
N.A.W

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FAX TRANSMISSION

November 21, 2003

**TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE U.S. SENATE AND
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

I write on behalf of the National Association of Wholesaler-Distributors (NAW) to express support for the Conference Report accompanying H.R. 1, the Medicare Prescription Drug and Modernization Act of 2003. In general, this legislation provides important albeit imperfect improvements in health policy meriting enactment into Federal law.

First, it seems inconceivable that the Federal health program upon which America's senior citizens primarily rely to acquire essential medical care today fails to cover prescription medications. Given the difficulty growing numbers of America's senior citizens are having paying for what has become their most important health care need, it is essential that Medicare be brought into the 21st century by adding a prescription drug benefit. This Conference Report offers the Congress the best opportunity it has had since the inception of the Medicare program nearly four decades ago to achieve that objective.

Second, this legislation addresses one of the preeminent healthcare issues confronting the American people and the Congress today; i.e., the rising number of medically uninsured people in America. By expanding access to Health Savings Accounts (HSAs), this legislation will help employers who are now unable to offer health benefits to their employees to do so through a combination of lower-cost, high deductible policies augmented by tax-favored HSAs.

There are more than 40 million uninsured in the United States today. First arresting and then reversing the current upward trend in this area is a national priority. In NAW's view, this problem will not be solved with any single approach. HSAs are an important component of the solution, and we applaud conferees for including them in this Conference Report.

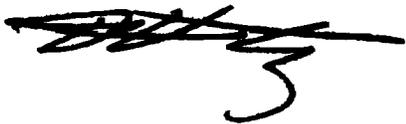
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In a similar vein, we would urge the Congress to complete action at the earliest possible date on the *Small Business Health Fairness Act of 2003* (H.R. 660; S. 545), legislation authorizing the formation and multi-state operation of association health plans (AHPs),

Thank you for your consideration of NAW's views.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dirk Van Dongen', with a long horizontal stroke and a small flourish at the end.

Dirk Van Dongen
President