



**BlueCross BlueShield
Association**

An Association of Independent
Blue Cross and Blue Shield Plans

June 17, 2002

The Honorable William M. Thomas
Chairman, Ways and Means Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
2208 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D. C. 20515

Scott P. Serota
President and
Chief Executive Officer

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Dear Chairman Thomas:

On behalf of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association (BCBSA) — representing 43 independent Blue Cross and Blue Shield Plans enrolling 84 million Americans — I am writing to thank you for your leadership in improving Medicare and providing prescription drug coverage for our nation's seniors.

Specifically, BCBSA applauds your most recent proposal to stabilize the Medicare+Choice program through multi-year funding. Millions of seniors rely on Medicare+Choice for protection from Medicare's high out-of-pocket costs, and for valuable added benefits such as prescription drug coverage. Without adequate funding increases this year, many beneficiaries — a disproportionate number of whom have low and moderate incomes — are at risk of losing this popular option. Our understanding is that your bill will take important steps to correct the program's chronic under-funding, helping maintain this choice for seniors in the future.

And, in light of the long term financial pressures facing Medicare, we are encouraged that your draft bill takes important steps to strengthen the Medicare program for future generations, while also maintaining Medicare beneficiaries' ability to purchase supplemental insurance coverage for their financial protection.

Thank you again for your leadership in improving Medicare. BCBSA looks forward to continuing to work with you to improve health care coverage and health care choices for millions of older Americans.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Scott P. Serota". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial 'S'.

Scott P. Serota