



National Association of Health Underwriters

America's Benefits Specialists

November 19, 2003

The Honorable William Thomas
Chairman of Ways and Means Committee
United States House of Representatives
2208 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Thomas:

For over five years, Congress has been working on a plan to cover prescription drugs under Medicare. The compromise legislation forged by the joint conference committee will do just that by making prescription drug coverage available to all Medicare beneficiaries.

The compromise legislation does far more, however, than merely layer a prescription drug benefit on top of the Medicare program of today. Instead, it improves and strengthens the Medicare program to ensure viability of the program not only for today's beneficiaries but for tomorrow's generation as well. The private sector will play an important role under the new Medicare options, as it should. Private health plans provide coverage for millions of Americans under the age of 65, and seniors deserve the same types of choices available to younger Americans. This will be a significant improvement over the limited choices available in the Medicare program today.

The compromise agreement makes significant improvements to the way plans and providers are compensated, which will greatly increase access both to health care and the plan options available to Medicare beneficiaries. Medicare beneficiaries deserve a system that ensures they receive high-quality care, embraces innovations in medical technologies and medicines, and provides incentives for continued improvements in medical care. Under the compromise agreement, Medicare beneficiaries will have greater freedom to select the health care coverage that suits them best, including the option of traditional Medicare.

NAHU believes that the compromise legislation represents the best opportunity in decades to improve and strengthen the Medicare program. We strongly support the compromise agreement, and believe wholeheartedly that America's seniors expect and deserve Congress to complete their work now on this critical legislation.

Thank you again for your excellent work on this legislation. We look forward to continued opportunities to work with you and other members of Congress and the Administration on enactment of this important legislation that will bring Medicare into the 21st century.

Sincerely,

Kevin P. Corcoran
Executive Vice President