

AARP South Carolina Health Action Now

What AARP Doesn't Like About the House Bill . . .and wants to improve!



In May, AARP issued "six asks" for health care reform. While the early version of the House bill addresses some of our priorities, there are things in the bill that AARP doesn't like.

Generic biologics

AARP is deeply disappointed that the House bill includes a drug industry backed proposal that would keep generic versions of expensive biologic drugs off the market until a brand name drug has been available to consumers for at least twelve years. A competing proposal would have given consumers access to safe, affordable generic biologics in less than half that time.

The average annual cost of some widely used biologics exceeds \$20,000; without less costly generic versions, patients might be forced to go without these life-saving medicines.

For AARP members who are Medicare beneficiaries and taking a biologic drug, there is little hope they can avoid falling into the Medicare Part D "doughnut hole."

Expanded Access to HCBS

AARP is disappointed the House bill didn't include provisions to expand access to Medicaid home-and-community-based services (HCBS). AARP believes expanding HCBS would greatly improve the quality of life for older adults and people with disabilities in need of in-home services while slowing the rate of Medicaid spending growth in the long-run and passing on budget savings to the state and federal governments.

AARP is not giving up on this issue and will continue to fight for any final health care reform bill to:

- provide states with additional federal money so more Americans can receive care at home;
 - give states more flexibility to fund HCBS;
 - provide the spouses of individuals receiving HCBS the same protection against poverty that are provided for the spouses of nursing home residents;
 - change the asset limit specifically for individuals applying for HCBS, as individuals living at home need funds to maintain their home and pay out of pocket expenses;
- Improve training and other support for family caregivers.

Transitional Care

While AARP supports the current provisions in the House bill that seek to reduce unnecessary re-hospitalizations, AARP believes more must be included to ensure patients get the follow up care they need. The current language does not effectively target the most at-risk people in Medicare. AARP will be calling on the House to improve the transitional care provisions in the bill.

Health Care Currents

In Print

Greenville LAT volunteer **Chris DeJong** is quoted in the August 20th edition of the Wall Street Journal regarding 4th District Congressman Bob Inglis and health care. Click here for the link.

True or False?

Get the facts about health reform and help AARP fight the myths and scare tactics of special interests. Click here for a great fact sheet and share with your friends. Also here is a link to AARP SC's state page with other "fact checker" websites to answer your questions.

In the Mail

LAT members and other volunteers will soon receive information regarding an upcoming training on health care reform in September.

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