

Majority of doctors in USA support single payer. But not one of the 19 doctors in Congress support it. Why not?

By Citizen Staff

Polls show that the majority of Americans favor a single payer Medicare for All system, similar to the one adopted by most industrialized countries – everybody in, nobody out, no premiums, no deductibles, free choice of doctor and hospital.

In addition, the majority of doctors in most polls support single payer.

But historically, the main organization of physicians and medical students in the United States – the American Medical Association – has opposed it.

Back in the 1960s, when there was an early push to create Medicare for seniors, doctors hired Ronald Reagan to help defeat the idea.

“One of the traditional methods of imposing statism or socialism on a people, has been by way of medicine,” Reagan said at the time. “It’s very easy to disguise a medical program as a humanitarian project.”

In 2019, the student section of the AMA forced a vote on single payer.

During the debate, Dr. Donald Palmisano, of Metairie, Louisiana, who served as AMA president in 2003-04, said – “I think we ought to put a stake in the heart of single payer. We’ve done it before and we ought to do it again.”

The measure was defeated 53 percent to 47 percent.

But that’s still 47 percent of doctors in the most conservative doctors’ organization in the United States voting for it.

So then how do you explain this?

Of the nineteen physicians who serve United States Congress – fifteen members of the House and four Senators, sixteen Republicans and three Democrats – there is zero support single payer.

That’s according to a survey conducted by *Capitol Hill Citizen*.

“The fact that none of the physicians in Congress support Medicare for All indicates just how out of step those legislators are with their constituents and with physicians,” Dr. Philip Verhoef, President of Physicians for a National Health Program, told *Capitol Hill Citizen*. “These physicians know full well that our system isn’t working for doctors or patients.”

“Poll after poll indicates that both the majority of physicians and the public support single

payer – it’s equitable, it saves money, it’s much easier to navigate, and it will remove the barriers to care currently faced by so many in this country.”

There are no Republicans in Congress – physician or not – who support single payer. One hundred and twelve Democrats in the House have signed onto the single payer bill there (HR 3421). Not on the list are the three Democratic physicians in the House.

Fourteen Senators – all Democrats – have signed onto the single payer bill in the Senate – (S. 1655).

Senator John Barrasso (R-Wyoming)

Medical specialty: Orthopedic surgery

Barrasso served as President of the Wyoming Medical Society. Barrasso is opposed to Medicare for All. When speaking against it, Barrasso uses insurance industry talking points – including that Medicare for all would put “the federal government, Washington, D.C., in charge of personal health care decisions.” In fact, single payer would allow for free choice of doctors and hospitals.

Congressman Ami Bera (D-California)

Medical specialty: Internal medicine

Congressman Bera practiced medicine for years in the Sacramento area. As a member of Congress representing the area, Bera’s two largest industry contributors are health professionals and the pharmaceutical industry. He has not signed on as a co-sponsor of Pramila Jayapal (D-Washington) single payer bill in the House (HR 3421).

Congressman Larry Bucshon (R-Indiana)

Medical specialty: Thoracic surgery

Congressman Buschon is opposed to single payer Medicare for All. Buschon’s two largest industry contributors are health professionals and the pharmaceutical industry. He red baits those pushing to have everyone in the country covered – cradle to grave.

In 2019, in response to a push in Congress to pass Medicare for All, Buschon said –



“House Democrats have taken a massive step towards turning American into a socialist nation by introducing their government-run, one-size-fits-all, single-payer health care bill.”

Congressman Michael Burgess (R-Texas)

Medical specialty: Obstetrics and gynecology

Congressman Burgess is opposed to Medicare for All, saying he opposes government-run health care. He doesn’t say he’s opposed to Medicare for seniors though. “My dad left Canada’s socialized medicine system behind for the United States because he saw how centralized government control of health care impeded access to quality care for patients,” he writes. Three of Burgess’ top four industry campaign contributors are the pharmaceutical industry, health services/HMOs, and health care professionals.

Congresswoman Yadira Caraveo (D-Colorado)

Medical specialty: Pediatrics

Caraveo says she has dedicated her life to serving Colorado families – first as a doctor, and now as the first representative of Colorado’s new 8th Congressional District.

