

FRIDAY ALERT



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ACTION NEEDED -- Urge Your Member to Vote for H.R. 3

H.R. 3, The Lower Drug Costs Now Act, detailed below, will be a giant step forward for bringing relief to Americans who can't afford their medications if it is passed by Congress. It's no surprise that the powerful pharmaceutical corporations are [fighting it tooth and nail](#).

Lawmakers need to know that their constituents want it passed now. [Click here to send a message to your U.S. Representative and tell them to vote for H.R. 3](#).

House Introduces Sweeping Legislation to Lower Drug Prices



On Thursday, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and the Democratic leadership team [unveiled legislation](#) to lower prescription drug costs. The bill, called the “Lower Drug Costs Now Act” (H.R. 3), empowers the government to negotiate lower prices and decreases out of pocket patient expenses. It would impose excise taxes on pharmaceutical corporations that refuse to negotiate.

The plan gives the Secretary of Health and Human Services the power to negotiate on behalf of the American people. It allows the secretary to annually negotiate for up to 250 of the most expensive drugs available through Medicare, [including insulin](#). The negotiated prices would be available for all insurers -- not just Medicare.

The bill factors will bring U.S. prices more in line with how much other countries pay for a drug. Pharmaceutical companies that refuse to bargain about prices will have to pay large taxes -- starting at 65% of the gross sales of the drug in question and increasing by 10% for every quarter that they do not negotiate.

The plan also caps out of pocket prescription drug costs for Medicare beneficiaries at \$2,000 and caps price increases at the rate of inflation for Medicare Part B and Part D. Today there is no cap for beneficiaries who take expensive or a large number of drugs to stay healthy.

“Americans now pay the highest prices for prescription drugs in the world. The House and Senate need to pass this plan and rein in the predatory practices of pharmaceutical manufacturers,” said **Richard Fiesta**, Executive Director of the Alliance. “Capping out of pocket costs and letting Medicare negotiate prices will finally provide relief to retirees and other Americans who struggle to afford their medicine. Retirees can’t wait. The House must pass it as soon as possible, and the Senate should do the same.”

House Committee Takes Action on H.R. 4344, “The Dignity in Aging Act”

On Wednesday, the House Education and Labor Committee [considered legislation](#), the “Dignity in Aging Act,” which re-authorizes the Older Americans Act (OAA). The OAA expires at the end of September.

The OAA directly [helps about 11 million Americans](#), through [a national network](#) of 56 state agencies on aging, including those located in U.S. territories. The funding helps provide everything from food services (including Meals on Wheels), independent living, elder abuse protections, jobs for low-income seniors, and support for caregivers.

“The Older Americans Act is one of the most important pieces of aging legislation and has helped millions of Americans get healthy food and to remain independent,” said **Joseph Peters, Jr.**, Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance. “We urge Congress to reauthorize this law so that current and future generations of older Americans can have a healthy and dignified retirement.”

New Polling: Americans Remain Concerned About Health Care

The majority of Americans think defending the Affordable Care Act’s protections for people with pre-existing conditions and lowering prescription drug and health care costs should be the top priorities for Congress, according to a [new Kaiser Family Foundation poll](#).

Seventy percent of those surveyed said that lowering prescription drug prices should be a top priority for Congress, 69% said that Congress should prioritize maintaining protections for people with pre-existing conditions, and 64% said



Congress should focus on lowering health care costs in general. Slightly more than half of respondents (53%) also reported having a favorable view of the Affordable Care Act.

In addition to the drug pricing plan released this week, Congress has considered and introduced several pieces of legislation dealing with prescription drug prices, health care costs, and pre-existing conditions. Earlier this year, the House [passed legislation](#) to rein in drug prices and block sabotage of the ACA.

“Lowering prescription drug and health care costs and defending the ACA have always been important to our members, and it seems that Americans in general also want action,” said **Robert Roach, Jr.**, President of the Alliance. “It’s heartening that lawmakers have started to respond and are taking action on these issues. They must continue to do so.”

Hearing Aids are for More than Just Hearing



Hearing aids are most often thought of as a simple solution to a common and harmful problem. Yet hearing aid technology has evolved substantially over the years and continues to advance. Seniors suffering from hearing loss can now benefit from improvements that offer added benefits that no one ever imagined. Fall Detection and Alert capability within a hearing aid -- as well as Heart Rate Measurement -- is now available in certain models.

Falling is a major health issue for retirees. According to the National Alliance for Caregivers, more than 65 million people (29 percent of the U.S. population) currently provide care for a disabled, chronically ill or an aged friend or family member. And according to the National Council on Aging, every 11 seconds an older adult is seen in an emergency department for a fall-related injury. One in every three older Americans – about 12 million – fall every year. Hearing aids are now considered necessary medical treatment rather than the luxury they once were.

The Alliance is working to make this treatment more easily available and less expensive for you and your extended family through our partnership with HEAR In America hearing plans. Please consider if you or anyone in your extended family should have their hearing checked. Then contact Hear In America today to find out if hearing aids would benefit you. For more information or to register for a FREE screening and evaluation, call 1-800-286-6149 or click here: www.hearinamerica.com/ara.