



FRIDAY ALERT



Alliance for Retired Americans

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*The Alliance wishes you and your family a safe and joyous holiday season.
The Friday Alert will resume on January 5, 2024.*

Senate Confirms Martin O'Malley as Commissioner of the Social Security Administration

Earlier this week, the U.S. Senate [confirmed](#) former Maryland Governor **Martin O'Malley** to lead the Social Security Administration (SSA) by a vote of 50 to 11.

O'Malley says enhancing customer service and efficiency are his top priorities for the agency. During his confirmation [hearing](#) in November, he pledged to respect Social Security's legacy as an insurance and retirement program for Americans.

"No other government program touches as many American families as Social Security does," said **Richard Fiesta**, Executive Director of the Alliance. "We are confident that Commissioner O'Malley is the right person to lead SSA at this critical time. We look forward to working with him to convince Congress to provide SSA the funding it needs to serve current and future retirees."



Photo: "O'Malleys Portrait Unveiling (53059768258).jpg,"
Wikimedia Commons, CC by 2.0

Generation X Workers Are Not Prepared for Retirement, New Survey Shows

According to [a new survey](#) from Schroders, nearly half of Americans between the ages of 43 and 58 say that they have not started planning for retirement at all and they know their savings have fallen short.

The typical Gen X household has only \$40,000 in retirement savings — and those savings are concentrated among top earners — according to [findings](#) published by the nonprofit National

Institute on Retirement Security (NIRS). Also, Black and Hispanic Americans have considerably lower savings and access to employer-provided retirement plans as compared to white Americans.

The survey indicates that Generation X workers who have saved for retirement are more conservative in their investment strategies and less confident about their ability to retire comfortably, despite the fact that their retirement window is fast approaching. The oldest Gen Xers are about 10 years out from traditional retirement age.

“This survey confirms that we have a retirement security crisis in this country,” said **Robert Roach, Jr.**, President of the Alliance. “And yet many Congressional leaders are talking about cutting Social Security and Medicare when we need to be strengthening and expanding them. There is no time to waste.”

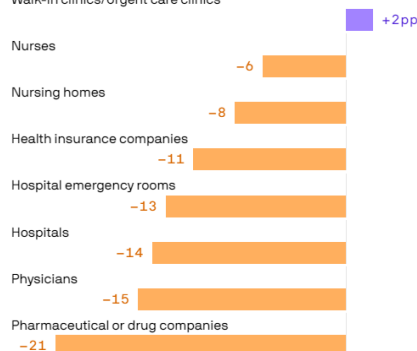
Americans Are Generally Dissatisfied With the U.S. Health System

[A new Gallup poll](#) shows that Americans' satisfaction with nearly every aspect of the nation's health care system has decreased since 2010.

Change in share of U.S. adults who say healthcare players are providing excellent or good quality services

In percentage points; Survey of at least 1,000 U.S. adults in 2010 compared to 2023

Walk-in clinics/Urgent care clinics



Data: Gallup; Note: 2010 wording was walk-in clinics. 2023 results are average of walk-in clinics and urgent care clinics.; Chart: Axios Visuals

The number of adults saying that pharmaceutical corporations are providing excellent or good quality services dropped 21 percentage points. Nurses maintained the highest level of satisfaction, with 82 percent of those polled rating the quality of nursing care as excellent or good. Nursing home care received the lowest amount of satisfaction from patients, with only 25 percent rating it as good or excellent.

Patient satisfaction with health insurance companies also dipped by 11 percentage points. Meanwhile, [92 percent](#) of patients aged 65 or older rated their Medicare coverage positively this year.

Gallup attributed increased dissatisfaction to a range of factors, including higher health care costs, the COVID pandemic, the opioid crisis, and health staff shortages.

Kaiser Health News: Deep Flaws in FDA Oversight of Medical Devices, and Patient Harm, Exposed in Lawsuits and Records

Living with diabetes, Carlton “PeeWee” Gautney Jr. relied on a digital device about the size of a deck of playing cards to pump insulin into his bloodstream.

The pump, manufactured by device maker Medtronic, connected plastic tubing to an insulin reservoir, which Gautney set to release doses of the vital hormone over the course of the day. Gautney, a motorcycle enthusiast, worked as a dispatcher with the police department in Opp, Alabama.

The 59-year-old died suddenly on May 17, 2020, because — his family believes — the pump malfunctioned and delivered a fatal overdose of insulin.

“There’s a big hole left where he was,” said Gautney’s daughter, Carla Wiggins, who is suing the manufacturer. “A big part of me is missing.”

The wrongful-death lawsuit alleges the pump was “defective and unreasonably dangerous.” Medtronic has denied the pump caused Gautney’s death and filed a court motion for summary judgment, which is pending.

The pump Gautney depended on was among more than 400,000 Medtronic devices recalled, starting in November 2019, after the company said in a recall notice that damage to a retainer ring on the pump could “lead to an over or under delivery of insulin,” which could “be life threatening or may result in death.”

As the recall played out, federal regulators discovered that Medtronic had delayed acting — and warning patients of possible hazards with the pumps — despite amassing tens of thousands of complaints about the rings, government records show.

Read more [here](#).