

FRIDAY ALERT



Alliance for Retired Americans

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Spanish version: www.alianzadejubilados.org

Alliance Activists Help Stop the American Health Care Act

The House of Representatives was scheduled to vote this week on the **Paul Ryan-Donald Trump** plan to repeal the Affordable Care Act. Friday afternoon President Trump and Speaker Paul Ryan decided to withdraw the bill because it did not have enough votes to pass. Polls this week showed that the American public was against the bill by a 3 to 1 margin.

The White House and the Speaker made changes to the bill throughout the week in an effort to gain more support from the most conservative members of the Republican Party. If this bill had been passed \$880 billion would have been cut from Medicaid, leading to rationed care for seniors and children, the Medicare Trust Fund would have been four years less solvent and insurance companies would have been allowed to charge older Americans five times more for the same coverage (see our Fact Sheet).

“Thousands of Alliance members joined a protest, made calls to their member of Congress, wrote letters and postcards and visited their elected officials,” said Alliance President **Robert Roach, Jr.** “I’m proud of our efforts to educate the public and tell Congress that this bill is unacceptable and would have harmed older Americans the most. We won this battle, but the war is not over. We will keep fighting to protect our retirement security.”



Retirees in Texas calling their members of Congress.

Pharmaceutical Corporations Spent \$5.6 Billion on Ads to Consumers in 2016

Pharmaceutical corporations [boosted their spending on advertising](#) and promotion by 9% last year,, bring the total to \$5.6 billion, according to a recent study by a drug industry publication. Combined, the industry plans to spend over 5.6 billion dollars to promote their drugs directly consumers rather than doctors.

Pfizer and Bristol-Myers Squibb spent the most on advertising, spending \$1.1 billion and \$458 million, respectively, on direct to consumer ads on television, billboards, magazines, newspapers and radio. The increased advertising comes as prescription prices continue to rise and pharmaceutical companies seek to increase volume.

Alliance Executive Director **Richard Fiesta** called for pharmaceutical corporations to stop chasing profits and focus on patients. “Americans pay the highest prices in the world for prescription drugs. Maybe they if they didn’t spend billions on ads, they could make their products affordable for working people. Congress needs to take action to lower drug prices, by allowing consumers to purchase drugs safely from other countries and allowing Medicare to negotiate prices on behalf of consumers and taxpayers.” should spend less on advertising, and companies putting profits above people.”

The United States and New Zealand are the only countries that allow pharmaceutical corporations to advertise drugs directly to consumers. The American Medical Association and consumer advocates argue that these advertisements can lead to people seeking medication that they do not need.

New Website Helps Seniors Plan for Retirement Health and Financial Issues

A new website tool can help retirees plan for the health and financial issues that could happen during their retirement. The site www.planyourlifespan.com, was developed by **Dr. Lee Ann Lindquist**, chief of geriatrics at Northwestern University’s Feinberg School of Medicine

Many Americans know the importance of financial planning and wills, but fewer take the time to plan for other possible life events such as how they would recover from a major falls or what they would do if they had a financial setback. Thinking about these issues is not easy, but the website helps start a dialogue between a retiree and their loved ones and helps seniors document and communicate their wishes in advance of a medical crisis or event.

The focus on planning comes is timely. Americans of all ages are experiencing greater anxiety about their retirement security. Lindquist hopes to expand the website, which was developed in cooperation with seniors. Retirees were able to shape the topics covered, as well as provide input into the design and language that would help them develop their individual plans.

The website includes videos of seniors discussing relevant topics and important information regarding some of the personal concerns seniors may have. Alliance Secretary Treasurer **Joseph Peters, Jr.** noted that the tool “can members enjoy retirement knowing that they have planned for the unexpected, and shared their preferences and needs with their families.”