

Sent: Mon, 18 Aug 2003 13:56:40 -0400
From: "Besanceney, Brian R." </O=EOP/OU=FIRST ADMINISTRATIVE
GROUP/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=BRIAN R. BESANCENEY>

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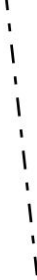
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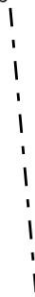
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Subject: Talking Points: Private Health Care Choices Within Medicare
[8.18.03Medicare Talking Pts_Reform Part 2.pdf](#)

Talking Points: Private Health Care Choices Within Medicare

The Medicare bills passed by both the House and Senate constitute major entitlement reform by applying the best practices of the private healthcare market to Medicare. These reforms represent the greatest opportunity in decades to modernize Medicare, strengthen private healthcare markets, and put patients and doctors—not bureaucrats and lawyers—in charge of healthcare decisions. By keeping the existing government system, building on its strengths, and incorporating the best ideas of the private sector, we can create a modern and efficient Medicare program for the 21st century.

- ***Competition among private healthcare plans in Medicare will help ensure more up-to-date coverage for breakthrough medical technologies.*** Whenever government gets involved in the business of micromanaging health care, innovation suffers and access to the newest and most effective treatments depends on the decisions of a slow-moving bureaucracy. For example, Medicare did not cover mammograms until nearly a decade after private insurers made them a standard benefit, and even then it took an act of Congress. Under a modern Medicare system, seniors would no longer have to wait for the most up-to-date, innovative care and treatments.

- ***Seniors would be able to choose the healthcare plan that best meets their personal health needs—rather than a one-size-fits-all government plan.*** The bills would give Medicare-approved private healthcare plans flexibility in designing their benefits. Seniors will be able to choose the coverage that makes most sense to them, including the choice of remaining in the traditional Medicare program. Providing seniors with more choices will give them—not the government—more control. When seniors exercise the power of choice, and there is competition among healthcare providers and insurers, seniors will get the best coverage, services, and quality of care. Federal employees and Members of Congress enjoy the benefits of a competitive market for their health insurance, as do millions of working Americans. Seniors should have the same opportunity.
- ***Medicare-approved private insurers would deliver drug benefits to seniors, and costs would be determined by market competition, not government price setting.*** This is a fundamental departure from the current Medicare command and control pricing system. Under both bills, Medicare-approved private plans would pool the buying power of millions of seniors to negotiate discounts on prescription medicines. Market forces, not government mandates, would determine prices.

The President is encouraged by the bipartisan progress that has been made to date and is urging Congress to seize this historic opportunity to pass legislation that will reform and modernize Medicare, thereby providing better care and more choices for America's seniors today and into the future.

TALKING POINTS: PRIVATE HEALTH CARE CHOICES WITHIN MEDICARE

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