



# **American Pharmacists Association**

**Improving medication use. Advancing patient care.**

## **APhA Statement on Medicare Conference Report November 21, 2003**

Recently, the Medicare Conference Committee took an historic step toward providing Americans a Medicare benefit that better represents today's health care system. While the proposal is not perfect, APhA supports it as an important, long-overdue step toward providing Medicare beneficiaries greater access to medications and critical pharmacist services.

The legislation makes progress toward APhA's goal of improving medication use and advancing patient care. The proposal creates a comprehensive benefit that provides coverage for drug products and pharmacists' services, provides seniors their choice of pharmacists, ensures any willing pharmacy can participate in the plan, and incorporates important administrative efficiencies.

We acknowledge that the legislation falls short in several areas, including areas that may negatively impact pharmacists' ability to care for their patients. However, APhA believes it is an important first step — one that should not be missed for lack of perfection. APhA appreciates the work and dedication of the Conference Committee to create a quality benefit.

It is unfortunate that some others in the profession have reached a different conclusion about this proposal. But it is a reality that people disagree. What is most important is that Medicare beneficiaries have better access to necessary prescription medications and pharmacists' medication therapy management services. At the end of the day, APhA sees this proposal, as a positive step in that direction. We look forward to working with policymakers and regulators to improve on this foundation.