LOS ANGELES—Representative Xavier Becerra (CA-31), Vice Chair of the House Democratic Caucus and Ranking Member of the Ways and Means Subcommittee on Social Security, released the following statement today marking the 45th anniversary of the implementation of Medicare. President Johnson signed Medicare into law on July 30, 1965, and then the Medicare program began to be implemented on July 1, 1966.

"Thanks to Medicare, the days when Americans would reach their senior years and find not one insurance company in the country willing to offer them a respectable health insurance plan are history. Today, our seniors are GUARANTEED decent, affordable healthcare by Medicare.

In an age of double-digit premium hikes, pre-existing condition rejections, and microscopic fine print contracts by private insurance companies, the one secure and reliable asset in seniors' corner has been and is Medicare.

Now is the time to strengthen Medicare -- not privatize it or turn it into CouponCare -- to guarantee it is there for the next 45 years securing the well-being of those who built America."