



November 18, 2003

Speaker Dennis Hastert
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Majority Leader Bill Frist
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Gentlemen:

On behalf of the 30,000 members of the American Association of Nurse Anesthetists, I am privileged to extend our support for the Medicare reform package awaiting adoption in Congress.

A strong Medicare program is crucial to quality of life for the American seniors who depend on anesthesia care provided by Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNAs). With CRNAs providing two-thirds of U.S. anesthetics, including the lion's share of anesthesia care in rural and medically underserved America and the military, our highest priority in Medicare legislation has been to help secure, strengthen and sustain seniors' access to quality healthcare services.

We believe that the Medicare package awaiting votes in Congress helps us accomplish this objective. Rather than the 4.5 percent Medicare cuts CMS projects for 2004, Congress' new Medicare package increases Part B reimbursements an average 1.5 percent each of the next two years. Further, we strongly support the bill's provisions that strengthen rural healthcare. The package also provides seniors a long-awaited prescription drug benefit.

We appreciate the opportunity to have contributed productively to this historic measure. We hope Congress takes up this historic opportunity to strengthen our Medicare by enacting this legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Tom McKibban". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Tom" being particularly prominent.

Tom McKibban CRNA MS
President
American Association of Nurse Anesthetists

American Association of Nurse Anesthetists

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