



## SENIORS AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

### BACKGROUND

Medicare is a very successful public insurance plan created by Congress in 1964 to end medical poverty among senior citizens. Before Medicare was enacted, 44 percent of seniors had no health insurance, and nearly a third lived in poverty. Today it is a cherished federal program that protects the most vulnerable when they need it most. Health reform is needed to rein in rising health costs for private and public programs alike.

Today, 98 percent of seniors are insured through Medicare. On average, seniors are responsible for less than 20 percent of their medical costs, compared to more than 50 percent before Medicare was enacted. Improving and strengthening Medicare is a critical component of reform. The health reform bill will improve Medicare beneficiaries' access to quality, affordable health care.

### OUR PRINCIPLES

HCAN is asking every Member of Congress to support the H.R. 3962, the Affordable Health Care for America Act, which:

1. **Fills in the Part D Donut Hole:** Addresses one of seniors' top concerns by immediately beginning to fill in the Medicare Part D donut hole which will make prescription drugs more affordable. In 2010, seniors will see the donut hole reduced by \$500 and will have access to 50 percent discounts on brand-name drugs in the donut hole until it is completely phased out by 2019.
2. **Enhances Preventive Coverage:** Eliminates copayments for preventive services in Medicare.
3. **Combats Waste, Fraud & Abuse:** Expands authority to fight waste, fraud and abuse.
4. **Protects the Doctor-Patient Relationship and Improves Quality:** Companion legislation resolves a longstanding problem with the physician payment formula to stop a 21% cut in physicians rates, promote primary care and advance innovation.
5. **Investments in health delivery system reform:** Improves coordinated care, promotes efficiency, and enhances quality.