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WORKER VOICES

Vice President Kamala Harris cast the deciding vote to pass the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), which included historic provisions to lower the costs of healthcare and prescription drugs. Here's how the Act is helping real people afford their care:



Ginny B. from Mechanicsburg, PA, lives with LEMS syndrome. She relies on a drug that costs hundreds of thousands of dollars a year, and she used to worry about how she would afford this life-saving medication. But thanks to the IRA's provision capping out-of-pocket prescription drug costs for Medicare beneficiaries, soon Ginny and others like her won't pay a dime over \$2,000 per year for their prescriptions.

Source: invest.gov



The Inflation Reduction Act has eliminated vaccine copays for Medicare recipients, enabling seniors like Susan R. to afford long-awaited vaccinations. As a senior on a fixed income, the \$400 copay for the shingles vaccine had been cost-prohibitive. "But I was relieved to see I could get it at no cost after the Inflation Reduction Act passed. It's been a major blessing to get the shingles vaccine with no copay; this is a life-changing policy."

Source: CAP Action

In Union is supported by union members, such as nurses, teachers, home care workers, steelworkers, auto workers, and union retirees. We provide straightforward, fact-based information to more than two million people who trust us to be unbiased on topics like the economy and healthcare. In Union doesn't endorse, lobby, or take contributions from politicians or candidates—and we don't contribute to them. Instead, we examine the records to help hold politicians accountable, tackle issues important to working-class families, and provide money-saving tips. In Union does the research and always provides sources, but you decide.

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SEPTEMBER 2024

ON THE ISSUES:

EXPANDING HEALTHCARE COVERAGE AND REDUCING COSTS FOR PENNSYLVANIANS



Pennsylvania families are concerned about rising healthcare costs and the price of prescription drugs. That's why we're closely examining the healthcare records and plans of the candidates for President and U.S. Senate. This election is about ensuring working families have access to quality, affordable healthcare. We're going to help you understand who will fight for you and who won't.



Biden-Harris Administration Releases New Medicare Prices for 10 Common Drugs



Senator Bob Casey
@SenBobCasey

I fought to give Medicare the power to negotiate prices with drug companies to lower costs for American families. Today, Medicare rolled out newly negotiated prices for 10 of the most popular drugs in the U.S.

Source: Senator Bob Casey (@SenBobCasey), Twitter, 8/15/2024

NEW Medicare-Negotiated Prices			
DRUG	PA USERS	LIST PRICE	NEGOTIATED PRICE
Eliquis <i>For Blood Clots</i>	187,000	\$521	\$231
Jardiance <i>For Diabetes, Heart Failure, Chronic Kidney Disease</i>	71,000	\$573	\$197
Xarelto <i>For Blood Clots and Coronary Artery Disease</i>	67,000	\$517	\$197
Januvia <i>For Diabetes</i>	37,000	\$527	\$113
Farxiga <i>For Diabetes, Heart Failure, Kidney Disease</i>	21,000	\$556	\$178.50
Entresto <i>For Heart Failure</i>	23,000	\$628	\$295
Enbrel <i>For Arthritis, Psoriasis, Psoriatic Arthritis</i>	2,000	\$7,106	\$2,355
Imbruvica <i>For Blood Cancers</i>	1,000	\$14,934	\$9,319
Stelara <i>For Psoriasis, Psoriatic Arthritis, Crohn's Disease, Ulcerative Colitis</i>	1,000	\$13,836	\$4,695
NovoLog/Fiasp <i>For Diabetes</i>	45,000	\$495	\$119

ISSUE FOCUS:



VICE PRESIDENT KAMALA HARRIS’S
EXPERIENCE MAKING HEALTHCARE
MORE AFFORDABLE

Vice President Kamala Harris has fought hard to make healthcare more affordable and accessible for everyone. She’s been a strong advocate for lowering prescription drug prices, expanding coverage, and holding Big Pharma accountable for their price gouging. You can see her record for yourself—she’s worked tirelessly to make a difference for families across the country.



