

# FRIDAY ALERT



**Alliance for Retired Americans**

815 16th Street, NW, Fourth Floor • Washington, DC 20006 • 202.637.5399

[www.retiredamericans.org](http://www.retiredamericans.org)

Spanish version: [www.alianzadejubilados.org](http://www.alianzadejubilados.org)

**October 4, 2019**

## Florida Alliance Calls Out Trump's Broken Promises On Medicare

On Thursday, President **Trump** traveled to The Villages in Wildwood, Florida to announce an executive order about Medicare Advantage plans. During his speech, he claimed that his Administration is lowering drug prices and protecting Medicare “more than it’s ever needed to be protected before.”

He repeated his pledge to repeal the Affordable Care Act (ACA) without mentioning that thanks to



the ACA, seniors receive free wellness visits and screenings for a number of conditions. He also touted less expensive short-term insurance plans that do not provide the same protections and coverage required by the ACA.

To set the record straight, Florida Alliance members held a nearby press

conference focused on President Trump's broken promises to seniors. Secretary **Barbara DeVane** cited the Administration's proposed budgets, which drastically cut Medicare, and the lack of meaningful action to lower high drug prices. The Alliance released a new [fact sheet](#) backing up her points.

Florida Alliance President **Bill Sauers** and several chapter members including **Preston Drummer** and **Lewellen McQueen** also attended the event.

“Prescription drugs are the number one factor in driving up Medicare costs,” said **Robert Roach, Jr.**, President of the Alliance. “There’s been no progress to lower them from this Administration. Any serious proposal must allow Medicare to negotiate lower prices on behalf of retirees and the American people while limiting the out-of-pocket drug spending seniors must pay under Medicare Part B and D.”

In addition to the news conference, the Alliance and its partner Lower Insulin Now drove home the message with a billboard truck calling for Medicare price negotiation and lower drug prices now. The truck drove through The Villages for several hours, calling attention to the problem.

### **The Deep Divide: State Borders Create Medicaid Haves And Have-Nots** **Lauren Ungar, *Kaiser Health News***

**Patricia Powers** went a few years without health insurance and couldn't afford regular doctor visits. So she had no idea cancerous tumors were silently growing in both of her breasts.

If Powers lived just across the Mississippi River in Illinois, she would have qualified for Medicaid, the federal-state health insurance program for low-income residents that 36 states and the District of Columbia decided to expand under the Affordable Care Act. But Missouri politicians chose not to expand it — a decision some groups are trying to reverse by getting signatures to put the option on the 2020 ballot.

Powers' predicament reflects an odd twist in the way the health care law has played out: State borders have become arbitrary dividing lines between Medicaid's haves and have-nots, with Americans in similar financial straits facing vastly different health care fortunes. This affects everything from whether diseases are caught early to whether people can stay well enough to work.

It wasn't supposed to be this way. The ACA, passed in 2010, called for extending Medicaid to all Americans earning up to 138% of the federal poverty level, around \$17,000 annually for an individual. But the U.S. Supreme Court in 2012 let states choose whether to expand Medicaid. Illinois did, bringing an additional 650,000-plus people onto its rolls. Missouri did not, and today about 200,000 of its residents are like Powers, stuck in this geographic gap.

Read more at ["The Deep Divide: State Borders Create Medicaid Haves And Have-Nots."](#)

### **Jo Etta Brown Re-appointed to Nevada Commission for Women**

**Governor Steve Sisolak** has re-appointed Alliance Executive Vice President **Jo Etta Brown** to the Nevada Commission for Women. Ms. Brown has served on the commission since 2016.

The Commission is finalizing the first Nevada license plate that depicts a suffragist. "2020 is a special year for women, it marks the 100 year celebration for women to vote," said Ms. Brown. "It is even more special for me -- my Grandmother was a suffragist."

Brown is also a member of the National Commission for Women.

### **Arizona Alliance Holds its State Convention**

The Arizona Alliance for Retired Americans celebrated 16 years of retiree activism at the 2019 Biennial Convention on Thursday, September 26th. The event honored **Doug Hart** as he steps down from his role as President. Presenters included Maricopa County Supervisor **Steve Gallardo**, State Senator **Lela Alston**, State Representative **Charlene Fernandez**, Phoenix Mayor

**Kate Gallego**, Arizona AFL-CIO Executive Director **Fred Yamashita** and former Rep. **Ron Barber** (AZ-02).

Delegates elected the 2019-2021 Board of Directors, which includes **Saundra Cole** (CWA) as President, **Vic Peterson** (AFGE) as 1st Vice President, **Dan Pollard** (IBEW) as 2nd Vice President, **Janie Hydrick** (NEA) as Treasurer, and **Russ Crossan** (International Brotherhood of Boilermakers, IBB) as Secretary.

“Thank you, Doug Hart for your years of service to the Arizona Alliance,” said **Richard Fiesta**, Executive Director of the Alliance. “Your leadership skills and your ability to bring people together have been very much appreciated by local members and the national Alliance for years.”



Arizona Alliance members in Phoenix on September 26.

### **Fiesta Speaks at State AFL-CIO Convention in Springfield, Massachusetts**

Alliance Executive Director Fiesta addressed the Massachusetts State Federation Convention Retirees Session last Friday, joining AFL-CIO President **Richard Trumka** and Massachusetts AFL-CIO President **Steven Tolman** and Massachusetts Alliance President **John Ratcliff**.



Executive Director Fiesta (second from left) and Alliance state President John Ratliff (seated, center) with Massachusetts Alliance and State Fed members

Mr. Fiesta spoke about ways Alliance retiree activists in Massachusetts and around the country are leading the fight for expanded Social Security, lower drug prices, and strengthened health care for all Americans. During its meeting, the Massachusetts State Federation passed a resolution to expand its collaboration with the Massachusetts Alliance.

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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.