

Senior Center Meetings – *Please join Congressman Van Hollen to discuss prescription drug coverage and other health care matters of interest to Maryland seniors.*

Monday, October 27, 2003

3:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.
Kensington Park Senior Living
3620 Littledale Road, Kensington, MD 20895

Tuesday, November 4, 2003

10:30 a.m. – noon
Holiday Park Senior Center
3950 Ferrara Drive, Wheaton, MD 20906

Open Season – *Federal Employees Health Benefits Forum*

Congressman Van Hollen will host sessions for federal employees to learn about various federal government health plan options in cooperation with the National Association of Retired Federal Employees. Experts on federal health insurance plans and representatives of health insurance carriers will make presentations. All current and retired federal employees are welcome to attend.

Thursday, November 13, 2003

7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
The Universities at Shady Grove
9630 Gudelsky Drive, Rockville, MD 20850

Monday, November 17, 2003

9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.
Holiday Park Senior Center
3950 Ferrara Drive, Wheaton, MD 20906

Please call my Rockville district office with any questions, concerns or problems with a federal agency: (301) 424-3501 On the web: www.house.gov/vanhollen

Congressman Chris Van Hollen

1419 Longworth House Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20515
Official Business



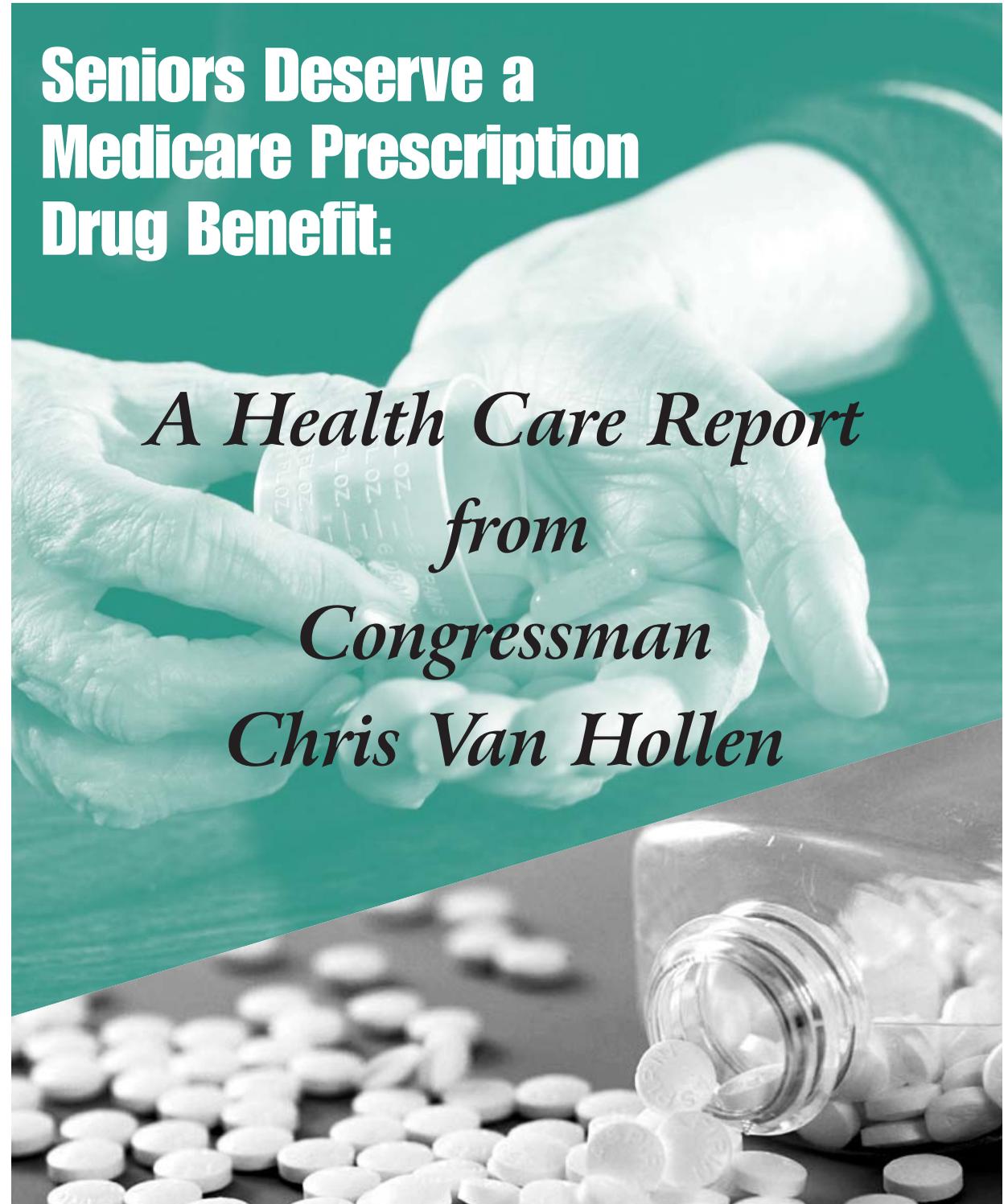
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I hope you will join me at upcoming meetings to discuss health care issues.

