



# U.S. Public Interest Research Group

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### **GIVE SENIORS A SECURE CHOICE: SIGN DISCHARGE PETITION HR 3767**

July 17, 2004

Dear Representative,

We are writing on behalf of state Public Interest Research Groups (PIRG) to urge you to sign, or to thank you for signing if you already have, the H.R. 3767 discharge petition offered by Representative Frost. U.S. PIRG serves as the national lobbying office for the non-profit, non-partisan state Public Interest Research Groups, and supports efforts across the country to reduce the cost of prescription drugs for all consumers. H.R. 3767, the Medicare Prescription Drug Savings and Choice Act of 2004, would create a nationwide Medicare-administered drug benefit that senior citizens could enroll in without fear of losing vital prescription drug or health coverage. U.S. PIRG urges you to sign the discharge petition so that the full House can debate the merits of H.R. 3767 and enact legislation to give Medicare beneficiaries the choice to enroll in a Medicare administered drug plan that they can trust.

Disappointingly small numbers of senior citizens have signed up for the temporary discount drug card plans, the vast majority of which were automatically enrolled through their Medicare HMO. One reason for the low enrollment is the tremendous confusion and frustration experienced by seniors comparing drug discount cards. Senior citizens quickly learned that no amount of shopping around would ensure reliable savings and coverage as long as private companies control their benefits. When enrollment into private health plans begins in January 2006, seniors who were reluctant to choose a drug card will be just as reluctant to abandon traditional Medicare benefits and enroll in a less-reliable private health insurance plan. Instead of promoting private drug plans that many seniors have already rejected, Congress should explore increasing future participation by creating a Medicare administered drug plan that seniors are more likely to trust.

The Federal government has proven its ability to negotiate significant prescription drug discounts for Veterans as well as other federal employees. H.R. 3767 would give Medicare beneficiaries, regardless of where they live and which drugs they take, access to the large prescription drug discounts that the government has the power to negotiate. Your signature on the H.R. 3767 discharge petition will enable the House to revisit the Medicare prescription drug law, and provide our senior citizens with the affordable and dependable prescription drug coverage that they were promised. Please contact me if you or your staff have any questions at (202) 546-9707.

Sincerely,

Lindsey Johnson  
Consumer Advocate