



American Public Health Association

Working for a Healthier World

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May 5, 2003

The Honorable Charles B. Rangel
2354 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Rangel:

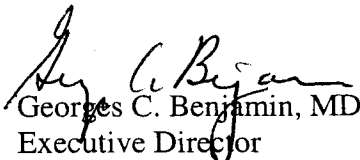
On behalf of the American Public Health Association (APHA), the largest and oldest organization of public health professionals in the nation, representing more than 50,000 members from over 50 public health occupations, I write in support of H.R. 1199, the Medicare Rx Drug Benefit and Discount Act of 2003. APHA supports this prescription drug plan that offers seniors real protection against rising drug costs. Specifically, APHA supports the following provisions in your plan:

- Guaranteed access for all Medicare eligible older adults and individuals with disabilities regardless of income or health status;
- Protection against premium and out-of-pocket costs for low-income beneficiaries;
- Catastrophic protection for all beneficiaries;
- Defined quality of care standards and a system to help prevent medication errors; and
- Administration through the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

We believe that your legislation is essential to provide Medicare beneficiaries, many of who are on fixed incomes, with affordable prescription drugs. Seniors rely on costly prescription drugs in preventing and managing acute care conditions and chronic diseases and without this legislation, many will continue to fill fewer of their prescriptions than their insured counterparts, thus underutilizing their medications. We believe H.R. 1199 would ensure that all seniors are able to obtain the medications their doctors prescribe and we are hopeful that Congress will pass this much-needed legislation this year.

Thank you for your commitment to addressing this urgent public health issue. We look forward to working with you on this and other issues facing our nation's seniors this year.

Sincerely,


George C. Benjamin, MD, FACP
Executive Director

