



CRS Report for Congress: Medicare:
Major Prescription Drug Provisions of
Selected Bills: July 10, 2002 - RL31496

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By Jennifer O'Sullivan

BiblioGov. Paperback. Book Condition: New. This item is printed on demand. Paperback. 26 pages. Dimensions: 9.7in. x 7.4in. x 0.1in. Medicare, the nationwide health insurance program for the aged and disabled, does not cover most outpatient prescription drugs. The absence of an adequate prescription drug benefit has been of concern to policymakers since the enactment of Medicare in 1965. On several occasions, the Congress has considered providing coverage for at least a portion of beneficiaries drug costs. The issue has again received attention this year. There are a number of issues driving the prescription drug debate. One of the key concerns in designing a drug benefit is the potential cost and how costs would increase over time. Another issue is the appropriate role of both the federal government and the private sector in assuming the financial risk of coverage and administering the benefit. Some observers suggest that a single uniform drug benefit should be added directly to Medicare's other benefits. Others recommend offering benefits through private plans which could offer different benefit packages provided certain minimum standards were met. A further consideration is whether a major new benefit should be added until structural reforms are made to the Medicare program as...



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