Seniors Deserve a Medicare Prescription Drug Benefit:

*A Health Care Report
from
Congressman
Chris Van Hollen*





Congressman Chris Van Hollen's Health Care Report

On June 27th – in the dead of the night and by a one-vote margin – the House of Representatives passed a bill that its proponents claim will provide seniors with a clear, comprehensive and affordable prescription drug benefit plan. Unfortunately, the Republican-backed proposal – which I opposed – fails to meet any of those tests. In fact, rather than making progress towards a meaningful prescription drug benefit, the House bill would actually make matters worse. Here's a report on where the House prescription drug plan goes wrong, and what we should be doing instead.

Chris listens to United Seniors of Maryland Vice President Betty Miller discuss senior health care issues.



Chris addresses Marylanders regarding Medicare prescription drug legislation before Congress.

Where the House Plan Goes Wrong

The most basic problem with the House prescription drug plan is that it violates the first tenet of responsible medicine: Do No Harm. By turning the entire Medicare program over to HMOs and private insurers in 2010, the Republican majority has transformed the prescription drug benefit into a vehicle for weakening – rather than strengthening – Medicare. Additionally, the authors of this plan chose to ignore warnings by the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office that an estimated one-third of retirees who currently have private prescription drug coverage could lose their coverage to an inferior Medicare benefit under the House proposal. Finally, and incredibly, the House bill actually prohibits Medicare from negotiating for lower drug prices on behalf of Medicare's 41 million beneficiaries. This is not the way to add a meaningful prescription drug benefit to the Medicare program.

What We Should Be Doing Instead

Seniors deserve a real Medicare prescription drug benefit plan: one that is comprehensive, affordable and easy to understand; one that will strengthen Medicare rather than weaken it; and one that will not reduce the benefits of seniors who already have coverage. The plan I supported (HR 1199, see chart for side-by-side comparison) satisfies all these criteria and goes further to bring down skyrocketing drug costs for all Americans. Over the coming weeks, the House prescription drug bill will have to be reconciled with a flawed but nonetheless largely preferable version in the Senate. As your Member of Congress, I will continue to fight for the kind of Medicare prescription drug benefit America's seniors expect and deserve.

Medicare Prescription Drugs: Van Hollen-Backed Plan (HR 1199) vs. House Bill (HR 1)

	Van Hollen-Backed Plan (HR 1199)	House Bill (HR 1)
Monthly Premium	\$25 (guaranteed)	\$35 (estimated)
Annual Deductible	\$100	\$250
Copay	20% up to \$2000	20% up to \$2000
Coverage Gap	NONE	Zero Coverage from \$2000-\$4900
Catastrophic Coverage	100% after \$2000	100% after \$4900
Guaranteed Minimum Benefit	YES	NO
Lower Drug Prices	YES	NO
Privatize Medicare	NO	YES