

(Washington, D.C.) – U.S. Rep. Rush Holt (NJ-12) last night highlighted how proposed health care reform would benefit seniors and strengthen Medicare. Holt continues to review the proposed legislation, which the House is expected to consider this weekend. Video of Holt's remarks can be found at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0a2oxxJCpTU> .

“I hear from many seniors in my district who ask how health insurance reform would affect Medicare and the care they receive,” Holt said. “Let me be clear: not only would Medicare remain intact under health reform, reform would make it better.”

Holt detailed how health reform would provide seniors who hit the prescription drug “doughnut hole” with a \$250 rebate soon after a bill is enacted into law. By 2020, the “doughnut hole” would be closed completely. This year, the donut hole gap in coverage is over \$3600 – and it increases each year. For the millions of seniors who fall into the donut hole each year, they keep paying premiums while paying 100 percent of drug costs.

Additionally, reform would shift Medicare's focus to keeping seniors well rather than just paying for procedures and equipment. Seniors would have free access to preventative services through Medicare and would be able to receive annual prevention check-ups with their doctor. Prevention services would ensure these seniors are able to treat their diseases at the earliest possible stage.

Holt noted the reform would eliminate overpayments to Medicare Advantage private insurers. Private insurers are receiving overpayments that, on average, are 14% more than traditional Medicare. Every person on Medicare – whether they are in a private plan or not – pays approximately \$90 a year to subsidize those excess payments. Those overpayments threaten Medicare's solvency and increase costs to taxpayers. By eliminating overpayments to private insurers, rooting out fraud and abuse, and improving efficiency, the life of the Medicare Trust Fund would be extended by nine years.

AARP and other senior advocacy groups support health care reform efforts.

“Few people today would call for a repeal of Medicare given its success for seniors, yet it was controversial back then. The same arguments were made against Medicare then as are being made now against health care reform. I predict that more than 40 years from now, today's cries of “socialized medicine” will have faded. Instead, it will be noted that we did the right thing by strengthening Medicare and giving families more control over their own health care,” Holt said.