The Better Care Reconciliation Act would take health care away from many older South Dakotans.

The Better Care Reconciliation Act of 2017 (BCRA) would make it harder for older adults in South Dakota to afford the health care they need. Under the BCRA:

Older South Dakotans may lose access to nursing home care, home health care, and other services that help them maintain their independence.

- Proposed cuts to Medicaid would slash federal funding by $772 billion, forcing states to cut important services for older adults, such as long-term services and supports.
- Medicaid is the primary payer for 52% of nursing facilities in South Dakota.
- Approximately 11,972 South Dakotans received long-term services and supports through Medicaid.
- About 9.7% of South Dakota’s Medicaid beneficiaries are older adults; approximately 14,000 people ages 50-64 and 13,000 seniors in South Dakota benefit from Medicaid.
- The proposed Medicaid cuts will deepen even more severely starting in 2025, just as “baby boomers” start turning 80. Cuts of 35% by 2036 will make it impossible for South Dakota to meet the needs of its growing aging population. By 2025, the number of South Dakotans over age 65 is expected to grow by 32.6%, and the number over 85, a population that relies on long-term services and supports, is expected to grow 8.9%.

Older adults may not be able to afford to pay their health insurance premiums.

- As of 2016, 8,000 South Dakotans ages 50-64 received tax credits to purchase coverage through the Marketplace. Nationwide, one in four people (26%) enrolled in Marketplace plans are ages 55-64.
- For a 60-year-old living in Pierre, South Dakota with an income of $30,000/year, net insurance premiums for a Silver plan after tax credits could rise by 183% in 2020. Net premiums for a bronze plan could change from $0 to $3,110.
- By changing the 3:1 limit on age rating to 5:1 (or higher if state law permits), premiums for older adults would increase relative to younger adults. This “age tax” by itself would raise premiums in South Dakota by $2,662 annually for a 60-year-old.

There would be fewer resources to fund Medicare.

- BCRA includes a huge tax cut, totaling $58 billion, for wealthy individuals that will harm Medicare’s financing in the short- and long-term, putting people with Medicare at risk for benefit cuts.
- BCRA opens the door to premium support which would likely put the 20% of South Dakotans ages 50-64 at risk for paying higher out-of-pocket costs once they enroll in Medicare.
- Older South Dakotans cannot afford to pay more for health care. The median personal income among South Dakotans ages 65 and older in 2015 was $23,000.