Leadership Council of Aging Organizations

November 5, 2009

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi:

As the Chair of the Leadership Council of Aging Organizations (LCAO), I write to you and your colleagues in the House of Representatives to convey our strong support for the manager's amendment to H.R. 3962, *Affordable Health Care for America Act*.

The LCAO -- founded in 1977 -- is a coalition of 60 national not-for-profit organizations long focused on the well-being of America's 87 million people over age 50, the fastest growing population segment of our country, and the age group that needs and uses health services the most. We believe that your leadership team and the leadership of the Ways and Means Committee, Energy and Commerce Committee, and Education and Labor Committee have succeeded in creating legislation that will make changes to the Medicare, Medicaid, and other long-term supports and services programs that will benefit millions of older beneficiaries and strengthen the future of these programs.

The work that has been done toward health care reform during this Congress has led to many substantial beneficiary improvements and protections that are very important to our members and their families. For example, provisions such as those that will make prescription drugs more affordable by closing the doughnut hole over time in the Part D prescription drug program, providing discounts on certain drugs when beneficiaries reach the doughnut hole, and allowing the Medicare program to negotiate drug prices on behalf of beneficiaries will positively impact the lives of millions of older adults who currently struggle to pay for their prescription drugs.

Further, extending the solvency of the Medicare trust fund, improvements on the delivery system through better coordinated care for those with multiple chronic conditions, protection for Medicare Advantage plan beneficiaries, improvements in preventive screenings and services, and help for low-income beneficiaries make this legislation a significant step forward for older adults as well as those who lack insurance coverage.

The LCAO also applauds your efforts to address the need for reforms in the long-term care system. The CLASS Act provisions, which create a new fiscally sound long-term care insurance option for all working Americans, improved support for family caregivers, and provisions that address quality problems in long-term care facilities are all important improvements on the currently broken system.

The bill provides an important reinsurance fund for pre-Medicare eligible retirees that will enable many in the 55 - 64 age group to keep their insurance coverage. Valuable advances are

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The bill provides an important reinsurance fund for pre-Medicare eligible retirees that will enable many in the 55 - 64 age group to keep their insurance coverage. Valuable advances are made to strengthen the health care workforce -- particularly in primary care settings -- to help ensure that seniors will have access to the care they need.

The LCAO met yesterday and after deliberation, voted to support H.R. 3962, the *Affordable Health Care for America Act,* and authorized me on behalf of the entire coalition to urge all members of the U.S. House of Representatives to support the manager's amendment to this legislation when it reaches the House floor.

Thank you for your consideration of our views and for all that you have done to make this historic moment possible.

Sincerely,

John Rother
Chair
The Leadership Council of Aging Organizations

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