

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act: Strengthening Medicare, Protecting Seniors

Without health care reform, the sustainability of Medicare is at risk . . .

- Without reform, Medicare is expected to go broke in the next eight years according to the Medicare Trustees Report.
- Without reform, costs will continue to rise and seniors will be forced to bear more and more of the burden out of their own pockets.
- Without reform, seniors will continue struggling to afford prescriptions in the “doughnut hole” – the gap in Medicare Part D drug coverage.
- Without reform, seniors may have trouble accessing their doctors.

. . . The worst possible scenario for America’s seniors is to maintain the status quo.

Health reform will provide new benefits and lower prescription drug costs.

- Health care reform will cut the cost of brand-name prescription drugs in half for seniors and are in the “doughnut hole” between initial and catastrophic coverage.
- Health care reform will guarantee Medicare coverage of important new preventive benefits, such as annual wellness visits. That means, when seniors go to the doctor for a colonoscopy, mammography or other preventive screening, they won’t pay the co-pay required under current law. Encouraging more preventive care is one of the best methods proven to save lives and lower health care costs.
- Health care reform will help seniors who are eligible for both Medicare and Medicaid access home and community-based alternatives to nursing home care and will protect seniors who currently have to spend down their assets and impoverish themselves in order to qualify for any help.

Health reform will protect guaranteed Medicare benefits and lower costs for seniors.

- According to the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office (CBO), health care reform will lower seniors’ Medicare premiums by \$30 billion over the next 10 years by focusing on prevention and wellness, increasing efficiency and making the program more cost-effective.
- Under health care reform, seniors will continue to receive the guaranteed Medicare benefits they deserve, including hospital stays, access to doctors, home health care, nursing homes and prescription drug coverage.
- Health care reform will protect the doctor-patient relationship and will not interfere with any medical decisions made by patients and their doctors.

Health care reform will work to preserve Medicare for years to come.

- The Office of the Actuary at Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services estimates health care reform will extend the solvency of Medicare by five years.
- Health care reform will reduce skyrocketing increases in the cost of the Medicare program by targeting \$100 billion in wasteful corporate subsidies to private health insurers who are getting rich off of Medicare dollars because of a flawed payment formula.

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Health reform will help doctors continue to care for seniors.

- Without reform, Medicare will be forced to cut payments to doctors by 21 percent next year, meaning some doctors would be forced to limit the number of Medicare patients they see or stop seeing Medicare patients altogether.
- Health care reform will reverse the payment cut and provide doctors with a pay increase so that they can continue to care for seniors.

Health reform will improve focus in Medicare on excellent health care outcomes for patients.

- Health reform saves money in Medicare by looking for places where the program can be more efficient, such as encouraging more people on Medicare to focus on prevention and wellness.
- Improvements include incentives for hospitals to reduce high readmission rates for seniors and reduce hospital acquired infections, which results in better care for patients and saves Medicare dollars.
- Another one of the many improvements would link Medicare payments together for all of a patient's doctors when they work together to treat a particular patient. For example, if a Medicare patient breaks her hip, her primary care doctor, her hospital and her physical therapist would receive one bundled payment from Medicare for her care. That means these providers would have to work together to treat the patient and track how much of the care – and the payment – they would be responsible for, reducing duplicated services, saving money in Medicare and ensuring more coordinated care for the patient.

The National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare supports health reform provisions.

- In a letter to every Member of the Senate the Committee expressed support for the Medicare provisions included in the Senate health reform bill. They said:

“America’s seniors have a major stake in the health care reform debate as the skyrocketing costs of health care are especially challenging for those on fixed incomes. Not a single penny of the savings in the Senate bill will come out of the pockets of beneficiaries in the traditional Medicare program. The Medicare savings included in H.R. 3590, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, will positively impact millions of Medicare beneficiaries by slowing the rate of increase in out-of-pocket cost and improving benefits; and it will extend the solvency of the Medicare Trust Fund by five years. To us, this is a win-win for seniors and the Medicare program.”

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