

OCTOBER 22, 2003

**SCHAKOWSKY JOINS IN RELEASE OF *PAYING MORE FOR LESS***

**STUDY FINDS MILLIONS OF MEDICARE BENEFICIARIES TO PAY MORE FOR PRESCRIPTION DRUGS, HOME HEALTH CARE, DOCTORS' VISITS UNDER REPUBLICAN PLAN**  
WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) today joined seniors and persons with disabilities to reveal the truth about the Republican-passed prescription drug bills. □ □

According to the study, "Paying More for Less," under the already-passed Republican House and Senate prescription drug bills, Medicare beneficiaries would have to pay **MORE** for their prescription drugs, home health care, lab tests, and doctors' visits. □

Specifically, the study found that:

- Between 11.1 and 13.4 million Medicare beneficiaries would pay **MORE** for prescription drugs than they do today.
  
- 32.5 million Medicare beneficiaries would pay more to see their doctor.
  
- Between 3.9 and 4.5 million retirees who now have prescription drug coverage would lose it.
  
- 5.8 million low-income seniors and people with disabilities could face higher drug costs.
  
- Lab visits and home health care services would cost Medicare beneficiaries \$20.7 billion.

"Members of Congress should take the same oath as doctors: First do no harm. But the pending Medicare bills would do plenty of harm. □ They harm millions of seniors and persons with disabilities by charging them more for their prescription drugs, home health care, lab tests, and doctors' visits," said Schakowsky, a member of the Energy and Commerce Committee.

The study was released by USAction Education Fund and prepared by Richard Kirsch,

Executive Director of the Public Policy and Education Fund of New York.

Below is Schakowsky's full statement from today's news conference on Capitol Hill:

**STATEMENT OF U.S. REPRESENTATIVE JAN SCHAKOWSKY (D-IL)  
OCTOBER 22, 2003**

"I am pleased to be here with USAction and Richard Kirsch. I wish to commend you on your tireless work on behalf of seniors and persons with disabilities. I also want to welcome Anne and Paulette to Washington and thank you for sharing your stories with us.

"Over the past several months, many of my colleagues and I have heard from senior citizens and persons with disabilities who are not happy with the House or the Senate Medicare bills. This report, *Paying More for Less*, underscores what our constituents know all too well. These are bad bills that - if enacted into law - would make millions of current and future Medicare beneficiaries worse off than they are today.

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"Medicare beneficiaries who have been waiting for decades for an affordable drug benefit are justifiably angry about the meager coverage in these bills. Senior citizens and persons with disabilities have figured it out.

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"They know that the drug benefit - complete with its massive doughnut hole - is not what the President and members of Congress get. They know that it is not even a Medicare benefit - since they would have to enroll with a private insurer which can set whatever premiums it wants, vary copayments, refuse to pay for certain drugs and charge more if beneficiaries go to their local pharmacy.

"Our constituents know that these bills do not provide affordable drug coverage. Many of them have figured out that this is not just about not getting what they need - it's about losing what they already have. I am going to send this report to my colleagues because I believe that "Paying More for Less" should be required reading for every member of Congress who thinks his or her constituents are going to benefit from the prescription drug bills we've already passed.

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"Members of Congress need to know that over 4 million retirees and their families will lose their employer-sponsored health benefits under these bills. For those retirees, enrolling in a paltry Medicare benefit will no longer be voluntary, it may be their only option.

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"Nearly 6 million low-income beneficiaries - those most vulnerable to high medical costs - would pay more.

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"Nearly 33 million senior citizens and persons with disabilities will pay more to see their doctors.

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□ **"And millions will pay more for home health care or lab tests - or both - depending on the decisions of the conferees.**

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**"If we cannot make health care more affordable for our constituents, at least we should not make health care less affordable.□□□**

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**"Members of Congress should take the same oath as doctors: First do no harm. But the pending Medicare bills would do plenty of harm.□ They harm millions of seniors and persons with disabilities by charging them more for their prescription drugs, home health care, lab tests, and doctors' visits. That is why I am here today to pledge my commitment to defeating these bills.□ If we can't fix them, we should nix them."**