



# FRIDAY ALERT



**Alliance for Retired Americans**

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## IRS Changes Course: Seniors Don't Need to File Tax Returns for Stimulus Payments After All

Thanks to advocacy by the Alliance and allies, the Treasury Department reversed course Wednesday and announced that [Social Security beneficiaries who typically do not file a tax return](#) will automatically get a stimulus payment.



Congress created these payments to help address the economic effects of the coronavirus pandemic and specifically instructed the Administration that beneficiaries should not have to file tax returns or complete other paperwork.

“Retirees who qualify for stimulus payments will now receive them automatically, as Congress intended,” said **Richard Fiesta**, Executive Director of the Alliance. “The reversal reflects the power of our advocacy to get relief as soon as possible to older Americans.”

However, Supplemental Security Income (SSI) beneficiaries and individuals who receive Veterans Affairs (VA) pension or disability benefits who don't file returns and don't receive Social Security retirement or disability benefits aren't covered by the Treasury Department's decision.

“Next we must make sure that veterans and SSI recipients also do not face the undue burden of having to file a tax return just to get the stimulus money they are owed,” Executive Director Fiesta added.

More details about how the coronavirus legislation passed in March affects seniors is available in our [new fact sheet](#).

## Seniors Working Retail Are Torn Between Their Health and Income



Since the 2008 recession, the number of retirement-age Americans working in retail jobs has increased. Today, nearly a quarter of retail employees are 55 or older and 7 percent are over 65. This means that [the population most susceptible to the coronavirus is on the front lines in essential jobs](#) and has to decide whether to prioritize their income or their health.

Older Americans in retail jobs are selling groceries, medicine, and other essentials to large numbers of shoppers, increasing their risk

for exposure to the coronavirus. While some accommodations are being made for older shoppers, like seniors-only hours in grocery stores and priority home delivery, few modifications have been made for the 4.4 million 55 and older workers.

Retail workers of all ages report that there is a lack of access to gloves or disinfectant to protect themselves.

“No one should have to choose between their health and their livelihood,” said **Robert Roach, Jr.**, President of the Alliance. “Congress and the administration need to do more to protect older Americans on the front lines of this pandemic by providing protective equipment to those who are working in essential businesses.”

## Retired Health Care Workers Put on Scrubs Again to Fight the Pandemic

It's not just personal protective equipment and ventilators that are in short supply amid the coronavirus pandemic; doctors, nurses, and other health care providers are being stretched thin, too. To help alleviate some of the strain, state governments and hospitals are asking [retired health workers to return to work](#).

New York State anticipates a severe shortage of health care workers to treat COVID-19 patients. More than [52,000 retired doctors, nurses](#), and other medical workers have responded to Governor **Andrew Cuomo**'s request to temporarily return to work.

Officials in other states, including Colorado, California, and Illinois, have put out similar calls for retired health care professionals. Public health experts say the best roles for older medical staff may be behind the scenes, including calling coronavirus patients to talk them through guidelines to protect themselves and others. Due to their age and increased risk, this will protect retirees and free up younger staff to perform direct patient care.

“Retirees are stepping up around the country to help where they can and these retired health care workers are American heroes,” said **Joseph Peters, Jr.**, Secretary-Treasurer of

the Alliance. “The rest of us can also help stop the virus’ spread by following the health guidance to stay at home.”

### **Federal Judge Rules Medicare Patients Can Challenge ‘Observation Care’ Status** **Susan Jaffe, *Kaiser Health News***

Hundreds of thousands of Medicare beneficiaries who have been denied coverage for nursing home stays because their time in the hospital was changed from “inpatient” to “observation care” can now appeal to Medicare for reimbursement, a federal judge in Hartford, Connecticut, ruled last week.



To receive coverage for nursing home care, patients must first be admitted to the hospital as inpatients for three consecutive days. Time spent in the hospital for observation doesn’t count, even though they may stay overnight and receive some of the same treatment and other services provided to inpatients.

Medicare has temporarily suspended the three-day inpatient admission requirement during the

coronavirus emergency.

**Read more at [Federal Judge Rules Medicare Patients Can Challenge ‘Observation Care’ Status.](#)**