

PDA

(Date of Delivery)

The Honorable Senator (Senator's Full Name)

(Office Street Address)

(City, State Zip)

Dear Senator (Senator's Last Name),

As your constituent I am asking you to support three measures to expand and improve Medicare in the upcoming \$3.5 Trillion Reconciliation Bill:

1. Expand Medicare to include coverage for dental, vision, and hearing
2. Allow Medicare to negotiate lower prescription drug prices
3. Lower the Medicare eligibility age to, at least, 60 years old

I was heartened to see that all three measures were included in the August 9th Memorandum from Majority Leader Schumer, listed under the jurisdiction of the Senate Finance Committee. Let's make sure these essential improvements to our healthcare system remain in the bill, get passed by Congress and signed into law by President Biden this autumn.

The United States currently spends almost twice as much on healthcare per capita than any country in the world. Yet our health outcomes and life expectancies are far worse than other rich industrialized countries.

Now Congress has a tremendous opportunity to lower costs and improve care for tens of millions of Americans by passing these three measures.

All three are tremendously popular with the American people:

- 83% of eligible voters support dental vision, and hearing expansion (Data for Progress).
- 81% support having Medicare negotiate drug prices (West Health/Gallup).
- 60% support lowering Medicare eligibility to 60 versus 34% opposed (Data for Progress)

They are also affordable. Allowing Medicare to negotiate drug prices will save taxpayers, patients, and the government so much money (estimated around \$450 Billion over ten years) that it covers almost the entire cost of the other two measures.

The health benefits of these three proposals are staggering. Over 70% of senior citizens have no dental insurance and thus do not visit the dentist; and the same percentage have gum disease. 75% of senior citizens who need hearing aids cannot access them. Seniors who suffer from poor oral health, vision, and hearing experience higher rates of illnesses including diabetes, cardiovascular issues, depression, and dementia.

20% of Americans cannot fill their prescriptions because of cost, which has predictably dire consequences. A recent study (West Health) concluded an average of 94,000 fewer Americans would die each year if Medicare, by far the largest single buyer of prescription drugs in the country, is allowed to negotiate drug prices.

23 million more Americans could sign up for Medicare if the eligibility age is lowered to 60. Currently, 8% of Americans age 60-64 are uninsured, a staggering 1.6 million people. Millions more are underinsured. Many of those avoid screenings for illnesses such as cancer until they turn 65, severely lowering the likelihood of survival. They also represent a public health risk, as the uninsured and underinsured frequently delay receiving treatment for infectious diseases.

These three measures will dramatically expand and improve health coverage for Americans 60 and older: and lower prescription drug prices for all patients. Just as importantly, these measures strengthen Medicare; a program which, if expanded to cover all health services for all Americans, would provide healthcare as good or better than any country in the world.

Please support the continued inclusion of these three proposals to expand and improve Medicare in the American Jobs and Family Plan legislation; and please vote for their passage.

your constituent,

(your name)

(your address)

(your e-mail)

(your phone number – optional)

(Or, if you'd rather not be contacted, sign your name and ID yourself and say "Contact Mike Fox, Deputy Executive Director, Progressive Democrats of America, mikefox@pdamerica.org")