



March 19, 2010

Dear Representative:

The Leadership Council of Aging Organizations (LCAO), a coalition of national not-for-profit organizations representing nearly 60 million older Americans, urges you to vote in support of the rule for the Reconciliation Act of 2010 (H.R. 4872) and the amendment in nature of a substitute. This health care reform legislation is historic, comprehensive and long overdue.

This legislation brings high-quality, affordable health insurance to millions of older adults and other Americans who lack adequate coverage now. Like the momentous enactment of Medicare in 1965, passage of this legislation will save families from choosing between financial ruin and their health. Like the notable enactment of the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1986 (known as COBRA), passage of this reconciliation bill will alleviate the fear among older workers that the loss of a job means the loss of health care coverage.

The organizations of LCAO are particularly supportive of the provisions in the Reconciliation Act rule and underlying health reform bill that:

- Lower drug costs for seniors and close the coverage gap in Medicare prescription drug coverage, known as the Part D doughnut hole, which will help millions of seniors afford life sustaining medicines;
- Strengthen Medicare's finances, by extending the life of the Medicare trust fund by nearly a decade.
- 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 support for home-and community-based services;
- Provide help to low-income Medicare beneficiaries by strengthening the low income subsidy program for prescription drugs and providing additional funding for outreach and enrollment efforts.
- Restrict the amount insurers can increase premiums based on age;

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- Expand affordable coverage options for Americans ages 55 to 64 in the individual and small group market;
- Help employers maintain retiree health insurance coverage;
- Improve care coordination for those seniors who see multiple physicians;
- Adding free preventative care benefits – no copayments or deductibles – for prevention and wellness services;
- Establish transparency requirements for nursing homes and criminal background checks for long-term care providers;
- Strengthens protections for vulnerable seniors against elder abuse; and,
- Improve the health care workforce serving seniors.

The path to this moment in history has been an arduous process, but your vote in support of the rule and Reconciliation bill will mark an historic advance in the care provided to seniors. We urge you to support this substantial reform, and look forward to working with you to ensure its successful implementation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Rother". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

John Rother, Chair  
Leadership Council of Aging Organizations