



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FEDERATION LAUDS HISTORIC AGREEMENT ON MEASURE TO STRENGTHEN MEDICARE

The following statement was released today by Chip Kahn, President of the Federation of American Hospitals:

Today, we have moved an important step closer to strengthening the Medicare program as President Bush, Congressional leaders and members of the House-Senate Medicare Conference Committee announced a historic agreement on a Conference Committee Report for H.R. 1. This agreement does more to improve Medicare coverage for seniors than any legislation since the program's inception.

The Federation of American Hospitals commends President Bush, the Congressional leadership, and members of the Medicare Conference Committee for their great efforts to bring these vital improvements in Medicare to fruition. Their remarkable perseverance on behalf of America's seniors would provide all Medicare beneficiaries with voluntary prescription drug coverage and allow seniors to stick with traditional Medicare coverage or choose among private plans that may better fit their coverage needs.

H.R. 1 also would greatly enhance the ability of hospitals to provide necessary medical care to Medicare beneficiaries. It would make important strides in ensuring that all hospitals have sufficient funding to meet the medical needs of this nation's seniors and would particularly aid those hospitals that serve seniors in rural America.

This Medicare drug bill, agreed on by President Bush, the Congressional leadership and members of the Medicare Conference Committee, would revitalize Medicare and make it into a modern, 21st Century program providing America's seniors the coverage that they need and deserve. These improvements to the Medicare program are long overdue. The Federation is pleased to offer this historic agreement our full support. We urge Congress to pass it and send it to President Bush for his signature.

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The Federation of American Hospitals ("FAH") is the national representative of privately owned and managed community hospitals and health systems throughout the United States.