



FRIDAY ALERT



Alliance for Retired Americans

815 16th Street, NW, Fourth Floor • Washington, DC 20006 • 202.637.5399

www.retiredamericans.org

Spanish version: www.alianzadejubilados.org

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41 Prescription Drugs Are Now Eligible for Medicare Part B Savings

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services [announced](#) that 41 prescription drugs will have reduced Medicare Part B coinsurance rates between April 1 and June 30, 2024. More than 700,000 seniors take at least one of the selected drugs, and depending on coverage, they could save up to \$3,575 per dose.

The lower rates are a result of the Inflation Reduction Act which penalizes drug corporations that raise prices faster than inflation. The penalty payments will be deposited into the Medicare Trust Fund.

The Inflation Reduction Act has [already led](#) to previous significant savings for Medicare beneficiaries by allowing Medicare to negotiate lower prices, capping annual out-of-pocket drug costs at \$2,000 and insulin copays at \$35 a month, and expanding eligibility for Medicare's Low-Income Subsidy "Extra Help" program.

"This action is just another way the Biden administration is delivering lower drug prices and more affordable health care for seniors," said **Robert Roach, Jr.**, President of the Alliance. "Meanwhile, 80 percent of House Republicans released a budget proposal last week that would actually repeal the Affordable Care Act, raise the retirement age, and cut Social Security and Medicare."

Medicare Prescription Drug Inflation Rebate Program

Reduced coinsurance for Medicare Part B drugs with savings up to \$3575 for some people per average dose, depending on their coverage.



Register Now: 2024 Midwest Regional Meeting

Prepare for this year's elections by attending the 2024 Alliance for Retired Americans Midwest Regional Meeting on May 15-16, 2024. At the meetings, participants will strengthen their skills as a retiree activist and make sure they're ready to help elect pro-retiree candidates this November.

Attendees will elect regional Alliance Executive Board members, hear from local labor leaders and elected officials, and participate in interactive workshops and training sessions, including:

- Storytelling for Solidarity: Collecting Stories for Collective Action;
- Senior Power Multiplied: Expanding Retiree Activism;
- Navigating Legislative Advocacy: Strategies for Success

[Click here to register.](#)

The Alliance has secured a block of hotel rooms at Courtyard Detroit Metro Airport Romulus at a rate of \$114 per night, plus applicable state and local tax. Please call 734-721-3200 and use the code "Alliance for Retired Americans" to reserve a room. The cutoff date for reservations is May 10, 2024.

Key Senator Urges Postal Service to Suspend Agency Overhaul

Sen. **Gary Peters** (D-Michigan), who chairs the committee that oversees USPS matters in Congress, [criticized](#) controversial changes that have taken effect under Postmaster General **Louis DeJoy** and urged leadership to pause them in a letter issued last week.



The changes are part of **DeJoy's** 10-year "Delivering for America" plan, which he claims will make the agency more efficient. However, prices for stamps and package shipment are increasing while on-time delivery rates have plummeted. A recent industry study confirmed that routine price hikes implemented since December 2020 have backfired by [driving bigger customers away](#).

"Seniors rely on USPS for home delivery of critical mail, including lifesaving medicine," said **Richard Fiesta**, Executive Director of the Alliance. "Lawmakers are right to demand that the agency provide on-time service for these critical deliveries."

The Postal Service acknowledged that the overhaul has tended to produce lower quality service instead of increasing efficiency, conceding that some regions that piloted the updates have reached an "unacceptable level of service."

April is [Medicaid Awareness Month](#)

The Medicaid program provides health care for 93.4 million Americans with limited income. This includes 42 million children who are insured through the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), 33.9 million adults, 4.8 million people with disabilities, and 7.2 million seniors. Medicaid is the largest payer for long term care.

The Affordable Care Act provided incentives to expand Medicaid to provide insurance for more Americans, but [10 states](#) have opted out leaving millions who would be eligible if they lived in other states.

"Medicaid is the primary funder of long-term and nursing care in this country helping millions of vulnerable patients get the care they need," said **Joseph Peters, Jr.**, Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance. "The Alliance will continue to fight for the ten holdout states to expand Medicaid and to ensure that the program is there for seniors who need it."

KFF Health News: The Burden of Getting Medical Care Can Exhaust Older Patients **By Judith Graham**

Susanne Gilliam, 67, was walking down her driveway to get the mail in January when she slipped and fell on a patch of black ice.

Pain shot through her left knee and ankle. After summoning her husband on her phone, with difficulty she made it back to the house.

And then began the run-around that so many people face when they interact with America's uncoordinated health care system.

Gilliam's orthopedic surgeon, who managed previous difficulties with her left knee, saw her that afternoon but told her "I don't do ankles."

He referred her to an ankle specialist who ordered a new set of X-rays and an MRI. For convenience's sake, Gilliam asked to get the scans at a hospital near her home in Sudbury, Massachusetts. But the hospital didn't have the doctor's order when she called for an appointment. It came through only after several more calls.

Coordinating the care she needs to recover, including physical therapy, became a part-time job for Gilliam. (Therapists work on only one body part per session, so she has needed separate visits for her knee and for her ankle several times a week.)

"The burden of arranging everything I need — it's huge," Gilliam told me. "It leaves you with such a sense of mental and physical exhaustion."

The toll the American health care system extracts is, in some respects, the price of extraordinary progress in medicine. But it's also evidence of the poor fit between older adults' capacities and the health care system's demands.

Read more [here](#).

The Alliance for Retired Americans is a national grassroots advocacy organization with 4.4 million members fighting for retirement security for all Americans. www.retiredamericans.org @activeretirees