

U.S. Sen. Baldwin: Introduces legislation to give Wisconsinites the choice to buy into Medicare at 55

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senators Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), Sherrod Brown (D-OH), and five other Senators introduced the Medicare at 55 Act, which provides an option for people between the ages of 55 and 64 to buy into Medicare. There are 41 million Americans between the ages of 55 and 64, and millions of them are burdened by high insurance premiums, unaffordable deductibles and limited options.

“Wisconsinites have sent a clear message to Washington that they want us to work across party lines to make health care more affordable, not more costly,” said Senator Baldwin. “Our legislation offers a choice for millions of older Americans to buy more affordable, quality health care coverage. For people between the ages of 55 and 64, this is a high quality option that can help reduce health insurance costs and increase competition.”

“People between the ages of 55 and 64 often have more health problems and face higher health care costs but aren’t yet eligible for Medicare,” said Senator Stabenow. “If you live in Michigan, are 58 years old, and are having a hard time finding coverage that works for you, this bill will let you buy into Medicare before you turn 65. Our legislation is one way we can work together on a bipartisan basis to lower health care and prescription drug costs.”

“Giving people more quality choices at reasonable prices is something we can all

agree on – that’s what letting Ohioans buy into Medicare is all about,” said Senator Brown. “This is a simple solution for folks who are 55 and can’t get healthcare through work, or those who are ready to retire but aren’t yet eligible for Medicare.”

People in the 55-64 age group face unique health challenges and especially high health care costs. The average person in this age group pays more than \$1,200 in annual out-of-pocket costs and is at a greater risk of suffering from chronic conditions such as diabetes or arthritis and medical emergencies such as heart attack and stroke.

Under the Medicare at 55 Act, an individual between the ages of 55 and 64 who buys into Medicare would receive the same benefits and protections as an individual enrolled under Medicare parts A, B, and D.

U.S. Senators Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI), Patrick Leahy (D-VT), Jeff Merkley (D-OR), Jack Reed (D-RI), and Al Franken (D-MN) co-sponsored the legislation.