

Medicare Consumers Call on Sen. Ron Johnson To Fix Looming Premium Hike

Written by Citizen Action of Wisconsin, Robert Kraig

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Consumers deliver boxes of empty prescription drug bottles filled with consumer stories and appeals to fix Medicare premiums, prescription drug costs, and to leave ACA alone.

STATEWIDE - At Senator Ron Johnson's Milwaukee office on Thursday, Citizen Action of Wisconsin joined the Wisconsin Alliance for Retired Americans and Medicare consumers to deliver hundreds of prescription pill bottles filled with appeals from Wisconsinites to fix the upcoming Medicare premium hike that will impact [1 out of 7 Medicare recipients](#) .

If no action is taken by Congress, an over 50% premium increase will take effect next year causing 15 million Medicare recipients, including 630,000 Wisconsinites to see the largest premium increase in the program's 50 year history.

Senator Tammy Baldwin [has already proposed action](#) that would protect these consumers from historic premium increases, however so far Senator Ron Johnson has not signed on to this or any other legislation to fix this Medicare premium hike.

To encourage Senator Johnson to help seniors, consumers' delivered pill bottles containing stories and appeals from Wisconsinites across the state pleading for action, as well as what can be done to solve this potential crisis. Each bottle included the following messages to Senator Johnson:

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Stop trying to repeal the Affordable Care Act, which would further damage Medicare.

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Allow Medicare to negotiate the cost of prescription drugs.

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Support S.2148 - Protecting Medicare Beneficiaries Act of 2015 - or any other equivalent legislation to correct this Medicare premium hike.

The cause of this crisis is no cost of living increase in Social Security coupled with conservatives failure to address the cost of prescription drugs and the overall cost of healthcare, which has impacted all areas of health coverage not just Medicare.

“The high cost of prescription drugs and healthcare threatens many of those who thought they were protected by one of the nation’s most effective health programs, solely because of Congressional inaction,” said Kevin Kane, Lead Organizer at Citizen Action of Wisconsin. “Instead of continuing efforts to repeal the Affordable Care Act, which will only make the issue worse, members of Congress need to fix real issues like this Medicare premium spike and the high prescription drug costs.”

Those who may see this largest premium increase in Medicare’s history next year [include](#) :

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Consumers new to Medicare

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Families with higher income

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Medicare recipients who do not yet collect a Social Security check

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Beneficiaries who are directly billed for their Medicare Part B premium; and

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Consumers who qualify for both Medicare & Medicaid, whose full premiums are paid by state Medicaid programs

“This threatened premium increase is very unnerving to people on Medicare like myself because consumers aren't really clear who exactly will be impacted,” said Molly Canary, a Medicare recipient, advocate and member of Citizen Action’s Organizing Cooperative. “Health care costs so much already, Senator Ron Johnson should be working with leaders like Senator Tammy Baldwin to protect Wisconsin’s seniors and people with disabilities.”