

President Lyndon B. Johnson's Remarks on the Medicare Bill

Name: _____ Date: _____

The following are excerpts from President Lyndon B. Johnson's remarks delivered alongside President Harry S. Truman at the signing the Medicare Bill, July 30, 1965, in Independence, Missouri.

There are more than 18 million Americans over the age of 65. Most of them have low incomes. Most of them are threatened by illness and medical expenses that they cannot afford.

And through this new law, ...every citizen will be able, in his productive years when he is earning, to insure himself against the ravages of illness in his old age.

This insurance will help pay for care in hospitals, in skilled nursing homes, or in the home. And under a separate plan it will help meet the fees of the doctors.

Now here is how the plan will affect you.

During your working years, the people of America—you—will contribute through the social security program a small amount each payday for hospital insurance protection. For example, the average worker in 1966 will contribute about \$1.50 per month. The employer will contribute a similar amount. And this will provide the funds to pay up to 90 days of hospital care for each illness, plus diagnostic care, and up to 100 home health visits after you are 65. And beginning in 1967, you will also be covered for up to 100 days of care in a skilled nursing home after a period of hospital care...

No longer will older Americans be denied the healing miracle of modern medicine. No longer will illness crush and destroy the savings that they have so carefully put away over a lifetime so that they might enjoy dignity in their later years. No longer will young families see their own incomes, and their own hopes, eaten away simply because they are carrying out their deep moral obligations to their parents, and to their uncles, and their aunts.

And no longer will this Nation refuse the hand of justice to those who have given a lifetime of service and wisdom and labor to the progress of this progressive country...

NOTE: As enacted, the Medicare bill (H.R. 6675) is Public Law 89-97 (79 Stat. 286).

Source: Lyndon Baines Johnson Library and Museum. (2007, June 6). President Lyndon B. Johnson's remarks with President Truman at the signing in Independence of the Medicare bill, July 30, 1965. Retrieved from <http://www.lbjlib.utexas.edu/johnson/archives.hom/speeches.hom/650730.asp>