on home- and community-based long-term care rather than institutions. Remaining in one's home, also called 'aging in place,' can be the best alternative from both a health and financial perspective. **Leonardo Cuello** of the **National Health Law Program** has studied the issue and found that many nursing home residents do not need to be in long-term care institutions and could have their needs met with in-home supports.

States have used provisions in the Affordable Care Act and Medicaid to fund a range of eligible seniors' needs, from home health aides to medical or sanitary supplies. The \$880 billion in Medicaid cuts included in the House-passed AHCA put these programs at risk.

"Living in the comfort of your own home is one way to keep your quality of life high as you age," said **Robert Roach Jr.**, President of the Alliance. "It can better emotionally and financially, and these cuts will hurt patients and taxpayers."

Trump Budget May Threaten Social Security, Medicaid

The White House plans to release President Trump's 2018 budget blueprint on May 23, and experts at the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities [expect that it will include harmful cuts](#) to Social Security and Medicaid. This is despite the President's repeated campaign promise "not to touch" Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid. The president already broke his campaign pledge when he endorsed the American Health Care Act that includes billions of dollars of cuts to Medicaid, and his budget blueprint may cut the program even further. Reports indicate that the budget blueprint will also propose cuts to Social Security Disability Insurance.

While Congress ultimately determines the level of funding for the budget and each program, there is reason for concern. Speaker Paul Ryan has repeatedly stated that [overhauling](#) Social Security and Medicare is on his agenda, and he has even said that a measure to privatize Medicare could be included in the 2018 budget. [Codewords](#) like "overhaul" and "reform" are often used by politicians who favor cutting earned benefit programs to put a more favorable spin on their positions.

“Candidate Trump promised to make no cuts to Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid,” said **Richard Fiesta**, Executive Director of the Alliance. “He already broke that promise with the AHCA, and millions of seniors will hold him and Congress accountable for threats to their retirement security.”

Senior Volunteers Provide More Than 3.3 Billion Hours of Service to their Communities

More than 21 million Americans 55 or older contributed more than 3.3 billion hours of service in their communities, according to the 2017 annual Volunteering and Civic Life in America report by Corporation of National and Community Service. Based on the Independent Sector's estimate of the average value of a volunteer hour, their collective service provides a yearly economic benefit valued at \$78 billion, while helping communities fill critical gaps in education, health care, and other services. The top-ranked volunteer activities were collecting and distributing food, fundraising, and providing professional or management assistance to nonprofits.

State Alliances Hold Conventions and Organize Across the Nation

Several state Alliances are holding their state conventions and discussing strategy to protect Social Security, pensions, Medicaid and Medicare this month. Alliance President Robert Roach Jr. and Executive Director Richard Fiesta attended the Washington State Alliance's state convention and discussed the need to organize to protect our earned retirement benefits. The state's entire leadership board, President Jackie Boschok, Secretary Kathy Wallentine and Vice Presidents Maria Britton Sipe, Jerry Seidl and Don Bennett, was re-elected.



Alliance President Robert Roach speaking at the Washington Alliance's state conference.

Bernie Faust was elected president of the Wisconsin ARA, and the Pennsylvania ARA welcomed new Executive Vice President **Marlene Bryant**. Alliance Director of Field Mobilization **Brendan Kelly** and Field Manager **Maureen Dunn** participated in the convention in Pennsylvania.



Pennsylvania ARA President Wayne Burton, Secretary Dwayne Thomas, Treasurer Mike Doyle, and newly elected Executive Vice President Marlene Bryant are sworn in by Pennsylvania AFL-CIO President Rick Bloomingdale.



In Wisconsin, Secretary Cynthia Wynn, Treasurer Ken Greening, President Bernie Faust, Executive Vice President Fatou Cessay, President Emeritus Michael Pyne, and Vice President Joanne Bruch are sworn in by former President Emeritus Leon Burzyski.



PA Alliance President Wayne Burton and Board Member Adam Swope present the Keystone Award for Lifetime Achievement to Jim Centner, who recently retired as director of SOAR. The award was accepted by his successor, Julie Stein.

The Alliance for Retired Americans is a national organization that advocates for the rights and well-being of over 4.4 million retirees and their families.