

LOS ANGELES —To mark the 47th anniversary of the signing of Medicare into law, 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. President Lyndon Johnson signed Medicare into law on July 30, 1965.

“For nearly five decades now, Medicare has safeguarded the health and well-being of America’s seniors. Its guarantee of quality, affordable health care has helped Americans live healthier lives with dignity and peace of mind.”

We have come a long way from a time when nearly half of those over 65 years old lacked health coverage. The days when many of America’s seniors were forced to go without or delay care because insurance companies refused to offer coverage are history.

Now more than ever, Congress should remain steadfast in strengthening Medicare, not ending or privatizing it. In 2010, with the passage of the Affordable Care Act, we made important strides in preserving Medicare for today’s seniors and generations to come. But this anniversary is a reminder that we must continue our commitment to those who have contributed a lifetime of hard work to America.”

Medicare currently provides 47 million seniors quality reliable health care. The program was strengthened by the Affordable Care Act which improved it by:

- Closing the so-called prescription drug “donut hole” coverage gap, which through May 2012, saved 5.3 million seniors in Medicare over \$3.7 billion, or an average of \$635 per person, and which will save the average Medicare beneficiary nearly \$4,200 from 2012-2021.

- Removing all co-payments for 32.5 million seniors in Medicare on one or more preventive services, such as check-ups, diabetes tests and cancer screenings.

- Reducing waste, fraud and abuse in the system and delivering more efficient care which strengthened the solvency of the Medicare Trust Fund.

