

# U.S. Rep. Pocan: Introduce bill to strengthen Medicare, define alternative plans

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**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – As we enter the second month of the Medicare Advantage open enrollment period, **U.S. Representatives Mark Pocan (WI-02), Ro Khanna (CA-17), and Jan Schakowsky (IL-09)** are reintroducing the “Save Medicare Act.” This bill renames so-called “Medicare Advantage” plans, prohibits private insurers from using “Medicare” in plan titles or advertisements, and imposes significant fines for any insurer that engages in this deceptive practice.

Many cable news watchers have been inundated with commercials for private healthcare plans during this open enrollment period. Because of that, Reps. Pocan, Khanna, and Schakowsky [filmed an informercial video](#) explaining why Medicare Advantage is not Medicare.

“Only Medicare is Medicare. It is one of the most popular and important services the government provides,” **Rep. Pocan said.** “These non-Medicare plans run by private insurers undermine traditional Medicare. They often leave patients without the benefits they need while overcharging the federal government for corporate profit. This bill eliminates any confusion about what is – and what is not – Medicare, and ensures this essential program will continue to serve seniors and other Americans for years to come.”

“It’s time to call out ‘Medicare Advantage’ for what it is: private insurance that profits by denying coverage and the name is being used to trick seniors into enrolling. That’s not right,” **said Rep. Khanna.** “This bill will end the scam by preventing private insurers from profiting off the Medicare brand. Our focus should be on strengthening and expanding real Medicare.”

“Do not be fooled, Medicare Advantage is not Medicare. I am extremely concerned about the deceptive advertisements that Medicare Advantage plans are using to trick older Americans into signing up for plans that may not cover the care they need. Not only are Medicare Advantage plans denying requests for much-needed care, but they are also falsifying medical records to make seniors appear sicker than they are so the plans can line their own pockets with taxpayer dollars,” **said Rep. Schakowsky**. “The Save Medicare Act, which I am proud to introduce with Congressman Pocan and Congressman Khanna, will help us put an end to the false advertising and will show the American people that these plans are scams.”

“So-called Medicare Advantage is neither Medicare nor an advantage,” **said Wendell Potter, President of the Center for Health and Democracy**. “It is simply another scheme by the insurance companies to line their pockets at the expense of consumers. I applaud Congressman Pocan and Congressman Khanna for introducing this vital legislation. The health care market is confusing for consumers and misleading branding like so-called Medicare Advantage just makes it worse.”

“Medicare is a national treasure, delivering real value to millions of older adults and people with disabilities,” **Diane Archer, President of Just Care USA said**. “Corporate insurance plans too often lean on Medicare’s good name to mislead people into signing up with them. Rep. Pocan and Rep. Khanna’s bill would put an end to this practice.”

“Signing up for the right Medicare coverage is a nightmare right now, a complex and tangled maze of choices,” **Alex Lawson, Executive Director of Social Security Works said**. “The real problem is that a bunch of these choices aren’t Medicare at all. They are private insurance companies preying on seniors and people with disabilities. Unlike actual Medicare, these plans deny and delay care — because that’s what for-profit insurance always does. These corporate insurance plans should not be able to lie about who and what they are by calling themselves Medicare anything.”

“Private health insurers drive up costs and deny care to people who need it, and calling what they’re up to ‘Medicare Advantage’ doesn’t change that fact,” **People’s Action Director Sulma Arias said**. “This bill by Reps. Pocan, Khanna, and Schakowsky will stop these scams. The people organizing through our Our Health Care for All campaign are proud to support the Save Medicare Act. We need our elected officials to focus on expanding real Medicare to everyone, not lending its branding to greedy corporations.”

According to a [New York Times article](#) published in October, “8 of the 10 largest Medicare Advantage insurers – representing more than two-thirds of the market – have submitted inflated bills...and four of the five largest players – United Health, Humana, Elevance, and Kaiser – have faced federal lawsuits alleging that efforts to overdiagnose their customers crossed the line into fraud.”

Additionally, according to the federal Medicare Payment Advisory Commission’s [2022 report to Congress](#), at least \$12 billion in overpayments were made to Medicare Advantage plans in 2020 by the federal government.

The “Save Medicare Act” will eliminate the confusion private insurers have relied upon for years to enroll unsuspecting seniors, and restore true Medicare as the primary health plan older Americans rely on.

[Click here](#) to read the text of the legislation.