NCPSSM
National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare

10 G Street NE
Suite 600
Washington DC 20002-4215
202-216-0420
800-966-1935
www.ncpssm.org

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United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the millions of members and supporters of the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare, I am writing to express our strong support for H.R. 3962, the *Affordable Health Care for America Act*, introduced by Chairman Dingell. We applaud Ways and Means Committee Chairmen Rangel, Energy and Commerce Committee Chairman Waxman, and Subcommittee Chairmen Stark and Pallone for including necessary and significant changes to the Medicare program that will positively impact millions of beneficiaries and strengthen the solvency of the program. It is my understanding that Medicare provisions in H.R. 3962 which slow the growth of health care costs, attack waste, and reform the payment and delivery systems will extend the solvency of the Medicare Trust Fund for five years.

The *Affordable Health Care for America Act* includes substantial beneficiary improvements and protections that are very important to our members. Top among these are provisions that will make prescription drugs more affordable by closing the doughnut hole in the Part D prescription drug program, providing discounts on certain drugs when beneficiaries reach the doughnut hole, and allowing Medicare to negotiate lower drug costs for beneficiaries in Part D which the government is prohibited from doing under current law. This legislation also helps beneficiaries by eliminating all cost-sharing - deductibles and copays - for preventive screenings and services; raising the asset limits so that more low-income beneficiaries will qualify for assistance with their out-of-pocket health care costs; protecting Medicare Advantage beneficiaries from paying more for high-cost care, such as home health care and chemotherapy, than they would in original Medicare; and enacting delivery system and payment reforms that will allow providers to better coordinate the care of beneficiaries, particularly those with multiple chronic conditions.

In addition to these beneficiary improvements, we support of provisions in the *Affordable Health Care for America Act* that will eliminate wasteful spending in Medicare and strengthen the solvency of the program. Contrary to the rhetoric heard from opponents, this bill does not cut Medicare; rather it includes provisions to ensure that we are receiving high-quality care and the best value for our Medicare dollars. We have long advocated for eliminating wasteful spending on overpayments to Medicare Advantage plans which are increasing costs to all Medicare beneficiaries and to the federal government. And we believe that slightly slowing the rate of increase in payments to providers – keeping in mind that they will continue to receive increases each year – can be done in ways that improve care and strengthen Medicare for the future.

The National Committee supports H.R. 3962, the *Affordable Health Care for America Act,* and I urge you to support this legislation when it reaches the House floor for consideration. In addition to its important provisions to cover the uninsured and reform private health insurance, this legislation is important to millions of beneficiaries who are counting on you to enhance and safeguard the Medicare program.

Cordially,

Barbara B. Kennelly

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President and CEO