In 2022, she made history by becoming Colorado’s first Latina federal representative.

“After a particularly difficult fight with an insurance compa-

ny, Caraveo was driven to run for elected office so she could advocate for systemic change that would help her patients and community,” her staff says.

But not single payer systemic. Congresswoman Caraveo has not signed up with 112 of her House colleagues to co-sponsor the Medicare for All bill in the House (HR 3421).

Senator Bill Cassidy (R-Louisiana)

Medical specialty: Gastroenterology

Bill Cassidy is a single payer red-baiter.

As in: “So-called ‘Medicare for all’ may sound nice, but adding the entire country to a program already projected to run out of money in just seven years is a recipe for rationed care and Medicare for none. Why would anyone see what socialism has done to the people of Venezuela and think, ‘I want America to be more like that?’”

Congressman Scott DesJarlais (R-Tennessee)

Medical specialty: Family medicine

Single payer would give improved Medicare to everyone. But Congressman Scott DesJarlais tries to scare seniors by writing that “Medicare for All would replace Medicare and every other insurance plan with a one-size-fits-all government-administered system like

the VA.”

That’s not true, but not a bad idea. In fact many single payer advocates are now advocating for a national health service plan like the VA.

“Seniors who paid into Medicare would lose the coverage and benefits they currently claim,” DesJarlais said.

Except that it would be replaced by better Medicare with no co-pays or deductibles – and it would cover vision, hearing and dental -- the three items that Medicare Disadvantage currently uses to entice seniors into that private program.

Congressman Neal Dunn (R-Florida)

Medical specialty: Urology

The three biggest industry contributors to Congressman Dunn are lobbyists, the pharmaceutical industry and health professionals. He is opposed to Medicare for All, would repeal Obamacare and replace it with free market solutions. Medicare is fine, but not for everyone, Congressman Dunn says.

Congressman Mark Green (R-Tennessee)

Medical specialty: Emergency medicine

Congressman Green is opposed to Medicare for All, which he refers to as “socialized medicine.” In an op-ed for FoxNews.com in July 2019, Dr. Green used the term “socialized medicine” four times in the op-ed and

once in the headline – “I’m an ER doctor, here’s why socialized medicine would be a total disaster for America.” Green is a big supporter of Israel and the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) is his top campaign donor.

For Dr. Green, socialized medicine is good for Israel and the rest of the world, but not for his constituents in Tennessee?

Congressman Andy Harris (R-Maryland)

Medical specialty: Anesthesiology

Congressman Andy Harris to a group of conservative activists in 2019: “If you Like the DMV, you’ll love Medicare for All.”

He didn’t say – if you like the DMV, you’ll love Medicare.

Because he’s not opposed to Medicare. He’s opposed to improved Medicare for All.

“Medicare for All will result in care for none,” Harris said.

Really – care for none? His two largest campaign contributors are retired people and health professionals.

Congressman Ronny Jackson (R-Texas)

Medical specialty: Emergency medicine

Jackson served as Physician to the President from 2013 to 2018 under Barack Obama and Donald Trump. He ran and won a seat for Congress in 2020 and is opposed to single payer Medicare for All. Trump nomi-

nated him to head the Veterans Administration, but he withdrew after an inspector general report found that Jackson had engaged in “inappropriate conduct” while serving as the top White House physician.

Congressman John Joyce (R-Pennsylvania)

Medical specialty: Dermatology

Congressman Joyce has appeared on national media repeatedly defaming Medicare for All, which he strenuously opposes. He talks about the costs of a single payer, but never about the savings. He talks about government bureaucracy but never talks about health insurance industry bureaucracy. He trashes Medicare for All, but not Medicare.

The two largest industry campaign contributors to Congressman Joyce’s campaigns are health professionals and the pharmaceutical industry.

Senator Roger Marshall (R-Kansas)

Medical specialty: Obstetrics and gynecology

Senator Marshall opposes single payer Medicare for All.

