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Statement by Medicare Rights Center President Joe Baker on House and Senate Budget Resolutions

New York, NY—The budgets released this week by House and Senate Republicans would undermine the Medicare program, now in its 50th year. While both budgets are lacking in critical details, the frameworks presented all but guarantee significant harm to older adults, people with disabilities, and their families.

The budget released by Congressman Price repeats on an old theme: ending Medicare as we know it. The Price plan would replace Medicare's guaranteed health benefits with a voucher (or premium support) that beneficiaries would use to purchase coverage through private health plans. This privatization scheme could grind away at traditional Medicare, funneling younger and healthier retirees into private health plans and leaving older, sick beneficiaries in the traditional Medicare program. Providing coverage for this vulnerable population could make traditional Medicare more expensive and less able to compete. In short, the Price budget preserves traditional Medicare, only to allow it to wither on the vine.

Senator Enzi's budget resolution is scant on details—instead, suggesting \$435 billion in unnamed Medicare cuts. While unspecified, the magnitude of these cuts threatens the health and economic security of current and future generations of Medicare beneficiaries.

In addition to substantial Medicare changes, both budgets would repeal the Affordable Care Act (ACA)—meaning 16.4 million Americans would lose health care coverage entirely. The budget resolutions released by House and Senate Republicans would return our country to an era where older adults not yet age 65 and people with disabilities are unable to secure health insurance as they wait for Medicare.

In this landmark year, the 54 million seniors and people with disabilities who rely on Medicare are owed a budget blueprint that commits to securing the program's future through responsible savings. As budget negotiations move forward, we urge Congress to secure lower prices on Medicare prescription drugs and to advance the value-based delivery reforms already underway thanks to health care reform.