

Opportunity Wisconsin: As Medicare Open Enrollment ends, Wisconsinites speak out on the importance of protecting benefits and strengthening the program

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MADISON, Wis. – As Medicare’s Open Enrollment period ends today, Wisconsinites are speaking out about the importance of the program and calling on members of Congress to strengthen the program and protect it from harmful cuts that could increase costs for seniors.

For the more than 1.2 million Wisconsinites who receive Medicare benefits, recent legislation has helped strengthen the program and reduce their out-of-pocket costs. Thanks to the Inflation Reduction Act, prescriptions for Medicare recipients have already become more affordable. The law capped insulin costs at \$35 per month, allowed Medicare to negotiate for lower prescription drug prices, and created a rebate program to provide relief when drug companies raise prescription prices faster than the rate of inflation.

Despite this progress, Wisconsin Republicans continue to threaten benefits that Wisconsinites depend on. Earlier this year, the Republican Study Committee in the House, which Congressman Bryan Steil is part of, released a proposed federal budget that would make sweeping changes and [jeopardize Medicare benefits](#). In April of this year, Congressmen Steil and Van Orden also voted for an extreme bill that would [force layoffs and close Social Security offices](#), making it harder for Wisconsinites to access benefits.

Now, ahead of the next government funding deadline on January 19th, Republicans in Congress have proposed nearly [\\$800 million in cuts to Medicare and Medicaid](#) administration, threatening access to benefits. Ahead of the upcoming funding deadline, Wisconsinites are speaking out on the importance of protecting access to these benefits.

Janet Mitchell, from Racine, spoke about the importance of Medicare, saying, “Wisconsinites depend on Medicare and expect their elected officials to protect access to these benefits for generations to come. It’s time for Republicans in Congress like Reps. Bryan Steil and Derrick Van Orden to stand up against cuts to benefits and protect the progress we’ve made to reduce out-of-pocket costs even further.”

“Thanks to President Biden and Democrats in Congress, Medicare has been protected and strengthened. For the 1.2 million Wisconsinites on Medicare, the Inflation Reduction Act is already reducing their out-of-pocket costs by capping insulin prices at \$35, allowing Medicare to negotiate lower prices on commonly prescribed drugs, and providing rebates when drug prices increase faster than the rate of inflation,” added **Jordan Anderson**, a disability advocate from Wood County.

“Wisconsinites expect their members of Congress to support Medicare and protect benefits for seniors and those with disabilities. Unfortunately, Republicans in Congress continue to propose harmful cuts that could reduce benefits and jeopardize care for many families in our state,” **said Opportunity Wisconsin Program Director Meghan Roh**. “With the next government funding deadline approaching, it’s critical that Congressmen Bryan Steil and Derrick Van Orden oppose any attempt to weaken Medicare, Social Security, and other programs Wisconsinites depend on.