

# RURAL HOSPITAL COALITION

November 17, 2003

The Honorable Dennis Hastert  
Speaker  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

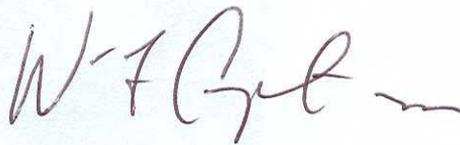
Dear Speaker Hastert:

The Rural Hospital Coalition, which is comprised of more than 150 rural hospitals in America, applauds your leadership in working in a bipartisan fashion to achieve a compromise Medicare bill. We support your efforts to modernize Medicare and give senior citizens a prescription drug benefit that they deserve. Most importantly, this bill strengthens health care in rural America. For that alone, you should be proud.

We urge all members of Congress to support the compromise Medicare prescription drug and modernization bill. It reforms a Medicare system that has, for far too long, reimbursed rural hospitals at a lower rate than their urban counterparts for the same services. Passage of this conference report will give rural physicians, nurses, clinics and hospitals a fair shake when it comes to Medicare payments. It will create a financially stronger hospital for rural communities – provide more jobs and provide more services.

Thank you again for your leadership to get this legislation this far. The Rural Hospital Coalition appreciates your strong leadership on rural health care issues and looks forward to working with you to see it is enacted into law in the very near future. On behalf of the Rural Hospital Coalition,

Sincerely yours,



William F. Carpenter III  
Senior Vice President & General Counsel  
LifePoint Hospitals, Inc.