

U.S. SENATOR BOB CASEY



CHAIRMAN Special Committee on Aging

Chairman Bob Casey's Opening Statement
"Improving Care Experiences for People with both Medicare and Medicaid"
February 10, 2022

Good morning. The hearing will come to order. Today's hearing will focus on seniors and people with disabilities who depend on both Medicare and Medicaid as their lifeline. Over 12 million Americans are eligible for both Medicare and Medicaid, including almost half a million in Pennsylvania. These Americans are expected to know which services Medicare covers, which services Medicaid covers, and which services aren't covered at all. They might have one insurance card for their primary care doctor, one for behavioral health, and one for prescription drugs, the list goes on and on. They might have a doctor who takes their Medicare insurance, but not their Medicaid insurance. Not only is this confusing and frustrating, it creates unnecessary hurdles for people trying to get the care that they need. All Americans deserve a health care system they can actually use, not one rife with stumbling blocks.

We will hear today from Jane Doyle, from northeastern Pennsylvania, not far from where I live. She lives in Monroe County, in the northeastern corner of our state. Jane will share her harrowing story of navigating the complexity of these benefits, not only for herself but also as a caregiver for her mother. She will also describe how she lives in fear that her doctors, who she trusts to keep her healthy, will no longer take her coverage. We will

also hear from Dennis Heaphy about how his coverage that combines Medicare and Medicaid and how that lets him remain independent. But it was quite a road to get that independence. Certainly, there is work to be done. Jane's experience and Dennis's story make that clear.

I am grateful that Senator Scott and I agree on this point. Today, we are introducing the PACE Expanded Act. This bill would reduce administrative barriers that prevent the development and expansion of PACE programs. In Pennsylvania, we call them LIFE programs. But in most of the country, they go by PACE. These programs enable people with Medicare and Medicaid to receive all their benefits through a single organization, providing primary care, long-term care and more in one place. PACE also enables people with a high level of need to stay in the community rather than receiving care in a nursing home, if that is their preference. Indeed, this is the preference for the majority of older adults, as well as people with disabilities.

That is why I am committed to expanding access to home and community-based services. Last year, the Senate passed the American Rescue Plan which included \$12.7 billion in emergency funding for states for these very services. These home and community-based services. States are using these resources to help more seniors and people with disabilities access care, and to pay the heroic home care workers the hazard pay and bonuses that they deserve. So this investment in the Rescue Plan of \$12.7 billion dollars was a good first step, but we need to do more and invest more to ensure people with disabilities and seniors can receive care in their homes. That is why I led 40 Democratic Senators in

introducing the Better Care Better Jobs Act last year, that's bill S. 2210. This bill would make a permanent investment in home and community-based services.

It would help states provide better care for seniors, people with disabilities and their families, and it would ensure there is a strong and supported workforce to provide those services. It would lead ultimately to better care. These are just a few of the many issues faced by people that have to navigate both Medicare and Medicaid. We will hear from several witnesses today who will highlight how we can continue to improve care for all of these Americans.