

**MEDICARE
Comparison of Candidates' Proposals**

Bush-Cheney¹	Kerry-Edwards²
General approach	
Supports greater role for private plans under Medicare to give seniors greater choice of health plans.	Supports giving seniors a choice of a health plan that's right for them. Opposes privatization of Medicare that causes benefit cutbacks. Opposes forcing seniors into HMOs to get drug benefits or affordable premiums.
Market competition	
Supports competition between Medicare private plans and the traditional FFS program. Supported increasing payments to private plans that contract with Medicare.	Opposes competition between private health plans and the traditional Medicare FFS program. Opposes higher payments to private plans that contract with Medicare.
Part B premiums	
Supported increasing the Part B premium for beneficiaries with higher incomes.	No position announced.
Medicare Drug Benefit	
Opposes direct government negotiation of prices; supports relying on competition between private plans to control drug costs.	Supports direct government negotiation of drug prices.

Note: The Bush-Cheney GOP Platform does not include any new Medicare initiatives. The positions in this table are based on the President's policies leading to the enactment of the Medicare Modernization Act of 2003.

¹ "Offering Health Care & Prescription Drug Choices," www.georgewbush.com; "The Budget for Fiscal Year 2005," OMB, February, 2004; "President Bush Plans More Choices & Better Benefits for Medicare," www.GOP.com.

² "A Plan to Protect & Strengthen Medicare & Social Security," www.INSIDEHEALTHPOLICY.COM, August 5, 2004; "The 2004 Democratic National Platform Committee Report," DNC, July, 2004; "A Plan for Stronger, Healthier Seniors," www.johnkerry.com, August, 2004.