



Bernie Sanders pushes Medicare for All, calls out pharma exec pay

Jack O'Brien

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The Senate Budget Committee held a hearing Thursday on the Medicare for All Act of 2022, a bill sponsored by Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-VT) that would establish a single-payer healthcare system.

Under the proposed legislation, the U.S. would take four years to transition from its current health system into a single-payer system. Sanders, chairman of the committee, wrote in a [Fox News op-ed](#) published prior to the hearing that it is “time for Medicare for All,” calling the American healthcare system the “most dysfunctional, inefficient, bureaucratic and expensive” in the world.

In his essay, Sanders contrasted the number of uninsured Americans with the multi-million dollar compensation packages for health insurance and pharmaceutical executives – namely those at Pfizer, Johnson & Johnson and AbbVie. Sanders also wrote that he expects the healthcare industry to push back against the proposal.

“Now, trust me. I know the 30-second ads coming from the insurance and drug companies will tell you that if Medicare for All becomes law, your taxes will go up. And they are correct,” wrote Sanders. “But what they won’t tell you is that under Medicare for All, you will no longer be paying premiums, deductibles and copayments to private health insurance companies.”

Sanders also cited a [2020 Congressional Budget Office estimate](#) that a single-payer healthcare system would reduce spending by \$650 billion per year.

Medicare for All has been a polarizing topic in healthcare for years, though 55% of voters support adopting a single-payer system, according to a [2021 Morning Consult survey](#). However, responses to the committee hearing elicited the expected partisan and divided response.

Sen. Lindsey Graham, the ranking member of the Senate Budget Committee, said Medicare for All “means higher taxes and disruption in care for the majority of Americans.” Other Senate

Republicans on the committee criticized the legislation as a government takeover of healthcare, with Sen. Rick Scott, R-Fla., deeming it “Medicare for None.”

Budget Committee member Sen. Alex Padilla, on the other hand, tweeted that “healthcare is a human right” and voiced his support for Medicare for All. Similarly, Public Citizen, a nonprofit progressive consumer rights advocacy group, urged Senate Democrats to pass the legislation.

The Cato Institute, a libertarian think tank, agreed with Sanders’ point that profits have risen for the healthcare industry while companies have failed to deliver quality care to patients, but argued that Medicare for All would make these issues worse.

“Medicare continues to undermine quality that the ACA did not address – setting relatively low prices for primary care and paying for that care on a fee-for-service basis. Both of which threaten care quality for enrollees with chronic conditions,” the organization said.

Pacific Research Institute CEO Sally Pipes added that Medicare for All would lead to longer wait times and higher costs for patients nationwide.

“While Sen. Sanders, the long-term supporter and author of several single-payer health care bills, grandstands, an honest look at ‘Medicare for All’ shows what a disaster it would be for America’s patients – higher costs, long waiting lists, less access to care, unaffordable taxes, a doctor shortage and lower-quality care,” Pipes said.