In 2020, he said that “Both Democrats and Republicans want to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act. Democrats want to double down and take more steps toward replacing our health care system with ‘Medicare For All’, which means less health care for se-

ward off cuts to Medicare, she is opposed to spreading the wealth through a Medicare for All plan.

Miller-Meeks stood with her Big Pharma allies and opposed allowing Medicare to negotiate lower prescription drug prices, which would lower costs for lowans at a time when they need it most.

Congressman Greg Murphy (R-North Carolina)

Medical specialty: Urology

Murphy is strongly against Medicare for All. He uses insurance industry talking points to make his case.

“Since Democrats took control of Congress, their primary healthcare strategy has been to impose a one-size-fits-all approach that fails to empower patients and their doctors to do what is best,” he says.

(Note to Congressman Murphy: Medicare for All is explicitly free choice of doctor and hospital.)

Murphy’s biggest chunks of campaign cash come from retired people, health professionals and the pharmaceutical industry.

Rich McCormick (R-Georgia)

Medical specialty: Emergency medicine

Congressman McCormick is vehemently opposed to single payer national health insurance. On his official Congressional web page, Congressman McCormick puts it this way: “As a practicing physician, Rich knows that our healthcare system is the best in the world and that the last thing we can afford is the Joe Biden-Bernie Sanders single-payer healthcare scheme.”

Congressman McCormick should change his web page. President Biden stands with him opposed to single payer. During the 2020 campaign, Biden famously said that if he became President and Congress sent him a single payer bill, he would veto it.

Don’t worry Dr. Rich, President Biden has your back.

Congresswoman Marianne Miller-Meeks (R-Iowa)

Medical specialty: Ophthalmology

While Congresswoman Miller-Meeks has joined hands with her Democratic colleagues to

Paul said. “I am a physician. You have a right to come to my house and conscript me. It means you believe in slavery. You are going to enslave not only me but the janitor at my hospital, the person who cleans my office, the assistants, the nurses. ... You are basically saying you believe in slavery.”

Congressman Raul Ruiz (D-California)

Medical specialty: Emergency medicine

Beware: “I’m for universal health care” is a political term of art.

Translated into plain English it means – I’m a Democrat, and I’m opposed to Medicare for All.

Take the case of Congressman Ruiz.

“If a person is sick, they should be able to get the care that they need,” he told reporters in 2017. “Single-payer or Medicare for all is one method that people are talking about to maybe achieve that goal. I don’t know if that’s the best one. I’m open to conversations about the methods that we could use in order to reach the idea that health is a human right and that at some level we should be concerned about the common good to provide health care for our community members and our neighbors.”

He has not joined his 112 colleagues who have signed onto Congresswoman Jayapal’s single payer bill in the House (HR 3421).

Senator Rand Paul (R-Kentucky)

Medical specialty: Ophthalmology

Senator Rand Paul is an ideological opponent of Medicare for All.

Paul garnered headlines in 2019 when he went to get a hernia operation at the famed Shoultice Hospital outside Toronto in Canada, home to Dr. Tommy Douglas and his famed Medicare for All system in Canada.

“This is a private, world-renowned hospital separate from any system and people come from around the world to pay cash for their services,” a Rand spokesperson told reporters at the time.

True as far as it goes. But Shoultice takes in a big chunk of its revenue from the single payer system in Ontario – in this case the Ontario Hospital Insurance Plan (OHIP).

In 2011, Paul compared the right to health care – which is the moral foundation for Medicare for All – to “slavery.”

“With regard to the idea whether or not you have a right to health care you have to realize what that implies,”

Congresswoman Kim Schrier (D-Washington)

Medical specialty: Pediatrics

Schrier is opposed to single payer, but wouldn’t mind allowing people to buy into a single payer. This is known as the public option. According to Physicians for a National Health Program (PNHP), the public option doesn’t guarantee coverage for all, it doesn’t eliminate co-pays and deductibles, it doesn’t insure all necessary care, it doesn’t insure choice of doctor, and it doesn’t control costs without compromising access to care.

So, it fails. But many liberal Democrats, like Congresswoman Schrier, are public option advocates. It too will go down with the sinking ship known as health care in America. **CHC**