

Happy Birthday, Medicare and Medicaid!

Written by Patty Schachtner, State Senator 10th District
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<http://newiproggressive.com/images/stories/S5/medicare-patient-s5.jpg>



Northwestern Wisconsin's new Senator Patty Schachtner talks about these crucial health care coverage programs and how we need to expand access to them.

SOMERSET, WI - Medicare and Medicaid will celebrate their 53rd birthday on July 30. Since the programs' inception, millions of elderly, low-income, and disabled Americans have benefited from crucial health care coverage. This coverage helps individuals afford hospital stays, fill prescription drugs, and access preventative care.

The proposals, packaged together under the Social Security Amendments of 1965, were signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson in Independence, Missouri. The concept was simple: people would contribute during their working years and insure themselves against health ailments during old age or poverty.

At the time, more than 18 million Americans were age 65 or older, and about a third of all seniors lived in poverty. Many seniors feared that medical expenses would wipe out saving and limited incomes, and almost half of Americans aged 65 and older had no health insurance.

During the bill signing, President Johnson detested the "injustice which denies the miracle of healing to the old and to the poor." The 1965 proposals were to end this perceived injustice, and strengthen the health and economic status of millions of vulnerable Americans.

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