

U.S. Sen. Baldwin: Helps introduce legislation expanding access to Medicare

Posted on Wednesday, May 1, 2019

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Choose Medicare Act Will Make Medicare Available to Individuals and Businesses

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin today joined Senators Jeff Merkley (D-OR) and Chris Murphy (D-CT) at a press conference to introduce the *Choose Medicare Act*. The legislation would provide every individual who is not already eligible for Medicaid or Medicare the opportunity to enroll in Medicare as an individual. In addition, it would provide every employer the choice to purchase Medicare for their employees.

“President Trump has spent the last two years sabotaging our health care system, raising health care costs and pushing junk insurance plans that do not have to cover people with pre-existing conditions. He has even gone to court to win a lawsuit that would repeal the Affordable Care Act and health care for over 20 million Americans. The choice for the American people couldn’t be more clear – we want to make things better and he is doing everything he can to make things worse,” **said Senator Baldwin.** “The *Choose Medicare Act* offers a new option for every American to buy more affordable, quality health care coverage through Medicare. In addition, it would open Medicare to employers of all sizes and allow them to purchase high quality, affordable health care for their employees, instead of, or in addition to, private insurance. Our legislation would be a critical step forward to help increase competition and reduce health insurance costs.”

Medicare is consistently rated the most popular and efficient health insurance

system in the United States. The new plan, Medicare Part E, would be self-sustaining and fully paid for by premiums. Medicare Part E would be offered on all state and federal exchanges, and people could use the existing Affordable Care Act subsidies to help pay for it. Additionally, employers could choose to select Medicare Part E rather than private insurance to provide affordable and reliable health care to their employees.

The *Choose Medicare Act*:

Increases Access, Competition, and Choice

- Opens Medicare to employers of all sizes and allows them to purchase high quality, affordable health care for their employees without requiring replacement of employment-based health insurance.
- Addresses the discrepancy between consumer protections in the individual and group markets by extending the Affordable Care Act's rating requirements to all markets, to end discrimination based on pre-existing conditions once and for all.

Provides Comprehensive Coverage

- Covers essential health benefits and all items and services covered by Medicare.
- Provides high-quality, Medicare benefits (gold-level coverage).
- Ensures coverage for all reproductive services.

Improves Affordability

- Establishes an out-of-pocket maximum in traditional Medicare.
- Increases the generosity of premium tax credits and extends eligibility to middle-income earners.
- Allows Medicare to negotiate fair prices for prescription drugs.
- Drives down private insurance premiums with competition from Medicare.

Senator Baldwin has supported a number of options to expand access and lower health care costs. She introduced the *Medicare at 50 Act* to give people between the ages of 50 and 64 years old the option of buying into Medicare. Baldwin has also cosponsored *Medicare for All*, the *State Public Option Act*, and the *Consumer Health Options and Insurance Competition Enhancement (CHOICE) Act*.