AS THE VICE PRESIDENT

- ✔ Put money back in working families’ pockets by casting the deciding vote on the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), which established a \$35 cap on insulin costs for those on Medicare
- ✔ Strengthened the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and reduced premium costs by an average of \$800 per year
- ✔ Allowed Medicare to negotiate and lower the costs of 10 of the most expensive prescription drugs, which will save seniors roughly \$1.5 billion in out-of-pocket costs

Sources: Center on Budget & Policy Priorities, 3/25/2024; POLITICO, 8/15/2024; Protect Our Care, 8/9/2024; Office of Health Policy, Health and Human Services, 2023 Report



AS A U.S. SENATOR

- ✔ Focused on reducing prescription drug costs, eliminating junk insurance plans, and improving maternal health
- ✔ Worked to impose penalties on drug companies who harm consumers with unfair price hikes on prescription drugs
- ✔ Sponsored two bills to block junk insurance plans that refuse coverage for essential healthcare and pre-existing conditions like diabetes and arthritis

Sources: East County Today, 2/7/2019; Protect Our Care, 8/9/2024; S.J. Res. 63, Roll Call Vote #226, 10/10/2018; S.J. Res. 52, Roll Call Vote #337, 10/30/2019; Roll Call, 7/25/2024



AS ATTORNEY GENERAL

- ✔ Took on healthcare corporations and drug companies while defending the ACA, including winning a \$241 million settlement for taxpayers in one case
- ✔ Sued Big Pharma for deceptive marketing and challenged their “pay-for-delay” agreements that prevent consumers from accessing competitors’ cheaper generic versions of brand-name drugs, saving working people nearly \$7.2 billion
- ✔ Protected Americans’ access to affordable healthcare, defending the ACA in court and working to ensure that millions of Americans could get the healthcare they needed through Medicaid expansion

Sources: Health Affairs, 10/1/2020; Protect Our Care, 8/22/2024; CLP, 6/23/2011

ABOUT
MINNESOTA GOV. TIM WALZ
AND HIS RECORD ON REDUCING HEALTHCARE COSTS



One of the reasons Vice President Harris chose Governor Tim Walz as her running mate is his long record of fighting to improve healthcare access and reduce costs for working families. Growing up in rural Nebraska, Walz’s family was devastated by his father’s death after a long battle with lung cancer—and by the medical debt they were forced to take on to treat his illness. This experience ultimately led Tim Walz to his career in public service, through which he has worked to expand healthcare and reduce the crippling burden of medical debt on working families.

Source: The Washington Post, 8/24/2024

Fighting Medical Debt:

As Governor, Walz advocated for and signed into law the Debt Fairness Act. This law eased the burden of medical debt, banned medical providers from withholding necessary care because of debt, and prevented medical debt from impacting credit scores.

Source: POLITICO, 8/6/2024

Reducing Prescription Drug Prices:

Under Walz’s leadership, Minnesota passed the Alec Smith Insulin Affordability Act, becoming one of the first states to enact a law capping out-of-pocket costs for insulin.

Source: AJMC, 8/9/2024

STAY INFORMED: YOUR CANDIDATES FOR U.S. SENATE ON HEALTHCARE

Senator Bob Casey has worked to expand access to affordable healthcare coverage for every Pennsylvanian.

After voting for the Affordable Care Act in 2009, Senator Bob Casey has consistently championed the ACA and voted against every Republican effort to repeal or weaken the law.

With his leadership in passing the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), Senator Casey continued to protect and strengthen the ACA, as well as Medicare and Medicaid. **As a result, Pennsylvanians are seeing relief from the high costs of prescription drugs and healthcare:**

- A record number of Americans, including 1.6 million Pennsylvanians, now have affordable healthcare coverage under the ACA
- Insulin copays for Medicare Part D beneficiaries are now capped at \$35 per month
- Out-of-pocket costs for prescription drugs will be limited to a maximum of \$2,000 per year for seniors starting in 2025

Sources: Pennsylvania Capital-Star, 3/20/2024; PBS, 1/16/2024; CNBC, 8/16/2022; NPR, 8/12/2022



Dave McCormick wants to repeal the Affordable Care Act, which means millions of Americans could lose their health insurance, face higher costs, and be denied coverage for pre-existing conditions.

- McCormick wants to rip away your health insurance and go back to the days before the ACA, when millions of Americans couldn’t afford coverage—and he’s endorsed by Donald Trump, who has promised to get rid of the ACA completely
- McCormick wants to take away the benefits seniors have earned and stop Medicare from negotiating for better prices—this would lead to higher prescription drug costs
- McCormick said “entitlements” like Medicare “aren’t sustainable” and has supported cuts to the program

Sources: Pennsylvania Independent, 11/28/2023; John Fredericks Radio Show, 10/3/2023 [41:21]; The Daily Beast, 4/5/2022; John Fredericks Radio Show, 11/16/2023 [4:40]

