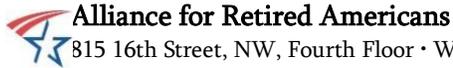




# FRIDAY ALERT



**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)

**July 31, 2020**

## Alliance Celebrates Medicare's 55th Anniversary with Virtual Events

Thursday marked the 55th anniversary of Medicare, and Alliance members across the country showed their support for the guaranteed health care program with creative virtual events.

Before Medicare, only half of the nation's seniors had health insurance. When uninsured seniors had serious health problems, they faced an impossible choice: risk financial ruin by seeking care or avoid treatment and watch their health deteriorate. Thanks to Medicare, 52.6 million Americans aged 65 and older now have guaranteed health coverage.

Alliance Executive Director **Richard Fieta** joined Florida Alliance members for a [Zoom video conference with six Florida House members](#): **Charlie Crist, Ted Deutch, Lois Frankel, Al Lawson, Donna Shalala, and Debbie Wasserman-Schultz**. Florida Alliance President **Bill**

**Sauers** presented Retiree Hero Awards recognizing members who earned a 100% pro-retiree score in the Alliance's Congressional Voting Record to each of the Representatives.



Sen. **Dick Durbin** participated in a virtual event with the Illinois Alliance and Rep. **Tom O'Halleran** joined an Arizona Alliance birthday celebration on Google Meet. In Iowa, U.S. Senate candidate **Theresa Greenfield** took questions at a [virtual town hall](#). In Texas, Alliance members marked the anniversary with a caravan around the Governor's Mansion and State Capitol building in Austin. Alliance

Texas Alliance members and allies told Gov. Greg Abbott to EXPAND MEDICAID NOW!

members in California, Nevada, North Carolina, and Washington will host virtual events today and in the coming days.

“Guaranteed health coverage is as important today as it was 55 years ago, but we can and must do better for older Americans,” said Alliance Executive Director Fiesta. “Allowing Medicare to negotiate prescription drug prices will strengthen the program, while saving the taxpayers billions and reducing costs for seniors. Even with Medicare, the average senior spends more than \$5,000 per year on out of pocket medical costs.”

## **McConnell’s COVID-19 Relief Package Takes Aim at Social Security and Medicare**

The TRUST Act [legislation](#) contained in the GOP’s relief package establishes congressional “rescue committees” to review the federal Social Security, Medicare, and Highway trust funds. The legislation was introduced by Sen. **Mitt Romney** (UT) and would create so-called rescue committees. Members of the committees would meet in secret behind closed-doors and make changes to the program, including cuts to Social Security and Medicare that would receive expedited consideration in the House and Senate.



“The TRUST Act is a bad idea, and including it in a bill that is supposed to help people during the pandemic is outrageous,” said **Joseph Peters, Jr.**, Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance. “If Congress were serious about protecting our earned benefits, members would require the wealthiest Americans to pay their fair share.”

[Send a petition to Congress to stop the scheme of Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and Sen. Romney that cuts Social Security and Medicare.](#)

## **Trump’s Executive Orders on Drug Pricing Fall Short**

Last Friday, President **Trump** signed four [executive orders he said would reduce drug prices](#), a campaign promise he has yet to fulfill. However, the orders are unlikely to take effect anytime soon if ever, and would not change current drug costs.

The power to implement drug pricing policy through executive order is limited and the drug industry is expected to challenge the orders in court.

“This is just a thinly veiled effort to try to gain support from older voters in the November election,” said Executive Director Fiesta. “Trump has had three years to make serious reforms, but instead packed his administration with former pharmaceutical corporation executives, enriched the wealthiest corporations, and allowed new levels of price gouging amid the COVID-19 pandemic.”

In December, the House of Representatives passed the Lower Drug Costs Now Act ([H.R. 3](#)), a bill the Alliance has endorsed. It requires the Department of Health and Human Services to negotiate lower drug prices for people covered by Medicare and extend discounts to individuals covered by private insurance. Senate Majority Leader **McConnell** has refused to bring the bill to a vote, and President Trump pledged to veto it.

## 8 in 10 People Who Have Died of COVID-19 Were 65 or Older

A sobering new [study](#) by the Kaiser Family Foundation found that 80 percent of people who have died from COVID-19 in the United States were aged 65 or older. The share of older Americans who have died varies state by state, from a high of 94 percent in Idaho to a low of 70 percent in the District of Columbia.

States that have the highest percentage of deaths among people 65 and older are most often the same states that have a disproportionate number of deaths in long term care facilities. These states include Idaho, New Hampshire (92%), Massachusetts (90%), Rhode Island (90%), Minnesota (89%), Connecticut (89%), Pennsylvania (87%), Ohio (86%), Kentucky (84%), and Delaware (83%).

“The impact of COVID-19 on older Americans is painful and undeniable,” said **Robert Roach, Jr.**, President of the Alliance. “We have lost too many friends, neighbors and family members before their time. We need the kind of comprehensive plan and response that other countries have implemented to prevent losing more seniors.”

### Coronavirus Scam Alert: Medicare Will Not Send You a Free Mask

Scammers are using the COVID-19 pandemic to try to steal beneficiaries' Medicare numbers and personal information in order to send you protective equipment. If anyone ever asks for your Medicare number or personal information in exchange for something, it's a scam. You may get a call, text message, or email offering you free face masks from Medicare. You might also see social media posts about free COVID-19 testing kits or “cures.” Don't fall for it!

Protect yourself by guarding your Medicare card like it's a credit card, check regularly for any billing fraud, and report anything suspicious to Medicare by calling **1-800-MEDICARE**. Visit [Medicare.gov/fraud](https://www.medicare.gov/fraud) for more tips on preventing scams.