

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Statement by Medicare Rights Center President Joe Baker on the Ryan-Wyden Medicare Proposal

New York, NY– Make no mistake, the Ryan-Wyden proposal is a voucher program designed to make people with Medicare spend more for their health care so that the federal government spends less—with some bells and whistles that sound attractive, especially when key details are left out.

Once again, we are told that “market forces will pressure plans to keep their premiums as low as possible in order to gain market share.” But these are the same market forces we have had over the last 30-plus years in the under-65 health insurance market, and costs have spiraled and been passed along to employers and, ever more frequently, to employees in the form of higher premiums, higher copays and lesser benefits.

The plan purports to protect lower-income Medicare beneficiaries—details to come—and it allows the rich to use their deep pockets to supplement the voucher amount to always purchase the best coverage. It’s the folks in the middle who will be subject to the vagaries of the market and presented with the rock-and-a-hard-place choice those under 65 have today: pay more out of pocket in premiums or copays or trade down to a cheaper policy.

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Medicare Rights Center is a national, nonprofit consumer service organization that works to ensure access to affordable health care for older adults and people with disabilities through counseling and advocacy, educational programs, and public policy initiatives.

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