

Resource 4 (2 of 2)**Individual Responsibility, Social Responsibility, and Medicare**

Teacher's Guide

Use the handout “Presidential Viewpoints on Medicare” to answer the following questions. For each question, provide a relevant section from the reading, along with an explanation of that section in your own words. *Important: There will be multiple (and often conflicting) answers for each question.*

- ▶ Whose responsibility is it to provide for the nation's elderly?

Students' answers could include the following:

- *The nation has a common commitment to preserve the basic protections of Medicare and a fundamental obligation to provide Medicare to those who need it. (William J. Clinton)*
- *Medicare is a binding commitment of a caring society. . . . to provide seniors access to preventive medicine and new drugs. (George W. Bush)*

- ▶ Is Medicare reform necessary? If so, how should it be reformed?

Students' answers could include the following:

- *Yes, but only as a stopgap measure until the entire health care system is reformed. (William J. Clinton)*
- *Yes, to improve our health care system, we must address one of the prime causes of higher cost, the constant threat that physicians and hospitals will be unfairly sued. (George W. Bush)*
- *Yes, we've got to eliminate waste wherever we find it and make some tough decisions about worthy priorities. (Barack H. Obama)*

- ▶ What trade-offs must the nation make to preserve Medicare?

Students' answers could include the following:

- *There must be planned cuts in payments to providers, to doctors, to hospitals, to labs, as a way of controlling health care costs. (William J. Clinton)*
- *Instead of bureaucrats and trial lawyers and HMOs, we must put doctors and nurses and patients back in charge of American medicine. (George W. Bush)*
- *Before we ask our seniors to pay more for health care . . . it's only fair to ask an oil company or a corporate jet owner that has done so well to give up a tax break that no other business enjoys. (Barack H. Obama)*