

LEADERSHIP COUNCIL
of
AGING ORGANIZATIONS

Barbara B. Kennelly, Chair

September 19, 2005

Via Fax

United States Congress
Washington, DC

Dear Senator/Representative:

The undersigned members of the Leadership Council of Aging Organizations (LCAO) write to urge you to approve re-authorization of the Qualifying Individual (QI-1) program which is set to expire on September 30, 2005. The QI-1 benefit provides critical help to low-income people with Medicare in paying health care costs. Without immediate action, this important benefit will be lost.

The Medicare Savings Program known as QI-1 pays the Part B Medicare premiums for individuals with annual incomes between 120% and 135% of the federal poverty level. This amounts to a benefit of over \$900 annually that many older and Americans with disabilities depend upon to pay for a portion of their health care costs. People covered by QI-1 will also have their enrollment into Part D drug plans facilitated by CMS in 2006, and if they lose coverage, they will no longer receive this extra assistance with enrollment.

Over 161,000 people nationwide currently rely on the QI-1 program and could not afford Medicare coverage without this assistance.

We strongly urge you to prevent the expiration of existing low-income protections by approving extension of QI-1 permanently or at least through the end of next year. Immediate action to reauthorize QI-1 will prevent thousands of low-income older and disabled Americans from losing this crucial assistance.

Sincerely,

AARP
AFL-CIO
Alliance for Retired Americans
Alzheimer's Association
American Association for International Aging
American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging
American Federation of Teachers Program on Retirement & Retirees
American Foundation for the Blind
American Geriatrics Society
American Public Health Association
American Society of Consultant Pharmacists
Asociacion Nacional Pro Personas Mayores
B'nai B'rith International Center
Catholic Health Association of the United States
Families USA
Gray Panthers
Military Officers Association of America
National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys

National Asian Pacific Center on Aging
National Association for Home Care and Hospice
National Association of Area Agencies on Aging
National Association of Nutrition and Aging Services Programs
National Association of Professional Geriatric Care Managers
National Association of Senior Companion Project Directors
National Association of Social Workers
National Association of State Units on Aging
National Caucus and Center on Black Aged, Inc
National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare
National Council on Aging
National Hispanic Council on Aging
National Indian Council on Aging, Inc.
National Senior Citizens Law Center
OWL, the voice of midlife and older women
Service Employees International Union
United Jewish Communities