

**GREENBELT, MD** - Congressman Steny H. Hoyer (D-MD) met today with residents of Green Ridge House to discuss the impact of the Affordable Health Care for America Act on elderly populations and how reforms will strengthen Medicare benefits and extend the program's solvency. The [House bill has been endorsed by AARP](#), the largest member organization for people 50 and older, representing 40 million members nationwide. The House passed the bill in early November; the Senate is currently considering its version of reform.

"Medicare was created forty years ago to provide seniors with reliable health care coverage they can count on, and now we are working to keep it strong for another forty years, and beyond," **said Rep. Hoyer**. "This bill makes Medicare work better, strengthening benefits by lowering prescription drug costs and eliminating co-pays for preventative care, and investing in the program to extend its solvency by five more years."

Under the House health reform plan, seniors will see a strong, new package of benefits that includes lowering the cost of Medicare prescription drugs by closing the Part D "donut hole" and expanding access to the drug program for low-income seniors. The bill also provides for higher-quality, more cost-efficient care through new incentives for doctors to share patient information on patients and coordinate treatments. And to save patients and the system in the long run, the current reform plan encourages greater preventive care-everything from blood pressure tests to cancer screenings- by eliminating preventative care co-payments.

"For most seniors, Medicare is an absolute necessity," **said Hoyer**. "That's why it's so important to protect the qualities that have made it irreplaceable-and to ensure that our children and grandchildren will be able to turn to it in the future. As we work to bring quality, affordable care to all Americans, we are making sure that seniors can keep relying on Medicare for their peace of mind."

Rep. Hoyer also addressed claims that the current health reform plan will put seniors' benefits at risk by clarifying that Medicare savings in the bill are achieved through the elimination of wasteful spending due to inaccurate payments and overpayments to private insurance plans, some of which receive up to 50% more than traditional Medicare for the same services. The majority of those savings are reinvested back into Medicare to improve seniors' benefits and help the entire program stay solvent.

The House also acted in November to prevent a 21% pay cut set to hit doctors who take Medicare patients next year. If that cut takes places, many doctors will cut back on their Medicare patients, or cease taking them at all. The bill is awaiting Senate action.

For further information and fact sheets on the Affordable Health Care for America plan, including more on how reform will benefit older Americans and their families, [CLICK HERE](#) .

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