



MONDAY ALERT

New York State Alliance *for* Retired Americans

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**New NYSARA Web Page is up and running at
www.newyorkstateara.org Please visit!!!!**

We're on Twitter (NYSARA Retirees)

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Governor Cuomo proposes changes in Medicare Part B Reimbursement and Healthcare costs for Retirees

The proposed changes are the same ones proposed and rejected in the 2016-17 Executive budget. NYSARA will be working to defeat these proposals again this year. The proposals are:

The 2017-18 Executive Budget proposal amends Section 167-a of the Civil Service law. These amendments would:

- Freeze the reimbursement of Medicare Part B premium at \$104.90* per month for all NYSHIP retirees with Medicare primary insurance; and
- Eliminate the reimbursement of the IRMAA for higher-income retirees. Therefore, as the cost of Part B increases each year, retirees will have additional out-of-pocket health care costs, which, NYSARA believes, constitutes a diminution of their established health care benefits.

This change not only affects state retirees for whom Medicare is their primary insurance, but also retirees from school districts and local governments that participate in the NYSHIP Empire Plan.

\$104.90 for those enrolled in Medicare on or before 12/31/15 or the lesser of \$121.80 for those who enrolled on or after 1/1/16. The cap of standard premium rates would take effect on 5/1/17 and cessation of IRMAA would be effective 1/1/17.

Differential Premiums for Future NYSHIP Civilian Retirees

For the second consecutive year, the Executive Budget proposal seeks to require retired civilian** state employees to begin paying a significantly greater share of their health insurance costs effective October 1, 2017.

*** This amendment does not apply to state and local police officers and firefighters.*

Health Care Costs for Retired State Employees

The Executive Budget proposal also includes the creation of a new benefit trust to cover current and future health care costs for retired state employees. The trust will be overseen by the State Department of Civil Service.

Restore the Americans Promise (RAP) Conference February 3rd

NYSARA is part of the RAP group which includes the Healthcare Action Network (HCAN), *Center for Independence of the Disabled in NY*, *Citizen Action of NY*, *Fiscal Policy Institute*, *Hunger Action Network*, *Metro Health Care for All*, *NY Statewide Senior Action*, *1199 SEIU United Healthcare Workers among other groups concerned*. NYSARA President Barry Kaufmann will be speaking on Social Security.

RAP is a statewide campaign focused on federal budget issues as they affect health care, human services, our social contract and safety net, and jobs and economic development.

HCAN is a national campaign focused on defending federal health care programs such as the Affordable Care Act, Medicare, Medicaid, children's health insurance, and family planning.

Topics to be discussed:

- The latest news from DC
- What's expected in 2017
- NY state Congressional targets for our work together
- Key advocacy strategies to do and share Forming teams and activities in our home regions

RSVP AT CITIZENACTIONNY.ORG/RAP2017

FRIDAY • FEB 3 • 10:30 AM to 3:30 PM

1199/SEIU OFFICE BUILDING 155 WASHINGTON AVE, ALBANY

FOR MORE INFO CONTACT: Mary Clark at [607.723.0110](tel:607.723.0110) • cabing@citizenactionny.org

NYSARA did you know? Part 3

- Under the Affordable Care Act once you are enrolled the insurance company cannot disenroll you.
- That under the ACA there are no annual or lifetime caps on coverage
- That there are penalties of 1-3% for high readmission rates to hospitals. Currently over 90% of NYS hospitals are subject to this provision
- the ACA requires a comprehensive website on local nursing homes (complaints, violations etc.)

NYSARA Retirees Part of Activism at Women's Marches

Retiree activists were a key part of the worldwide movement involved in Saturday January 21st Women's Marches.

"The rallies were about making a commitment," said **Robert Roach, Jr.**, President of the Alliance. "We are going to hold all elected officials accountable for protecting and respecting American values. We are especially going to hold the current administration to their commitment to protect Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid. We will defend our defined benefit pensions just as vigorously."



NYS Alliance Board member Suleika Cabrera-Drinane (on the left) displays a sign at the march in Washington DC on January 21st.

To see more pictures of NYSARA members active during the January 21st actions [click here](#)

As a follow-up to the rallies, NYSARA and the national Alliance organized thousands of people to call the White House on Monday to demand accountability from the new President, only to have the White House disable its telephone comment line. In response, the Alliance connected activists to Congress and asked people to sign a petition to President Trump on our [home page](#).

HHS and OMB Nominees Price, Mulvaney Tout Cuts to Social Security and Medicare

As confirmation hearings were held this week for Rep. **Tom Price** to be Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services and Rep. **Mick Mulvaney** to be Director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), retirees reacted with fear and dread. Rep. Price has earned a lifetime pro-retiree score of just 4% on the Alliance's [Congressional Voting Record](#), while Rep. Mulvaney has earned a lifetime score of just 6%.

Rep. Mulvaney's history includes voting in the South Carolina State Senate in May, 2009 for an amendment declaring Social Security and Medicaid unconstitutional. In May 2011, he said that Paul Ryan's plan needed to go farther because it did not cut Social Security and Medicare "rapidly enough." That same year, Mulvaney told MSNBC that Social Security was a "Ponzi scheme" that might not be able to provide assistance to people in the years to come.

He even failed to pay Social Security and Medicare withholding taxes for a domestic worker, violating the law everyone else must follow and disrespecting the very system he would oversee.

"On Tuesday, Rep. Mulvaney again pledged to push President Trump to raise the Social Security retirement age beyond 67," said **Richard Fiesta**, Executive Director of the Alliance. "Both Mulvaney and Price have pledged to replace guaranteed earned Medicare benefits with a system of 'coupon-care' and vouchers that will cost retirees more out of pocket."

During his hearing, Rep. Price refused to commit to work on reducing prescription drug costs for Medicare beneficiaries, and said he remains an advocate for raising the Medicare eligibility age. Both nominees have positions in favor of Medicare and Social Security "reform" that are in direct conflict with President **Trump's** repeated promises not to cut Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid.

"These two nominees should not be confirmed," said Mr. Fiesta. "President Trump must keep his campaign promise and publicly vow to veto any bills that cut Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid and appoint people to his cabinet who will help him keep those commitments."

Trump's Budget Begins to Leak

Although **President Trump's first** budget is not scheduled to be released until April, details of his plans are beginning to emerge. According to *The Hill* and other media outlets, the budget will be based on a [plan](#) outlined by the conservative [Heritage Foundation](#).

The Heritage Foundation advocates raising the Medicare eligibility age to 68 and beyond while adding a "temporary" premium for Part A (hospital insurance). The right-wing think tank wants to increase premiums for Medicare Part B (services like lab tests, surgeries, and doctor visits as well as supplies like wheelchairs and walkers) and D (prescription drugs). It also wants to increase means-testing for seniors with higher incomes, shift additional costs to seniors, and begin transitioning to vouchers or "coupon care" quickly.

Social Security could also be slashed in the budget, with a potential move to a chained-CPI COLA formula, combined with a higher retirement age indexed to keep going up. In addition, Medicaid would be cut if the rumors come to fruition, as many in the GOP propose turning it into a block grant program to states.

"These would be drastic cuts that are leaking fly in the face of everything the new president promised the country during his campaign," said President Roach. "He was very explicit when he said over and over that Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid are safe."

A hiring freeze for the federal government that the new president announced this week is an additional hit in a long line of cuts and reductions for the Social Security Administration (SSA). Its staffing is at its lowest level since 2013, despite more of beneficiaries. The hiring freeze will also

further burden the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, reducing the number of doctors and nurses for the VA as an increasing number of the nation's 3 million veterans rely on it.

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