

Rep. Herger Introduces *Save and Strengthen Medicare Act*

(Washington, D.C.) – Congressman Wally Herger (CA-02), chairman of the House Ways and Means Subcommittee on Health, today introduced [H.R. 6645](#), the *Save and Strengthen Medicare Act of 2012*. The legislation contains five principles of reform—each with a history of bipartisan support—based on the principle that cost savings should be driven by doctors and patients. See attached documents for comprehensive information about the bill. Herger issued the following statement upon introduction:

“I believe our nation’s greatest economic challenges require bold solutions. We need to fundamentally reform the tax code to invigorate economic growth and job creation. And we need to restructure our entitlement programs to preserve them for future generations and to prevent our escalating debt crisis from crushing our economy.

“Medicare has provided seniors and people with disabilities with vital health coverage for decades. Unfortunately, the program is on an unsustainable path due to an aging population and rising health costs. The average senior couple will receive three times as much in Medicare benefits as they paid into the system in taxes. Without structural reforms, this reverse pyramid will bankrupt the Medicare program and devour resources available for other national priorities. We need to reform this program so our children and grandchildren can continue to look forward to a secure retirement with affordable, high quality health care.

“As the outgoing chairman of the Ways and Means Health Subcommittee, I am introducing the *Save and Strengthen Medicare Act* to highlight the urgent need for Medicare reform and to provide members of Congress with the opportunity to analyze and strengthen a specific plan that would protect the program. The legislation contains five reforms that have been developed and supported by lawmakers and health scholars across the ideological spectrum. Specifically, it modernizes the Medicare benefit; enhances competition and choice in the program to create a level playing field between traditional Medicare and Medicare Advantage plans; targets greater government support to lower-income beneficiaries; reforms Medicare’s eligibility for the 21st century; and encourages working Americans to save for their personal retirement health expenses.

“In an era of divided government, I believe it is critical to embrace the best ideas that have been put on the table to date, from any political or ideological quarter. This legislation is not a purely Republican effort. It is not merely a statement of preferences. It is a serious attempt to find a way forward before the entitlement crisis completely detonates. We must work together to meet this historic opportunity to do good for our nation and expend whatever energy necessary in the coming year to protect the Medicare program, our nation’s economy, and the American Dream for future generations of Americans.”