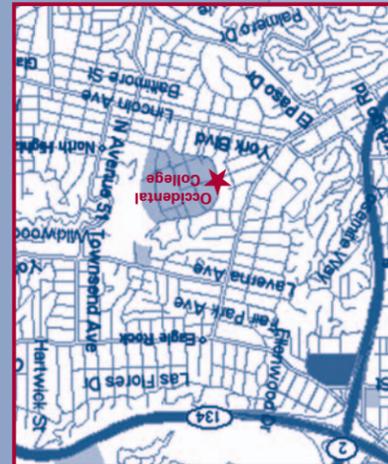


“MEDICARE MATTERS ... AND I INTEND TO FIGHT FOR IT.” — Congressman Xavier Becerra



COME WITH YOUR QUESTIONS. IT'S SURE TO BE AN EDUCATIONAL MORNING.
 For maps and directions, please visit www.house.gov/becerra.
 If you have further questions, or require special accommodations at the Forum, please call Congressman Becerra's office at (213) 483-1425.

Representatives Becerra and Stark will be joined by other Members of Congress from Los Angeles County to hear from advocates, experts and beneficiaries as they discuss the current and future state of our nation's Medicare system.

Hosted by Congressman Xavier Becerra (CA - 31), member of the Ways and Means Committee Special Guest: Congressman Pete Stark (CA - 13), Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on Health and Senior Member of the Ways and Means Committee

**OCCIDENTAL COLLEGE — THORNE HALL
 1600 CAMPUS ROAD
 LOS ANGELES, CA 90041**

MEDICARE: TODAY AND TOMORROW
 A forum on the current state of our nation's Medicare system and the future of this important government program.
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 13, 2003
 Doors open at 10:30 a.m. Forum begins at 11 a.m.

You are cordially invited to join Congressman Becerra at:

CONGRESSMAN XAVIER BECERRA
 U.S. House of Representatives
 Washington, D.C. 20515



How to Contact Congressman Becerra

IN LOS ANGELES
 1910 Sunset Blvd., #560
 Los Angeles, CA 90026
 (213) 483-1425

IN WASHINGTON D.C.
 1119 Longworth HOB
 Washington, D.C. 20515
 (202) 225-6235

www.house.gov/becerra


**M.C.
 PRSRT STD**

**CONGRESSMAN XAVIER BECERRA:
 “MEDICARE MATTERS ...”**

This mailing was prepared, published and mailed at taxpayer expense. Printed on recycled paper with soybean ink.



Dear Friend:

On July 30, 1965, President Lyndon Johnson affixed his signature to a law that created our nation's Medicare system. Next to Social Security, there is no federal program that is of greater importance to Americans, and ensuring proper healthcare for our nation's seniors should be a top priority of our government.

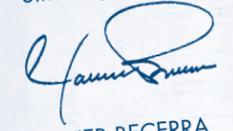
Times, however, change ... and priorities evolve. Thirty-eight years ago, Congress did not include a prescription drug component to Medicare, as medications simply weren't that common and indispensable. The world is very different now and we know the important role prescription drugs play in enhancing, and in many cases, extending, human life.

But that improved quality of life has not come without considerable cost. Prescription drugs are expensive, and for many Americans, painfully so. Seniors deserve a comprehensive Medicare program that not only guarantees that they have access to a doctor and hospital, but also to affordable prescription drugs that their doctors prescribe.

The debate in Congress over the future of Medicare is in full swing and there are two very different plans on the discussion table right now. Inside this newsletter you'll find a comparison chart of the two plans. One plan works within the Medicare program and amends it to include guaranteed prescription drug coverage on top of the healthcare coverage it already provides. That's the Democratic plan. The other plan – the Republican plan – would work through HMOs and other private insurance companies by paying them to offer a prescription drug plan or to add prescription drug coverage to their available plans.

Republicans have become more open about their intentions to privatize Medicare. Simply put, their plan is wrong. Medicare matters and has done so much good for so many people – and I intend to fight for it. Our nation's leaders need to know the true thoughts and feelings of Americans like you. I encourage you to contact the President, your United States Senators, and me to let us know your views on this very important subject.

