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House Prescription Drug Plan A Step in the Right Direction

(Arlington, VA) The National Association of Health Underwriters (NAHU) applauds the efforts of the House Ways and Means and Energy and Commerce Committees for their efforts to improve and strengthen Medicare. The Medicare Outpatient Prescription Drug Act of 2002 is a good first step towards addressing comprehensive Medicare reform.

"The structure of the Medicare program has changed little in more than 30 years, and does not adequately meet the needs of today's beneficiaries," explained Janet Trautwein, NAHU vice president of government affairs. "Comprehensive reform is necessary to ensure that beneficiaries have a Medicare program that provides choices and is flexible enough to accommodate advancements in health care.

"NAHU is extremely pleased that the House Medicare drug plan provides meaningful Medicare reforms that will help current and future beneficiaries. The legislation guarantees access to affordable prescription drugs for all beneficiaries and utilizes private-sector mechanisms to manage costs and deliver a high quality benefit. The House bill also appears to address some problems within the Medicare+Choice program so that beneficiaries can take advantage of additional coverage options and choices.

"The overwhelming bipartisan support for a prescription drug benefit for seniors gives us a real opportunity to improve Medicare with comprehensive legislation. Seniors need prescription drug benefits, but adding them without addressing the underlying program will only exacerbate Medicare's financial problems. NAHU looks forward to continuing its work with members of Congress on further development of a program that will bring Medicare into the 21st Century."

The National Association of Health Underwriters represents more than 17,000 professional health insurance agents and brokers who provide insurance for millions of Americans. NAHU is headquartered in Arlington, VA. For more information, please visit www.nahu.org.

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