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**83% Of Older Voters Want Medicare To Negotiate Drug Prices,**

**Says Survey By The Senior Citizens League**

*Obamacare Repeal Would Cause Big Price Spikes In the Doughnut Hole*

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**(Washington, DC) –** An overwhelming majority of older voters want Congress to take action to slow sharply rising prescription drug costs, according to a recent survey by The Senior Citizens League (TSCL). Some 83 percent think Medicare should negotiate prescription drug prices for the Part D program. Another 69 percent think the government should prohibit deals that keep generic drugs off the market. “The public thinks Medicare should negotiate drug prices just like the agency does for all other medical goods and services,” says TSCL’s Medicare and Social Security policy analyst, Mary Johnson.

A complete repeal of the Affordable Care Act, known as Obamacare, instead threatens more than 43 million Medicare beneficiaries with sharply spiking drug costs. The 2010 health law includes benefits for Medicare Part D that cover prescription drugs, filling a costly coverage gap commonly referred to as the doughnut hole. “Reopening the doughnut hole would most negatively impact the household budgets of the sickest Medicare patients,” Johnson notes. “For people with limited savings the risk is not having enough to cover basic needs,” she adds.

Under Medicare drug plans, beneficiaries ordinarily pay fixed co-pays or co-insurance for generic and brand – name drugs. In 2017 the standard Medicare drug plan covers a total of $3,700 in retail costs (those paid by both patient and the plan). Once that level of spending is reached, people enter the doughnut hole coverage gap. Under Obamacare, manufacturer prices for brand - name drugs purchased are discounted by 50 percent with drug plan enrollees responsible for a 40 percent co-insurance. Enrollees also pay a 51 percent co-insurance for generics.

“Medicare beneficiaries could lose that coverage in the doughnut hole under an Obamacare repeal,” Johnson explains. In 2017 most Part D plans offer no alternative for gap coverage. “People who fall into the doughnut hole must spend more than $4,950 before they will be protected by Catastrophic Coverage when the cost of the medications are greatly reduced, but still can be substantial. “The average Social Security retiree receives about $1,300 a month,” she notes.

TSCL is urging older Americans to speak out to Members of Congress.

What do you think about proposals to cut Social Security or Medicare benefits? Visit [www.SeniorsLeague.org](http://www.SeniorsLeague.org) to participate in TSCL’s annual [Senior Survey](http://wfc2.wiredforchange.com/o/8854/p/salsa/web/questionnaire/public/?questionnaire_KEY=243http://wfc2.wiredforchange.com/o/8854/p/salsa/web/questionnaire/public/?questionnaire_KEY=243).

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*With 1.2 million supporters, The Senior Citizens League is one of the nation’s largest nonpartisan seniors groups. Its mission is to promote and assist members and supporters, to educate and alert senior citizens about their rights and freedoms as U.S. Citizens, and to protect and defend the benefits senior citizens have earned and paid for. The Senior Citizens League is a proud affiliate of The Retired Enlisted Association. Visit* [*www.SeniorsLeague.org*](http://www.SeniorsLeague.org) *for more information.*