

# U.S. SENATOR BOB CASEY



CHAIRMAN Special Committee on Aging

## **The Cutting Copays Act**

*U.S. Senator Bob Casey*

### **Why Do We Need the Cutting Copays Act?**

Nearly [90% of older adults](#) take prescription drugs, and more than half report taking four or more prescription drugs. While the majority of older adults have prescription drug coverage, many still struggle to afford their medications.

Over 20 percent of older adults who take prescription drugs say it is difficult to afford their medications, with about one in ten saying it is “very difficult.” In 2022, due to cost, some older adults had to forgo basic needs or go into debt to afford prescription drugs. Additionally, nearly [one in five](#) older adults had not taken their medications as prescribed at some point in the past year. Older adults either did not fill their prescription, took an over-the-counter drug, cut pills in half, or skipped a dose. Skipping doses, taking smaller doses, or swapping medications for over the counter drugs can negatively affect chronic disease prevention and management among older adults, contributing to higher risk of renal disease, coronary artery disease, and peripheral vascular disease.

### **The Medicare Part D Low-Income Subsidy Program**

The Medicare Low-Income Subsidy (LIS) Program, also known as Extra Help, is a Medicare program that helps low-income Medicare Part D beneficiaries with their premiums, deductibles, and coinsurance. [Across the country in 2021](#), over 13.8 million Americans were enrolled in the LIS Program. Beneficiaries qualify for the LIS Program if they have full Medicaid coverage, get help from their state for Part B premiums, or receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI). Other beneficiaries with income and resources below a certain limit may also be eligible.

Currently, the lowest income LIS beneficiaries pay up to \$1.55 for each generic drug. These copays can still be a financial burden for low-income beneficiaries.

### **What Does the Cutting Copays Act Do?**

The Cutting Copays Act would remove generic drug copays for the lowest income LIS beneficiaries, further reducing the financial burden for low-income individuals and families.