Sincerely,



XAVIER BECERRA
 Member of Congress

P.S. You can start making your voice heard by attending the Medicare forum I am hosting on Wednesday, August 13, at Occidental College with other Members of Congress, including Congressman Pete Stark (CA - 13), ranking member of the Subcommittee on Health and one of the nation's foremost leaders on healthcare policy. I'm looking forward to your participation.

Si desea esta información en español, por favor llame al (213) 483-1425.

COMPETING MEDICARE PRESCRIPTION DRUG PROPOSALS

	DEMOCRATIC PLAN H.R. 1199	REPUBLICAN PLAN H.R. 1
Who Runs the Plan?	Medicare would cover prescription drugs as a new, voluntary Part D benefit.	Beneficiaries must use private insurance companies like HMO's for drug coverage.
Monthly Premium	\$25	\$35 "estimated," but insurance companies may set higher premiums.
Deductible (annual)	\$100	\$250
Out of pocket	Beneficiary pays 20% of drug costs until \$2,000 in out-of-pocket costs have been paid. After \$2,000, the beneficiary pays 0%.	Beneficiary pays 20% of drug costs up to \$2,000, then must pay 100% of drug costs from \$2,000 to \$3,500. After \$3,500, the beneficiary pays 0%.
Catastrophic Coverage	When out-of-pocket costs reach \$2,000, 100% of drug costs are covered.	When out of pocket costs exceed \$3,500, 100% of drug costs are covered.
Controlling Costs of Drugs	The Secretary of Health and Human Services uses the collective bargaining clout of 40 million Medicare beneficiaries to negotiate lower drug prices with pharmaceutical companies.	The Secretary of Health and Human Services is prohibited from negotiating lower drug prices.
Fallback Prescription Drug Plan	Provides all beneficiaries the option of a government prescription drug plan.	Does not provide a government fallback prescription drug plan in regions where two private drug plans fail to emerge.
Effect on existing employer based prescription drug plans for retirees	No negative effect.	Any payments made by a plan sponsored by a retiree's former employer for prescription drugs would not be counted towards the point at which full coverage begins. Retirees would receive significantly less assistance from the Medicare Rx program than other seniors.

COST TO SENIOR CITIZENS

Yearly Drug Costs	Out-of-Pocket Costs: Democratic Plan	Out-of-Pocket Costs: Republican Plan	DIFFERENCE
\$1,500	\$680	\$920	H.R. 1199 saves seniors \$240
\$3,000	\$980	\$2,020	H.R. 1199 saves seniors \$1,040
\$4,500	\$1,280	\$3,520	H.R. 1199 saves seniors \$2,240
\$12,000+	\$2,300	\$3,920	H.R. 1199 saves seniors \$1,620

Which Plan Would You Choose?

COMMUNITY BULLETIN BOARD – NEWS STRAIGHT FROM THE 31ST DISTRICT



HONORABLE APPOINTMENTS

High School students who wish to attend one of the nation's four military academies must be nominated by their member of Congress. This year, four of Congressman Becerra's constituents whom he nominated received appointments: Anthony Mattazaro, Adam Flick and Yoon Um received appointments to West Point; and Matthew LeBlanc, received an appointment to the United States Air Force Academy. **Way to go Anthony, Adam, Yoon and Matthew!**

Congressman Becerra proudly congratulates with (from left right) Matthew LeBlanc, Yoon Um, Anthony Mattazaro, and Adam Flick.



REV. MEDINA GOES TO WASHINGTON

Serves as Guest Chaplain to the House of Representatives

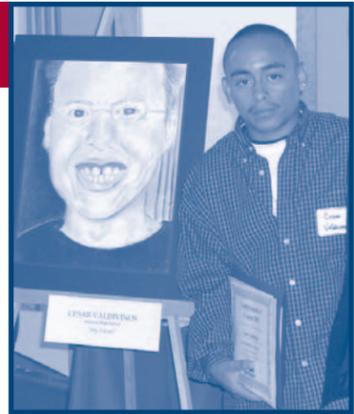
The Very Reverend Ernesto Medina, provost for the Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles, served as guest chaplain and led the United States House of Representatives in its opening prayer on June 5, 2003. Congressman Becerra nominated Rev. Medina to serve in that capacity saying, "Rev. Medina is more than just the pastor of the Cathedral Center of St. Paul – he is neighbor, friend, and indispensable spiritual leader in the community of Echo Park in Los Angeles." **Thank you for your service, Rev. Medina!**

Congressman Becerra and Rev. Medina stand on the steps on the Capitol Building minutes before Rev. Medina delivered the opening prayer to the House of Representatives on June 5.

