



June 13, 2002

The Honorable John Dingell
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Dingell:

AARP greatly appreciates your efforts to create an affordable prescription drug benefit in Medicare. Medicare beneficiaries have waited long enough for access to drug coverage. Action on a bipartisan Medicare prescription drug benefit this year is a top priority for AARP, our members and the nation.

We know from our membership that in order for a Medicare prescription drug benefit to provide comprehensive coverage it must include:

- An affordable premium and coinsurance;
- Meaningful catastrophic stop-loss that limits out-of-pocket costs;
- A benefit that does not expose beneficiaries to a gap in insurance coverage;
- Additional assistance for low-income beneficiaries; and
- Quality and safety features to curb unnecessary costs and prevent dangerous drug interactions.

AARP supports your initiative to incorporate these goals. We commend you for including key elements in your bill that Medicare beneficiaries and our members have indicated they find valuable. For example, your legislation includes a \$25 monthly premium that many Medicare beneficiaries view as affordable, a benefit design without a gap in insurance coverage that beneficiaries believe is important, and coinsurance set at 20 percent that many beneficiaries find reasonably priced.

In our view, your plan could provide real value to beneficiaries in protecting them against the high costs of prescription drugs. We want to work with you to assure that Medicare prescription drug legislation gains bipartisan support and moves through the Congress this year.

The Honorable John Dingell

Page 2

Our members need prescription drug coverage in Medicare now. We thank you for your leadership on this issue. AARP will continue to work with Members of Congress on both sides of the aisle to enact affordable, meaningful prescription drug coverage for all beneficiaries.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "William D. Novelli". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line under the first name.

William D. Novelli
Executive Director and CEO