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Towns

Congressman weighs in on coming changes to Medicare

By Carlos Querido , Special to The Herald

04/10/2004

WETHERSFIELD -- Senior citizens packed into the community center Wednesday and heard their U.S. representative tell them there are many flaws in the Medicare Act of 2003.

"We need to change this law, because it is so unfair," Congressman John Larson, D-1st District, said.

Larson's presentation began with a short video that described the challenges seniors have regarding prescription drugs and health insurance.

The Medicare Act of 2003, signed into law by President George W. Bush, goes into effect in 2006. It implements the greatest changes to Medicare since the program was established in 1965, according to the video.

Larson, who voted against the law, said he will fight to change some of its provisions before and after it goes into effect.

This May, seniors on Medicare will begin to receive information about a new discount drug card, part of the Medicare Act, designed to provide financial relief for prescription drugs until the new law takes effect.

According to Judith Stein of the Center for Medicare Advocacy, who joined Larson at the community center, the cards will offer discounts on certain drugs only and drug companies will be able to change their discounts every seven days.

"It is a moving target," Stein said of the discount drug card.

Larson told the gathering that public officials have a "moral responsibility" to make sure the nation's seniors are well cared for. He mentioned that the senior generation made this nation what it is today, and that is the least the government can do to repay them.

For more information about the Medicare Act of 2003, call the Center for Medicare Advocacy Hotline at 1-800-262-4414 or call the office in Willimantic at (860) 456-7790.

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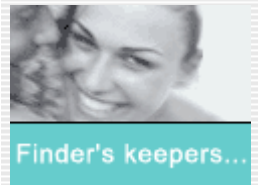
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