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January 8, 2007

The Honorable John Dingell  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Dingell:

The League of United Latin American Citizens, the largest and oldest Hispanic organization in the United States, endorses H.R. 4, the Medicare Prescription Drug Price Negotiation Act of 2007. We applaud the bipartisanship support of Representatives Dingell, Emerson, Rangel, Shea-Porter and Stark for their leadership in sponsoring this critical piece of legislation.

H.R. 4 is necessary to ensure that Hispanic Medicare beneficiaries are able to afford the out-of-pocket costs for basic medicines they need. At a time when Hispanics have become the largest minority group in the country with a population of 46 million, it is vital that Medicare use its bargaining power to bring down the prices of prescription drugs.

Retail prescription prices increased an average of 8.3% a year from 1994 to 2005 more than triple the average annual rate of inflation. Yet, current law prohibits the Secretary of Health and Human Services from using the full bargaining power of the Medicare program to negotiate prescription drug prices. Now is the time to support legislation that will enable the Secretary to negotiate lower prices and bring needed relief to millions of older and disabled Americans.

The savings realized by Medicare will make it easier for Congress to close the doughnut hole in prescription coverage for Medicare beneficiaries. In fact, if Medicare negotiates similar prices to those negotiated by the Veteran's Administration, the savings will be more than twice what is needed to eliminate the doughnut hole gap in coverage.

We urge swift passage of H.R. 4 and stand ready to assist you in that effort. If we can be of assistance, please contact Brent Wilkes, LULAC National Executive Director or Lizette Jenness Olmos, LULAC Communications Director at (202) 833-6130.

Thank you for your continued leadership on behalf of older Americans.

Sincerely,

Rosa Rosales  
LULAC National President