

DEFAZIO BLASTS GOP PLAN TO PRIVATIZE MEDICARE

Health care costs would skyrocket and seniors would receive reduced services under Republican voucher system

January 28, 2011

WASHINGTON, DC— Representative Peter DeFazio (D-OR) today blasted GOP proposals to privatize Medicare, increasing costs and uncertainty for millions of Americans. Earlier this month, the Republican leadership passed legislation to repeal the Affordable Care Act and to once again allow the worst abuses of the insurance and pharmaceutical industries.

DeFazio issued the following statement in response:

“Today, Republicans announced that they want to convert Medicare, vital to 40 million Americans, to a voucher system. This is absolutely unacceptable. Last week, they attempted to undo the reforms preventing the insurance industry from discriminating based on preexisting conditions or age, and preventing them from canceling policies when people get sick. Just one week later, Republicans want to push seniors into the private market and mandate they purchase government approved private health insurance, as opposed to Medicare, an incredibly comprehensive health insurance program.

Do they really believe that seniors, at their age and with their preexisting conditions are going to be able to purchase a private insurance policy resembling anything like what they get out of Medicare today? Maybe they live in a different world, but I don't believe it. The health insurance industry is exempt from anti-trust law and they have proved they can and do collude to drive up prices and discriminate against people for a host of conditions to protect their bottom line.

Republicans seem to be ready to throw seniors on the mercy of an unregulated insurance market with inadequate vouchers from the government. Vouchers mean more uncertainty, diminished coverage and skyrocketing costs for millions of seniors who need reliable care. I am totally opposed to privatized, ‘voucherized’ Medicare.”

DeFazio has led the fight to stop the dismantling of senior health care programs like Social Security and Medicare, including the attempted privatization of Social Security by the Bush Administration and the Republican majority in 2005.

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