

Resolution on Medicare

WHEREAS, before Medicare was adopted as a part of President Lyndon Johnson's Great Society program, the elderly were frequently uninsured and their health care was in many cases financed by their children or by charity, and

WHEREAS, Medicare has proven to be a successful program to assure adequate medical coverage for citizens over the age of 65, a portion of society that incurs a disproportionately high set of health challenges, and

WHEREAS, Medicare has built-in cost containment provisions, including limiting compensation to providers based upon schedules of "customary charges" for various diagnoses ("DRGs"), and

WHEREAS, Generations have grown to rely upon Medicare as a predictable, defined benefit to cover health care costs during citizens' retirement years, and

WHEREAS, Speaker of the House Paul Ryan and House Republicans introduced House Budget Resolution for Fiscal Year 2015, H. Con. Res. 96, which would have drastically altered Medicare. While this plan was not adopted, the prospect of the Republicans controlling the White House as well as the House and Senate have given new life to Ryan's Medicare reduction proposals, and

WHEREAS, the Republican plan would raise the age of Medicare eligibility from 65 to 67 thereby increasing the health care costs borne by insurance plans for people who are too young for Medicare, and

WHEREAS, the Republican plan would shift Medicare from a defined benefit to a set of vouchers that would not be designed to cover needed health care, or future escalations in health care costs, and

WHEREAS, the Republicans have voted repeatedly to repeal the Affordable Care Act (ACA) which filled the Part D drug cost "doughnut hole" and which provided for parity of reimbursement between Medicare and Medicare Advantage.

Therefore be it resolved by the Arlington County Democratic Committee on December 7, 2016 that

1. We oppose ending traditional Medicare by changing it from a defined benefit to a defined contribution voucher program.
2. We oppose increasing the Medicare eligibility age.
3. We oppose increasing the out-of-pocket costs for Medicare beneficiaries by further increasing income-related premiums.
4. We oppose repealing the Medicare-related provisions of the Affordable Care Act, which are helping Medicare beneficiaries with their prescription drug costs and provide preventive screening and wellness visits with no out-of-pocket costs.
5. We urge Senators Warner and Kaine and Congressman Beyer to vote against any proposed cuts to Medicare.