



Governor's Commission on Senior Services

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February 4, 2004

The Honorable Ron Wyden
U.S. Senate
516 Hart Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Wyden:

The Governor's Commission on Senior Services is very pleased with your efforts to address some of the major weaknesses in the recently passed Medicare Modernization Act. We are very supportive of the bipartisan bill that you are introducing with Senator Snow, especially the parts that address cost containment.

This bill will prevent drug companies from limiting drug supplies to countries that sell to individuals in the United States. The bill will also give the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services the authority to negotiate drug prices. This prohibition on this in the original bill was a critical mistake and must be addressed before the major parts of the Act are implemented.

We are enthused with the bills efforts to get the National Association of Insurance Commissioners to make recommendations regarding the Medicare Supplemental (Medigap) coverage issue. Furthermore, the bill has a strong consumer component that will make information available on the different plans, and will require the General Accounting Office to report on drug prices for Medicare versus private plans, the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Defense. These components will help protect seniors and people with disabilities.

While the bill does not address all of our concerns, it is an extremely important step to address some of the major weaknesses in the bill. Thank you for you work on addressing some of the major problems of the original Medicare Reform bill.

Sincerely,

Dolores Hubert
Chair