



Leadership Council of Aging Organizations

January 26, 2010

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader Reid and Speaker Pelosi:

The Leadership Council of Aging Organizations (LCAO), a coalition of national not-for-profit organizations representing nearly 60 million older Americans, greatly appreciates your leadership in the monumental effort to pass health care reform legislation. The bills approved by the Senate and House would make major advances in the health care provided to older adults. We urge you to continue working to enact historic and comprehensive health care reform that includes these long overdue improvements.

The organizations of LCAO continue to inform their members of the critical need to pass a bill this year that ensures high-quality, affordable and accessible health care for older adults and all Americans. In particular, LCAO organizations have communicated to their memberships that a final health care bill could:

- Close the gap in Medicare prescription drug coverage, known as the Part D doughnut hole, which would help millions of seniors afford life-sustaining medicines;
- Phase down Medicare Advantage overpayments, in order to restore fiscal health to the Medicare program without reducing any traditional benefits;
- Allow Medicare to negotiate drug prices, which will help current and future beneficiaries by keeping the program sustainable;
- Help older adults remain independent in their homes and affirm our nation's commitment to the dignity of those dealing with a serious illness or disability through the CLASS program and Medicaid home- and community-based services provisions in the bills already passed;
- Provide needed help to low-income Medicare beneficiaries;
- Restrict the amount insurers can increase premiums based on age;
- Expand affordable coverage options for Americans ages 55 to 64;
- Help employers maintain retiree coverage;
- Improve care coordination for seniors;
- Reduce out-of-pocket costs for prevention and wellness services;

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- Establish transparency requirements for nursing homes and criminal background checks in long-term care;
- Protect vulnerable seniors against elder abuse; and,
- Improve the health care workforce serving seniors.

Thank you for guiding your colleagues through an arduous process resulting in legislation that would mark an historic advance in the care provided to seniors. We urge you in the strongest terms possible to continue with this substantial reform, and look forward to working with you to ensure its success.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Rother". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "John" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Rother".

John Rother, Chair Leadership Council of Aging Organizations

CC Members of the United States Senate
Members of the United States House of Representatives