



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

April 5, 2024

President Biden, Senator Sanders Tout Lower Health Care Cost Accomplishments

President **Joe Biden** teamed up with **Sen. Bernie Sanders** (VT) at the White House on Wednesday to promote the administration's efforts to lower the cost of inhalers and other health care needs. Alliance Executive Director **Richard Fiesta** represented the Alliance at the event.

President Biden and Sen. Sanders [touted the lower health care costs and prescription drug prices](#) that have resulted from the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) Biden signed into law in 2022. They also emphasized the need to strengthen the Affordable Care Act, Medicare, and Medicaid to provide coverage and lower costs to more Americans.

Biden reminded attendees that the law gave his administration the power to finally take on the powerful drug industry. With Americans paying the most of any nation for identical treatments, he stressed that Medicare has been given the power to negotiate lower prices for costly drugs from arthritis to heart disease, adding that the negotiations will both save lives and bring Medicare \$200 billion in savings. He noted that the IRA limits annual Medicare Part D out-of-pocket drug costs to \$2,000 in 2025.

Biden discussed the IRA-mandated \$35 out of pocket cap on insulin for seniors with Medicare, stating that every Republican in Congress voted against the law and the party remains opposed to lower insulin prices for all Americans. The GOP opposition continues despite the fact that insulin only costs \$10 to make, yet patients not covered by Medicare pay \$400 or more a month for insulin on average.

Instead of seniors with diabetes paying as much as \$400 a month for their insulin they so badly need, they now only have to pay \$35 a month.

Period.

I want to extend those savings to everyone who needs lifesaving insulin, whether you're a senior or not.



He also pledged to protect the Affordable Care Act and called on Congress to make the Affordable Care Act's tax credits permanent.

"One in four Americans has reported not taking at least one drug as prescribed because they couldn't afford it," said **Robert Roach, Jr.**, President of the Alliance. "It was only after President Biden took on the powerful pharmaceutical industry that seniors began to see lower drug costs."

Washington State Alliance Victory: New Residents Get Relief in Voting Rights Case

Thanks to an important agreement reached last month in a legal case brought by the Washington State Alliance, eligible voters will not be turned away when they show up at the polls.

On March 15 a federal judge approved an [agreement](#) that ensures Washington election officials will no longer enforce a state law requiring voters to reside in Washington — or in a specific precinct or county within the state — [for at least 30 days](#) before registering to vote in the next election.

The judgment gives the Washington State Alliance the voting rights protection it sought prior to the 2024 elections in the case of *Washington State Alliance for Retired Americans v. Hobbs et al.*

As the plaintiff in this case, the Washington State Alliance asserted that the pre-election residency requirement violates the U.S. Constitution. It also violates a provision of the Voting Rights Act that prohibits states from preventing otherwise eligible voters from voting in presidential elections based on how long they have resided in the state before Election Day.

"This agreement is a win for democracy in a year when voting rights continue to be under attack," said **Richard Fiesta**, Executive Director of the Alliance. "The Alliance will never stop fighting to protect our hard won constitutional rights and our democracy."

"By going to court, we took the necessary steps to prevent unneeded burdens from being placed on seniors and all Washingtonians who make the effort to exercise their precious right to vote after moving," added **Jackie Boschok**, President of the Washington State Alliance.

Alliance Webinar Tells How to Spot and Fight Artificial Intelligence Election Disinformation

The Alliance's March 28 interactive webinar, "How to Spot and Fight AI (Artificial Intelligence) Election Disinformation," discussed how to navigate artificial intelligence and spot election disinformation generated by AI. The webinar explained what AI is, how it is eroding trust in democracy and what is being done to prevent it.

If you were unable to take part, you can find a [recording of the event here](#) and a [copy of the presentation](#) here.

"Artificial intelligence is re-shaping our society and politics is not immune. We need to be ready to recognize and combat disinformation no matter where it comes from," said **Joseph Peters, Jr.**, Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance. "This webinar is a great way to educate ourselves and be more effective advocates."

KFF Health News: Your Doctor or Your Insurer? Little-Known Rules May Ease the Choice in Medicare Advantage

By Susan Jaffe

Bart Klion, 95, and his wife, **Barbara**, faced a tough choice in January: The upstate New York couple learned that this year they could keep either their private, Medicare Advantage insurance plan — or their doctors at Saratoga Hospital.

The Albany Medical Center system, which includes their hospital, is leaving the Klions' Humana plan — or, depending on which side is talking, the other way around. The breakup threatened to cut the couple's lifeline to cope with serious chronic health conditions.

Klion refused to pick the lesser of two bad options without a fight.

He contacted Humana, the Saratoga hospital, and the health system. The couple's doctors "are an exceptional group of caregivers and have made it possible for us to live an active and productive life," he wrote to the hospital's CEO. He called his wife's former employer, which requires its retirees to enroll in a Humana Medicare Advantage plan to receive company health benefits. He also contacted the [New York StateWide Senior Action Council](#), one of the nationwide State Health Insurance Assistance Programs [that offer free, unbiased advice on Medicare](#).

Klion said they all told him the same thing: Keep your doctors or your insurance.

Read more [here](#).



Bart Klion says the doctors who have treated him and his wife "have made it possible for us to live an active and productive life." But those health care providers are leaving the Klions' Medicare Advantage plan. The New York couple were told they needed to find new doctors or other health insurance by March 31.

(photo: HANS PENNINK FOR KFF HEALTH NEWS)