

NEWS - CONGRESSMAN PETE STARK

239 Cannon House Office Building

Washington, DC 20515

(202) 225.5065

www.stark.house.gov

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Sarah Baldauf, (202) 225-3202

Stark: Republican Budget Would Gut Medicare

WASHINGTON -- Today, Rep. Pete Stark (D-CA), Ranking Member on the Ways and Means Health Subcommittee, made the following statement in response to the Republican budget released by Rep. Paul Ryan (R-WI), Chairman of the Budget Committee.

"This year's Republican Budget, once again, is a plan to dismantle the Medicare guarantee that Americans overwhelmingly support and that seniors and people with disabilities rely on.

"The Republican claim that their budget would preserve Medicare is both irresponsible and disingenuous. Beneficiaries would be given a voucher -- crafted to decrease in value over time -- to buy private insurance or try to stay in traditional Medicare.

"This Republican scheme would not only shift health care costs to seniors as their vouchers diminish, but will end Medicare as we know it. Private plans will cherry pick healthier folks, leaving the more sickly and elderly in what amounts to a faint memory of traditional Medicare as costs rise beyond their reach.

"Importantly, the Republican budget would not require plans to provide defined benefits as Medicare does today, thus ending the Medicare guarantee that has defined the program for decades.

"What's more, the Republican budget would undo the consumer protections provided by Medicare and put private health insurers back in charge.

"Enacting the Republican plan would be devastating to the health and financial security of America's senior citizens and people with disabilities. I will fight this plan to take America backward."