

Padilla, colleagues introduce Medicare for All

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U.S. Senators Alex Padilla (D-Calif.) and Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.), along with Representatives Pramila Jayapal (D-Wash.) and Debbie Dingell (D-Mich.) recently reintroduced the Medicare for All Act—historic legislation that would guarantee health care as a fundamental human right to all people in the United States regardless of income or background.

In addition to Padilla and Sanders, the legislation is also led in the Senate by Tammy Baldwin (D-Wis.), Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.), Cory Booker (D-N.J.), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-N.Y.), Martin Heinrich (D-N.M.), Mazie Hirono (D-Hawaii), Ben Ray Luján (D-N.M.), Ed Markey (D-Mass.), Jeff Merkley (D-Ore.), Brian Schatz (D-Hawaii), Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.), Peter Welch (D-Vt.), and Sheldon Whitehouse (D-R.I.)

“Every American deserves access to high quality, affordable health care, regardless of their zip code or tax bracket,” said Senator Padilla. “Health care is a human right and no American should go bankrupt because of medical costs. Congress can and must do better to ensure that everyone has equitable access to care, and that starts by passing Medicare for All.”

“The American people understand, as I do, that health care is a human right, not a privilege,” said Senator Sanders. “It is not acceptable to me, nor to the American people, that over 85 million people today are either uninsured or underinsured. As we speak, there are millions of people who would like to go to a doctor but cannot afford to do so. That is an outrage. In America, your health and your longevity should not be dependent on your bank account or your stock portfolio. After all the lives that we lost to this terrible pandemic, it is clearer now, perhaps more than it has ever been before, that we must act to end the international embarrassment of the United States being the only major country on earth to not guarantee health care to all.”

“Health care should be a right for all, not a luxury for some,” said Senator Blumenthal. “In the United States of America, millions of Americans go to sleep at night worried about a procedure they can’t access or a treatment their family can’t afford. Our status quo is unacceptable. Regardless of age, income, or zip-code, access to quality, timely medical care should be guaranteed for all who need it. I’m proud to join my colleagues in introducing this landmark legislation.”

“Despite the progress we’ve made in the past decade, millions of Americans still struggle to afford the quality health care they deserve,” said Senator Booker. “Health care is a human right, and it is unacceptable that the wealthiest nation on the planet lags behind other countries in guaranteeing access to quality and affordable care for all its citizens. It’s time to put an end to the medical bankruptcies and exorbitant health care costs that burden families across the nation and work toward Medicare for All. I am proud to join in reintroducing this bill that will build a health care system that ensures that no one is left behind.”

“The American health care system leaves millions of individuals without coverage and it needs fundamental change. In the richest country in history, your health should not be determined by your income or zip code,” said Senator Gillibrand. “I am proud to join my colleagues in the fight for Medicare for All, which would guarantee high-quality health care for every American and enshrine into law that health care is a right, not a privilege.”

“New Mexicans should never have to choose between putting food on their table and accessing health care,” said Senator Heinrich. “That’s why I am proud to cosponsor the Medicare for All Act to expand health care coverage and provide access to hospital services, emergency services, prescription drugs, oral health, vision, and audiology services to all Americans.”

“Everyone should be able to get the health care they need, regardless of their income or insurance status,” said Senator Hirono. “As we continue to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, adopting Medicare for All is an important thing we can do to help expand access to comprehensive health care for all communities. I am proud to support this bill and other legislation to help people across the country access quality, affordable health care.”

“Health care is a basic human right – no one should ever go broke because of a medical bill or have to ration life-saving medications to make ends meet,” said Senator Warren. “Medicare for All works to guarantee that every American will be able to afford and access the health care that every person deserves.”

“Medicare for All will help every Vermonter access essential health care, regardless of means. That’s worth fighting for, and I’m proud to join Sen Sanders to reintroduce this essential and lifesaving legislation,” said Senator Welch. “No person should ever have to worry that they can’t afford the medical care they need — period.”

Today in the U.S., tens of thousands of Americans die each year because they cannot afford the health care they desperately need. Millions more suffer unnecessarily because of delayed treatment, and more than 85 million Americans are uninsured or under-insured because of high deductibles and premiums. In addition, health care spending in the U.S. constitutes over 18 percent of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP), according to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. Yet health outcomes, life expectancy, and infant mortality rates in the U.S. remain much worse than many other major countries. The U.S. has the highest infant mortality rate of almost any other major country on earth.

Implemented over four years, the Medicare for All Act would provide comprehensive health care coverage to all with no out-of-pocket expenses, insurance premiums, deductibles, or co-payments. This includes coverage for primary care, vision, dental, prescription drugs, mental health, substance use disorder, long-term services and supports, reproductive health care, and more. The legislation would create a more streamlined and cost-effective system, allow patients not to worry if their doctor is “in-network,” and substantially reduce the cost of prescription drugs by allowing the federal government to negotiate with pharmaceutical companies.

According to the Congressional Budget Office, Medicare for All would save the American people and the entire health care system \$650 billion each year. A study by RAND found that moving to a Medicare-for-all system would save a family with an income of less than \$185,000 about \$3,000 a year, on average.

In 2020, 69 percent of the American people supported providing Medicare to every American.

Nearly 200 national, state, and local organizations endorsed the Medicare For All legislation, including: National Nurses United, American Medical Student Association, People’s Action, Public Citizen, Social Security Works, National Organization of Women, SEIU, AFA – CWA, International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees, International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers (IFPTE), United Electrical, Radio & Machine Workers of America (UE), United Mine Workers of America, Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees Division, Center for Popular Democracy, and National Domestic Workers Alliance.