



U.S. Congressman
Nick Rahall
WORKING FOR WEST VIRGINIANS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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RAHALL CALLS FOR PAYBACK OF SHORTCHANGED SENIORS

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- 2 million seniors, including 31,237 West Virginians, are being shortchanged by the federal government according to Families USA Foundation, and Nick Rahall (D-WV) thinks its time the government started paying for its mistake.

"60 percent of West Virginia's seniors are paying \$30 more a month in Social Security than they should and that is scandalous," said Rahall. "So I have introduced legislation that would right the wrong, make the federal government seek out those who are eligible, and pay them back their lost earnings."

According to Rahall, those who are eligible include any one 65 or older who makes less than \$6,620 a year and have less than \$4,000 in assets, or couples who make less than \$8,880 a year and have less than \$6,000 in assets.

Anyone who falls into this category can waive the Medicare payment fee which totals almost \$30 a month, or \$360 a year.

"To our poorest seniors this is no small change," said Rahall. "They deserve this benefit, they deserve to know they qualify, and they deserve a refund. In a court of law they would have a pretty strong case against the Social Security Administration for gross negligence."

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Dear Colleague:

I am sure you were as surprised as I was to learn that the Federal Government had not informed low income Medicare beneficiaries that they may not be liable for their out of pocket health costs. The recently released report by Families, U.S.A. has caused a brief fire storm of protest from many members of the House of Representatives. I joined with over 100 of you in a joint letter to the Secretary expressing our distress at the inaction of the Department.

I have introduced a bill that would require the Federal government to reimburse those individuals that are Qualified Medicare Beneficiaries (QMB's), but have not been notified of their eligibility. The bill is designed to compensate poor individuals for a benefit that they should be rightfully receiving, as well as to provide an added incentive for the Department of Health and Human Services to begin notifying people about this important program.

Under the current law, State Medicaid funds pay for the out of pocket medical costs of a Medicare beneficiary enrolled as a QMB. Since my bill requires the Federal Government to reimburse beneficiaries, the States will not be burdened by undue costs to their Medicaid funds. If a State/Federal program is going to truly work toward serving the people, both governments must hold up their end of the deal. In the case of the QMB program, the federal government has been lacking in its efforts. For this reason we should seriously address the injustice of forcing the destitute to pay costs for which they are not liable.

If you would like to join with me as a cosponsor of this bill, please let me or David Mallino of my staff know at 5-3452.

With warm regards, I am

Sincerely,

NICK J. RAHALL, II
Member of Congress