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COMMITTEE ON
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COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-1305

April 13, 2004

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The Honorable Tommy G. Thompson
Secretary of Health and Human Services
Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Thompson:

I am writing in support of your efforts to help American seniors make intelligent and cost conscious choices about their prescription drug purchases by comparing pharmaceutical prices on the Medicare.gov website.

The availability of this information will allow seniors to shop around for the best available price for a particular drug, creating competition which, as you stated, can "help drive down drug prices." In addition to price comparisons for a given drug, seniors can compare the prices of different drugs with the same use, to help them make educated, financially sound decisions about their prescription drug purchases.

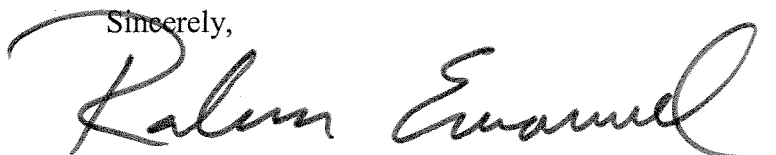
Because you are obviously committed to using this site to bring downward pressure on U.S. drug prices, I am calling on you to include on the website information about drug prices in Canada and Europe. As drug prices in these countries are often 30% to 80% lower than those in the U.S., the inclusion of these prices on the site would intensify the pressure on pharmaceutical manufacturers, encouraging them to lower prices here in the U.S.

I am well aware that you are on record opposing the concept of purchasing brand name prescription drugs from Canada and Europe. The addition of the Canadian and European prices to your website would not encourage people to go to Canada and Europe to purchase their prescription drugs; it would serve to make consumers aware of the price discrepancy between drug prices in Europe and Canada and those here at home.

I have a list of prescription drugs and the price discrepancy between Canada and the U.S. on my website. It provides consumers with updated price listings for commonly used drugs.

I hope you might consider a similar price comparison for the Medicare.gov website. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Rahm Emanuel
Member of Congress