



FRIDAY ALERT



Alliance for Retired Americans

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Biden Administration Moves to Tighten Medicare Advantage Regulations

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) [has issued](#) a draft rule that would require Medicare Advantage plans to encourage beneficiaries to actually use all of the supplemental benefits available to them. Beneficiaries would also have to be informed mid-year about any unused benefits available to them.

The draft rule would also more strictly limit the amount insurance agents and brokers who advise customers can be paid, setting a fixed amount for guidance no matter which plan a consumer chooses. Payment caps currently exist, but some corporations reward advisers with extras like golf trips when a client chooses their plan.

“CMS must continue to hold Medicare Advantage corporations accountable,” said **Robert Roach, Jr.**, President of the Alliance. “There should be no tolerance for corporations compensating insurance agents or brokers more than is allowed.”

Our New Debt Commission Position Paper

The Alliance has [released a new position paper](#) outlining its opposition to the Fiscal Commission Act (H.R. 5779) and the Fiscal Stability Act (S. 3262).

These two bills were introduced by Rep. **Bill Huizenga** (MI) and Sens. **Joe Manchin** (WV) and **Mitt Romney** (UT). They each establish a 16-member “Fiscal Commission” to make recommendations on balancing the federal budget and improving the solvency of Federal trust funds, including Social Security and Medicare.

“Social Security cannot, by law, contribute to the national debt,” said **Richard Fiesta**, Executive Director of the Alliance. “These bills are built on the flawed, dangerous premise that we need to



Debt Commission Legislation Fast Tracks Cuts to Social Security and Medicare

Social Security and Medicare have been the foundation of retirement security for generations of Americans, providing income and health care to millions. Americans earn these benefits, contributing to them with every paycheck.

Rep. Bill Huizenga (MI) and Sens. Joe Manchin (WV) and Mitt Romney (UT) have introduced legislation to establish a 16-member “Fiscal Commission” appointed by congressional leaders. Twelve members of the commission would be members of Congress and the other four would be “outside experts.”

The Commission would make recommendations on how to balance the federal budget to address the growth of direct spending and to improve the solvency of Federal trust funds, including Social Security and Medicare, for at least 75 years. There is no requirement that the Commission’s deliberations would be open to the public.

The Commission’s recommendations would then be delivered to Congress immediately following the November 2024 elections, with the requirements that each chamber conduct an immediate up or down vote on the recommendations without any opportunities for changes or amendments. The bills only discuss cuts without mentioning consideration of revenue increases.

The House bill is H.R. 5779, the Fiscal Commission Act. The Senate bill is S. 3262, the Fiscal Stability Act.

Alliance for Retired Americans Position

The Alliance for Retired Americans strongly opposes H.R. 5779 and S. 3262, and any other legislation to create committees or commissions “to do the work of Americans’ elected representatives” without input from the American people.

Retirees have earned their Social Security and Medicare benefits over a lifetime of work. The benefits ensure older Americans receive the health care they need, and provide income for more than 66 million Americans. These benefits are critical and they should not be cut.

The Alliance urges Congress to strengthen the solvency of our nation’s retirement programs and expand Social Security and Medicare benefits by making the wealthiest pay their fair share into these programs.

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cut earned benefits rather than strengthen and expand them. We encourage alliance members to share this information with their friends and family and urge their elected officials to vote no on these bills.”

LAST CHANCE TO REGISTER

Watch Your Wallet: Making Housing Decisions, Managing Debt and Avoiding Scams as You Age Webinar

On Monday, November 27, 2023 from 4:00 PM to 5:00 PM Eastern Time the Alliance will host an educational webinar with **Hector Ortiz** and **Cora Hume** from the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau’s Office for Older Americans.

To RSVP, click [here](#).

Free At-Home COVID Tests Available for Home Delivery



As Americans prepare to gather for the winter holidays, the federal government is offering four free at-home COVID tests per address through the mail. Tests can be ordered online at www.covidtests.gov.

The release of additional tests comes days ahead of Thanksgiving and the busy holiday travel season, which has corresponded with a surge in [coronavirus](#) cases in recent years.

[According to a recent survey](#), sixty one percent of Americans aged 65 years or older have already gotten the updated COVID vaccine or plan to get the new vaccine. However, smaller percentages of Americans overall say they plan to get the updated vaccine.

“Information is power,” said **Joseph Peters, Jr.**, Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance. “Having a few COVID tests on hand is a good idea if you are going to be spending time with people who are particularly vulnerable.”

KFF Health News: Extra Fees Drive Assisted Living Profits

Assisted living centers have become an appealing retirement option for hundreds of thousands of boomers who can no longer live independently, promising a cheerful alternative to the institutional feel of a nursing home.

But their cost is so crushingly high that most Americans can’t afford them.

These highly profitable facilities often charge \$5,000 a month or more and then layer on fees at every step. Residents' bills and price lists from a dozen facilities offer a glimpse of the charges: \$12 for a blood pressure check; \$50 per injection (more for insulin); \$93 a month to order medications from a pharmacy not used by the facility; \$315 a month for daily help with an inhaler.

The facilities charge extra to help residents get to the shower, bathroom, or dining room; to deliver meals to their rooms; to have staff check-ins for daily "reassurance" or simply to remind residents when it's time to eat or take their medication. Some even charge for routine billing of a resident's insurance for care.

Read more [here](#).