

106TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. RES. 435

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that Medicare beneficiaries should have access to outpatient prescription drug coverage.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 8, 2000

Mr. SESSIONS (for himself and Mr. PETERSON of Minnesota) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that Medicare beneficiaries should have access to outpatient prescription drug coverage.

Whereas prescription medicines save lives, cure and prevent disease, relieve pain, improve the quality of life for patients, help people avoid disability, surgery, hospitalization, and nursing home care, and often decrease the total cost of treating an illness;

Whereas two-thirds of Medicare beneficiaries have access to prescription drug coverage through employer-based insurance plans, Medicare+Choice plans, medicare supplemental (Medigap) policies, Medicaid and state drug as-

sistance programs, and other private insurance or managed care plans that include a drug benefit;

Whereas United States companies led the world in drug research and development, spending \$24 billion on research and development in 1999;

Whereas United States companies have over 1,000 life-saving medicines in development for cancer, heart disease and stroke, rheumatoid arthritis, multiple sclerosis, diabetes, depression, and numerous other diseases that affect the elderly;

Whereas privately funded research and development is extremely costly, time-consuming, and high risk—on average it takes 12 to 15 years to bring one medication to market and each costs an average of \$500 million and only 3 of every 10 drugs that reach the market are profitable;

Whereas almost half of all major new medicines in the world are discovered by United States companies primarily because the United States market-based health care system rewards and encourages biomedical research and development;

Whereas far fewer drugs are developed by companies in foreign countries because many foreign governments control the prices of prescription medicines thereby discouraging research and development; and

Whereas the number of persons qualifying for Medicare benefits will increase dramatically over the next 25 years placing additional strains on the financial solvency of the program: Now, therefore, be it

- 1 *Resolved*, That it is the sense of the House of Rep-
- 2 resentatives that Congress should enact legislation that—

1 (1) ensures that prescription drug coverage re-
2 places the need for seniors to rely exclusively on out-
3 of-pocket expenditures for their medicines;

4 (2) ensures that the Medicare program is not
5 further fiscally compromised and its financial sol-
6 vency is preserved and protected;

7 (3) ensures that existing sources of drug cov-
8 erage for Medicare beneficiaries, such as employer-
9 sponsored retiree prescription drug benefits, are not
10 displaced into a government-run program;

11 (4) provides a mechanism to assist low income
12 Medicare beneficiaries to afford coverage;

13 (5) avoids any form of extensive government
14 regulation, including government rationing of life-
15 saving medicines and direct or indirect price con-
16 trols; and

17 (6) encourages the continued high rate of re-
18 search and development by the private sector in the
19 United States and does nothing that creates dis-
20 incentives for the discovery of new drugs.

21 SEC. 2. The Clerk of the House of Representatives
22 shall transmit a copy of this resolution to the President.

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