



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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Democrats Eye Plans to Substantially Drop the Price of Insulin

Senate Democrats are [proposing legislation](#) to cap insulin prices at \$35 a month, after previous attempts to reduce drug prices stalled in Congress. The cap would likely be combined with a bipartisan bill targeting pharmacy middlemen known as pharmacy benefit managers and is a top priority of Sens. **Raphael Warnock** (GA) and **Jeanne Shaheen** (NH).

With prices of insulin in the U.S. [7 times](#) those in other countries, the proposed plan could provide financial relief to at least 1 out of 5 insulin users with different types of private health insurance, [a new KFF analysis](#) of insurance claims data has found. According to the American Diabetes Association, nearly 1 in 3 people over the age of 65 have Type 1 or Type 2 diabetes.

“We welcome all proposals that bring relief to people facing skyrocketing prescription drug costs,” said **Robert Roach, Jr.**, President of the Alliance. “Of course, allowing Medicare to negotiate lower prices for all prescription drugs remains our number one goal.”

Seniors Celebrate Affordable Care Act’s 12th Anniversary

As the Affordable Care Act (ACA) celebrated its [twelfth anniversary](#) Wednesday, a number of changes could reshape the program for the future. These include making premium reductions permanent, filling in the Medicaid gap and preventing a drop in Medicaid enrollment.

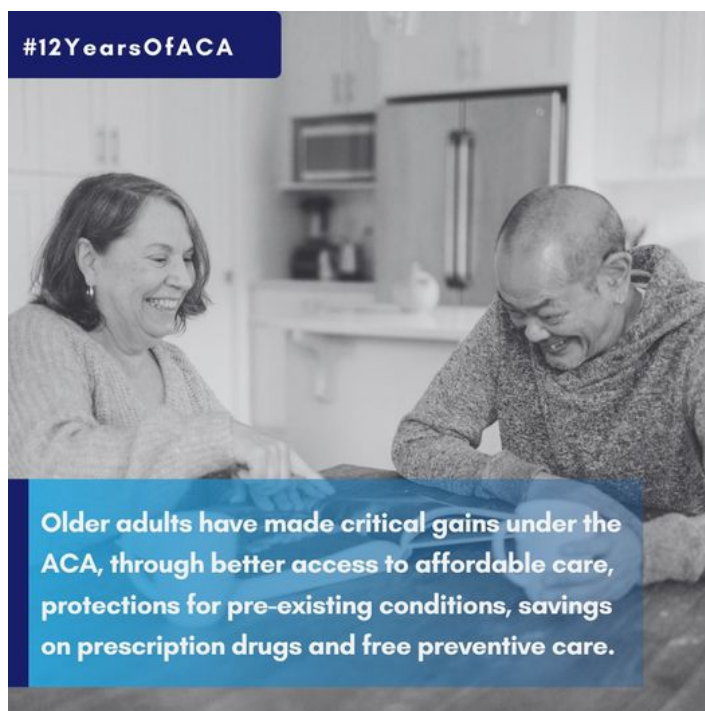
The ACA has been strengthened since its inception. The American Rescue Plan, the COVID-19 relief bill that President **Biden** signed into law last March, ramped up the financial assistance available to people buying coverage on their own through HealthCare.gov or state-run exchanges.

That boost made a big difference, often reducing premiums by thousands of dollars a year. However, the extra financial help ends at the end of this year, when premiums will go back up for millions of consumers unless Congress makes the increase permanent or extends it.

A dozen states, including Florida and Texas, still [haven’t expanded Medicaid](#) to cover all low-income residents, as the Affordable Care Act originally envisioned — refusing to accept federal funds that were available for that purpose.

Biden and the Democrats have discussed having the federal government insure those people directly through federal action. According to several estimates, more than [2 million Americans](#) would become eligible for Medicaid as a result.

“Thanks to the ACA, over 130 million people have gained protection from discrimination against pre-existing conditions and no longer have to worry about arbitrary caps or limits on coverage,” said **Richard Fiesta**, Executive Director of the Alliance. “Another 30 million people have coverage under the ACA through either private health insurance or Medicaid.”



He added, “Coverage for pre-existing conditions and free preventive care have been tremendously important for older Americans. In addition, the ACA closed the Part D doughnut hole coverage gap, which forced millions of seniors to pay 100% out of pocket for their prescription drugs for many years. As the 13th year of this landmark law begins, there is a lot to build on.”

Retirees on Fixed Incomes Live Day-to-Day Amid Rising Inflation

With inflation levels at a 40-year high, many Americans are feeling the squeeze from rising prices nationwide. Yet for those over the age of 65 who [rely on a fixed income](#), historic inflation presents a dire threat to their already strained budgets.

Roughly half of older people who are living alone already struggle to get by on less than \$27,000 a year, which the [Elder Index](#) regards as the bare minimum for a healthy single renter to cover expenses. This means that even the slightest increase in prices can push an older person into poverty.

And while cost-of-living increases to Social Security checks provide some relief to medium- and long- term effects of inflation, they do little to protect retirees from short- term price increases. This proves especially detrimental for the 12 percent of older adults who survive solely on Social Security income.

Elderly populations across the U.S. have already reported cutting back on necessities such as meat, vegetables, personal care and even hot showers. Seniors experiencing homelessness are expected to [triple in number](#) by the next decade, due in part to rapid inflation.

“Far too many older Americans struggle to survive on Social Security checks alone,” said **Joseph Peters, Jr.**, Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance. “That’s why it’s so urgent to expand Social Security and increase benefits by making the wealthiest Americans pay their fair share to help ensure a secure retirement for all.”

Kaiser Health News: Covid’s ‘Silver Lining’: Research Breakthroughs for Chronic Disease, Cancer, and the Common Flu

By Liz Szabo

The [billions of dollars](#) invested in covid vaccines and covid-19 research so far are expected to yield medical and scientific dividends for decades, helping doctors battle influenza, cancer, cystic fibrosis, and far more diseases.



“This is just the start,” said [Dr. Judith James](#), vice president of clinical affairs for the Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation. “We won’t see these dividends in their full glory for years.”

Building on the success of mRNA vaccines for covid, scientists hope to create mRNA-based vaccines against a host of pathogens, including [influenza](#), [Zika](#), [rabies](#), [HIV](#), and [respiratory syncytial virus, or RSV](#), which hospitalizes 3 million children under age 5 each year worldwide.

Researchers see promise in mRNA to treat [cancer](#), [cystic fibrosis](#), and rare, [inherited metabolic disorders](#), although potential therapies are still many years away.

[Read more here.](#)

The Alliance for Retired Americans is a national organization that advocates for the rights and well-being of over 4.4 million retirees and their families.