

FRIDAY ALERT



Alliance for Retired Americans

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Prices Increased 3 to 9 Times Faster Than Inflation for 20 Widely-Used Drugs

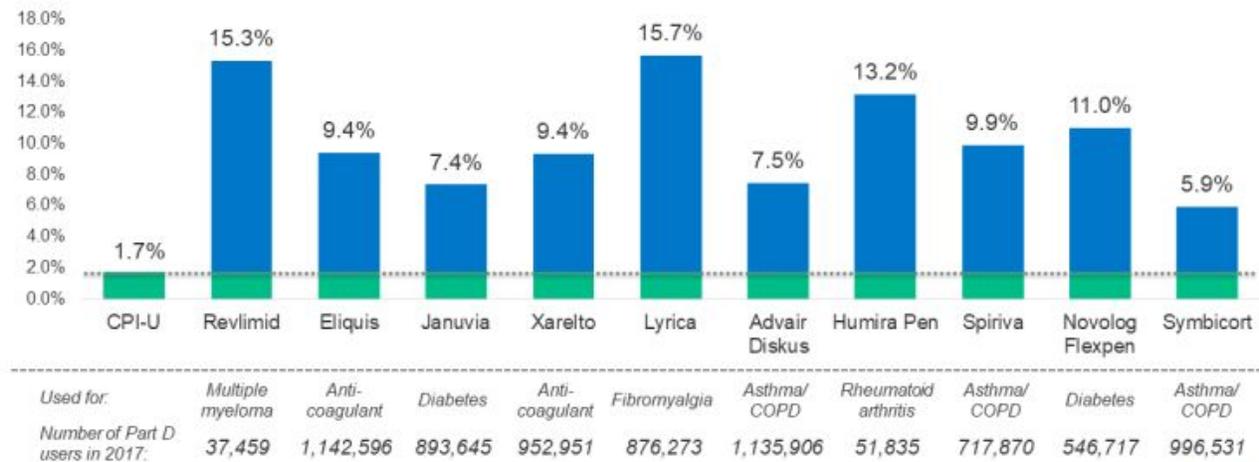
List prices for 20 of the 25 most common drugs covered by Medicare have increased between three and nine times faster than the rate of inflation between 2016 and 2017 according to a new [report from the Kaiser Family Foundation](#).

Some of the drugs with the biggest increases were the pain medication Lyrica, which rose by 15.7%; cancer medication Revlimid, which rose by 15.3%; and Humira Pen for rheumatoid arthritis, which increased by 13.2%.

Figure 2

List Price Increases Between 2016 and 2017 for Brands with High Total Medicare Part D Spending in 2017 Exceeded Inflation by Several Percentage Points

Top 10 Brands by 2017 Total Part D Spending with 2016-2017 List Price Increases Above Inflation



NOTES: List prices are based on average spending per dosage unit and do not account for rebates. 2016-2017 price changes compared to the increase in the CPI-U between July 2016-July 2017.

SOURCE: KFF analysis of CMS Medicare Part D Drug Spending and Utilization Data and Bureau of Labor Statistics data.



Skyrocketing drug prices affect both retirees whose co-pays are increasing and taxpayers. These drugs are manufactured and sold by highly profitable pharmaceutical corporations. The corporations claim that high prices are needed to fund industry research and development; however, many pharmaceutical corporations are spending [more on advertising than on actual research](#).

Vote on “Lower Drug Costs Now Act” is Likely to Come Soon

In a related development, this week the House Ways and Means Committee completed its work on [the Lower Drug Costs Now Act](#), H.R. 3. The bill would cap out-of-pocket spending for Medicare beneficiaries at \$2,000 yearly and require the federal government to negotiate lower prices for all American consumers, including seniors. The bill is expected to come to a vote on the floor of the House of Representatives as early as November.

Alliance President **Robert Roach, Jr.** said, “Congress has a way to start bringing down high drug prices right in front of them. It is H.R. 3. The facts are clear -- we need to stop these corporations from gouging the American public.”

“Savings from the negotiations will be reinvested into Medicare. They could be used to expand benefits, such as providing hearing, dental and vision coverage,” added **Joseph Peters, Jr.**, Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance.

Pete Buttigieg Discusses Senior Issues with Nevada Alliance Members

As part of a day of campaigning in the Las Vegas area, Democratic presidential candidate/Mayor [Pete Buttigieg met with Nevada Alliance members](#) Wednesday. Alliance Executive Director **Richard Fiesta** moderated the discussion which covered prescription drug prices, Social Security, Medicare, and other retiree issues.

California Alliance Holds Convention



Nan Brasmer with Rich Fiesta

California Alliance for Retired Americans President **Nan Brasmer** was honored as CARA’s first Retiree of the Year banquet in Sacramento.

Alliance Executive Director Fiesta praised Brasmer’s leadership during the banquet. “Nan has built a strong foundation so that the California Alliance carries on for years into the future. But for now, we don’t have to worry about that, because she is still providing the leadership that has delivered meaningful change for California retirees.”

Other speakers at the convention included AFL-CIO Executive Vice President **Tefere Gebre**, **Dr. Paul Song** from Physicians for a National Health Program; **Adelita Serena** from Mothers Out Front; and musician and retiree activist **Jon 'Bowzer' Bauman**.

Medicare Part D Enrollment Goes thru December 7

With Medicare's open enrollment period now underway, it's the perfect time to do a "Medicare Check-up" and make sure that you are in the right Medicare insurance plan for your situation. Visit [eHealth](#) for unbiased resources that help Alliance members with their Medicare needs. This is a free service and there is no obligation to change your plan or enroll.

Learn about the coverage options available to you, and compare existing plans to see what fits your needs best. To speak to a licensed insurance agent at eHealth, an insurance broker specializing in the Medicare insurance plan needs of Alliance members, call 1-888-519-2029 (TTY users: 771) Monday - Friday between 8am - 8pm EST or visit [their website](#).

Medicare open enrollment runs from October 15 to December 7. For more information, please visit [Medicare.gov](#).

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.