

March for a Decent Future on Medicare's Birthday

No Cuts to Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security

Dear Friends:

On July 30, Medicare celebrates its 46th Birthday. Medicare, Social Security and Medicaid are the "crown jewels" of our national social insurance system. Despite widespread public support for this system, all of these programs are under attack by politicians in Washington, DC.

PNHP-Western Wash, United for Single Payer, Healthcare for All-WA and the WA State Alliance for Retired Americans join with others to call for the protection of these programs.



JOIN us Saturday, July 30, Noon-2pm, for a downtown Seattle- Medicare Birthday Party

Give Medicare a Birthday Present — Improved Medicare for ALL!

Noon: meet at the Safeco Field (S. Atlantic/1st Ave.) for music and street theatre

Sidewalk parade: up 1st Ave to Pioneer Square and then to the Federal Bldg

Rally: at Victor Steinbrueck Park, Pike Place Market

Profit-Driven Health Care is the Problem — Improved Medicare For All is the Solution!

Manufactured "Debt Crisis" Scapegoats the Aging Population and the Poor

Politicians and the media, at the behest of Wall Street privatizers, are blaming "the aging population" so they can create panic about the debt. The aim of their scam is to slash and then eventually kill Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid, thus transferring billions to Wall Street and millions for campaign donations.



"Debt Crisis" Reality

- Iraq and Afghanistan wars are the largest contributors to the debt with a \$1-3 trillion estimated cost, or a \$2 billion/month cost to the American people.
- Continued skyrocketing of health care costs (5-8% per year) is due to the private health insurance corporations' unconscionable profiteering.
- Highly profitable U.S. corporations are paying 0 in federal income taxes even though they have a 35% statutory tax rate. The extension of the Bush tax cuts allows billionaires to pay a lower tax rate than teachers, nurses and firefighters.

Proposed Social Security Cuts

There is a proposal to lower Cost of Living Adjustments (COLAs) for Social Security. This would be devastating for millions of retirees. A 75-year-old retiree's benefits would be cut by \$560 per year, and an 85-year-old would have an annual cut of \$984.

Social Security Reality

Social Security does not add a penny to the deficit and will be solvent for the next 37 years. It has no place in debt ceiling negotiations. Raising the cap on Social Security taxes for annual incomes over \$106,000 can easily render it solvent beyond 2050.

Proposed Medicare Cuts

President Obama has put on the table raising the Medicare eligibility age from 65 to 67. The consequence would be to force 65-67 year olds to buy high cost private insurance and to stay in the workforce. This would have disproportionate impact on people of color who have shorter life expectancies. It would mean a 12% cut in benefits, the largest since Medicare began.

Medicare Reality

Medicare can easily be stabilized by:

- increasing the payroll tax by a small fraction of a percent
- negotiating drug prices with pharmaceutical companies and
- stopping the current practice of paying private Medicare plans more than traditional Medicare.

HOWEVER to reap maximum health benefits and cost savings, Medicare should be improved and expanded to include everyone. Medicare For All would significantly reverse the U.S. economic crisis.

Proposed Medicaid Cuts

The White House is proposing a cost savings of \$65 billion through a “blended rate”. This means the federal government would spend less on Medicaid by dumping a bigger portion of the rising costs on the states. The states would then try to minimize the shifted costs, probably relying on more cuts. Lower income people, including particularly vulnerable children and seniors, would pay with their health, and in some cases, their lives.

Medicaid Reality

Medicaid is a critical safety net that must be defended and preserved until we have a Medicare For All system. Medicaid is not the cause our rising health care costs but is just a part of our irrational, fragmented and failed market-based model of health care financing.



Tell Congress—No Cuts to Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security!

The solutions are not mysterious. Make corporations and the wealthy pay their fair share of taxes. Cut spending on wars. Expand Medicare to a Medicare For All health system. Then we would be a country that respects our people, especially the retired, who have labored for years to produce our common wealth.

Senators

Murray (866-481-9186) and Cantwell (202-224-3441)

Representatives

McDermott (202-225-8901), Inslee (202-225-6311), Larsen (202-225-2605), Smith (888-SMITH09), Beutler (202-225-3536), Dicks (202-225-5916), and Reichert (202-225-7761)

For more information, contact:

Physicians for a National Health Program - Western Washington @ pnhpwesternwashington@comcast.net