"MY FRIEND" GETS 1ST PLACE

Jefferson High School senior Cesar Valdovinos won this year's 31st Congressional District Art Competition. Cesar joined Congressman Becerra in Washington, D.C. in June for the annual national awards program. His painting, titled "My Friend," will hang in the Capitol Building for one year. **Congratulations, Cesar!**

For those high school students interested in taking part in Congressman Becerra's 2004 art competition, put a call into his office to get more information.



COFFEE TALK

Congressman Becerra recently hosted a "Coffee With Your Congressman" meeting, where he invited residents of Highland Park to join him for a morning of "town hall" discussion. Social Security, the war with Iraq, federal budget deficits – these were just a few of the subjects raised by the attendees. Upcoming "Coffee With Your Congressman" town hall meetings will be taking place in your neighborhood. **Look out for your invitation.**



Over 70 constituents attended Congressman Becerra's first "Coffee With Your Congressman."

DATELINE WASHINGTON

January 2003 – Congressman Becerra introduces H.R. 24, "The Bullet Tracing Act to Reduce Gun Violence." The legislation charges the Department of Justice with establishing a system where every gun sold in the United States is first test fired to record ballistics data that is then stored in a database that local law enforcement authorities can access when investigating gun-related crimes. Mayor Jim Hahn, Police Chief William Bratton and the gun control advocacy groups Million Mom March, Women Against Gun Violence and the Brady Campaign to Reduce Gun Violence have endorsed the legislation.

January 2003 – Congressman Becerra is named Vice Chair of the Congressional Diabetes Caucus. With over 289 members, the bipartisan Congressional Diabetes Caucus is the largest of all the caucus' in the U.S. House of Representatives.

February 2003 – The Community Law Enforcement and Recovery (CLEAR) program receives a \$1.5 million federal appropriation toward existing programs and \$1 million toward a new program at the Hollenbeck Division of the

Los Angeles Police Department. CLEAR is a neighborhood gang-related activity program that is sponsored by the City of Los Angeles, the LAPD and the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department. Congressman Becerra played an integral role in helping secure these funds.

April 2003 – Two million dollars appropriated for LA's BEST (Better Educated Students for Tomorrow), the innovative after-school program for at-risk youth that addresses the alarming rise in street gangs, school dropouts and drug use in communities where children lack adequate adult supervision during the critical hours between 3 and 6 p.m. Congressman Becerra was instrumental in helping make these funds a reality.

April 2003 – Congressman Becerra introduces H.R. 1782, Expanding and Improving the Earned Income Tax Credit. The legislation would increase the amount of the earned income tax credit for modest income working Americans and create a new benefit level for those families with three or more children.

May 2003 – Congressman Becerra secures a federal appropriation of \$240,000 for Los Angeles City College toward construction costs for a satellite campus to be built at the old Van de Camp bakery building in Atwater Village that will serve as a community health facility offering preventative screenings and other health services.

July 2003 – Congressman Becerra introduces H.R. 2674, "Librarian Education and Development Act of 2003." If signed into law, the LEAD Act would help pay off student loans for those men and women who become librarians in low-income areas throughout the country.

July 2003 – Congressman Becerra introduces H.R. 2815, the Brownfields Remediation Act of 2003. The legislation would make the tax incentive for cleaning up and redeveloping "brownfields" (contaminated, abandoned properties) permanent. This tax incentive for environmental cleanup is a valuable tool for improving the livability and economic prospects of blighted, decaying communities and reclaiming idle land for more productive uses.