



**For Immediate Release**  
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## **National Senior Advocates Develop Health Care Reform Recommendations**

Washington, D.C. – Saying that older Americans have a major stake in this year’s health care debate, the Leadership Council of Aging Organizations (LCAO) on Thursday released detailed recommendations for national health care reform. The LCAO is a coalition of 60 national not-for-profit organizations concerned with the well-being of America’s 87 million people over age 50. The recommendations were sent to every member of the U.S. House and Senate.

“Congress has an opportunity to improve the quality, affordability, and accessibility of health care for the fastest growing segment of our country. Our health care crisis is a big reason why so many Americans worry they will not be able to retire securely – if they can even retire at all,” said Edward Coyle, Chair of LCAO and Executive Director of the Alliance for Retired Americans.

The full recommendations are available at [www.lcao.org](http://www.lcao.org). A few highlights:

- Create a national public-plan option as an alternative to private health insurers
- Allow early retirees aged 55 to 64 to buy into Medicare
- Close gaps in Medicare coverage such as the “doughnut hole”
- Expand Medicare coverage of preventive care and disease management
- Improve Medicare prescription drug coverage by adding a national public plan that uses the government’s bulk purchasing power to negotiate volume discounts from drug manufacturers
- Expand coverage for low-income Medicare beneficiaries
- Broaden eligibility for Medicaid
- Create a national insurance program to help families afford long-term care
- Expand the Older Americans Act to improve access to home and community-based services
- Improve the quality of nursing home care by increasing transparency and accountability among nursing home owners and operators and expanding residents’ rights
- Increase training for workers who care for older adults

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### **About LCAO (<http://www.lcao.org>)**

The Leadership Council of Aging Organizations (LCAO) is a coalition of national nonprofit organizations concerned with the well-being of America’s older population and committed to representing their interest in the policy-making arena. The 60 members offer expertise and advocacy on a broad range of issues affecting the elderly and those who care for them. The coalition focuses on ensuring social justice and fiscal responsibility for an aging society.