



# FRIDAY ALERT



## Alliance for Retired Americans

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## Alliance Members Spread the Word about the Benefits of Medicare Drug Price Negotiation

Days after the **Biden-Harris** administration [unveiled](#) the list of 10 prescription drugs that will be subject to Medicare price negotiation, Alliance members across the country joined elected leaders and Cabinet officials to inform older Americans about this important development.

The [list](#) includes several drugs that many seniors use, including Eliquis and Xarelto, which are used to treat blood clots; and Jardiance, Jenuvia, Farxiga, and Fiasp (along with Fiasp FlexTouch; Fiasp PenFill; NovoLog; NovoLog FlexPen; NovoLog and PenFill), which are used to treat diabetes.

Maryland/DC Alliance member **Pam Parker** [joined](#) U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services **Xavier Becerra** on a panel in Chantilly, Virginia Tuesday touting the drug price negotiation benefits. Senator **Mark Kelly** (AZ) joined Alliance members Wednesday to discuss how Medicare negotiations will lower prescription drug costs for Arizonans. You can watch the event [here](#).

““Seniors have paid as much as \$6,500 a year in out of pocket costs for just one of these drugs,” said Arizona Alliance president **Linda Somo** at the event. “Prescription drugs don’t work if people can’t afford to take them.”

Former Arizona Alliance president **Doug Hart**, who takes two pills a day of blood thinner Eliquis, [spoke to television](#) station ABC15 about what drug price negotiation means for him.

“Thanks to President Biden and years of grassroots activism by Alliance members, Medicare will be able to negotiate prices on these drugs beginning in 2026,” said **Robert Roach, Jr.**, President of the Alliance. “The drugs involved are some of the most expensive medications on the market, and that means seniors and taxpayers will save billions of dollars.”

## President Biden, AFL-CIO President Shuler Mark Labor Day with Rallies in Philadelphia, Detroit

President Biden celebrated both unions and his job creation record during a [Labor Day appearance](#) at a rally at the Sheet Metal Workers Local 19 in Philadelphia Monday. He noted that there are nearly 13,500,000 new jobs in the country since he was sworn in, including 800,000 new

manufacturing jobs, and reminded attendees that his administration had [saved millions of pensions](#).

Also on Monday, AFL-CIO President **Liz Shuler** joined thousands of union members at the annual [Detroit Labor Day rally](#). The event was timely, given the September 14 contract deadline between the United Auto Workers (UAW) and the Detroit Three automakers: Ford, General Motors and Stellantis.



AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler (center) and UAW President Shawn Fain, right, led the parade with Michigan elected officials and leaders. (photo: Ken Coleman)

"If the shareholders and CEOs are lavishing themselves with the value we create, then it's our turn for our fair share," [said](#) UAW President **Shawn Fain**. "I want to be very clear on this point: We will accept nothing less than consistent, living wages that grow with the economy."

"The UAW is fighting for better pensions, increased wages, and an end to tiered compensation between workers with different lengths of service," added **Joseph Peters, Jr.**, Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance. "Tiered compensation pays newer employees less. That hurts workplace morale and cripples the union."

## Pleasant Surprise: Medicare's Per Person Spending Has Stopped Skyrocketing

Spending per Medicare beneficiary has nearly [leveled off](#) over more than a decade — but for unknown reasons. The lower per-person cost could have to do with the Affordable Care Act, fewer heart attacks, or the recent lack of new blockbuster treatments.

In fact, if Medicare spending had grown the way it had for much of its history, federal spending would have been \$3.9 trillion higher since 2011, and deficits would have been more than a quarter larger.

The development has had enormous consequences for federal spending. Budget news is often dire, but the Medicare trend has been unexpectedly good, saving taxpayers a huge amount relative to projections. Medicare is growing more slowly than ever, although still more quickly [than the rest of the federal budget](#).

One partial explanation: older Americans appear to be having [fewer heart attacks and strokes](#), the likely result of effective cholesterol and blood pressure medicines that became more widely used in recent years, according to research from Harvard Professor **David Cutler** and colleagues.

Medicare may even wind up saving money because of Covid-19, because the older Americans who died from the disease tended to have other illnesses that would have been expensive to treat if they had survived, according to an [analysis](#) from the Medicare actuary.

“The data shows that any calls to privatize or cut Medicare, or raise the eligibility age, are wrong-headed,” said **Richard Fiesta**, Executive Director of the Alliance.

## FDA Expected to Greenlight a New Covid Booster

With the fast approaching fall and winter months — meaning more time spent indoors — the Food and Drug Administration and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are prepared to soon [approve](#) an updated Covid booster shot. The FDA could greenlight this updated version as early as Friday.



97% of adults already have some protective immunity against Covid, but immunity from vaccines and past infections naturally lessens over time. Since cases are expected to spike during the winter months, health experts say it is important to strengthen this immunity. Seniors have been affected in especially high numbers by Covid, with [76% of American deaths](#) occurring in patients 65 or older.

Once the FDA has signed off, the CDC and its advisory committee will vote on recommendations on how the vaccines should be used and who should receive them. The official signoff of CDC director **Dr. Mandy Cohen** is expected to follow a Tuesday CDC meeting, and the rollout will then begin.

“Covid has disproportionately affected seniors. We strongly urge everyone to follow the CDC’s guidance regarding booster shots,” said **President Roach**.