

JUNE 28, 2002

**SENIORS STILL WAITING IN LINE FOR A QUALITY & AFFORDABLE PRESCRIPTION DRUG BENEFIT UNDER MEDICARE**

**CALCULATE SAVINGS UNDER DEMOCRATIC PLAN & REPUBLICAN SO-CALLED RX PLAN AT**

[http://www.house.gov/reform/min/drug\\_plan/](http://www.house.gov/reform/min/drug_plan/)

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Early this morning, U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) joined her Democratic colleagues in voting against the Republican so-called prescription drug plan. House Republicans refused to allow a vote on a Democratic alternative bill that would have offered a comprehensive and quality prescription drug benefit under Medicare to ensure that seniors and persons with disabilities have access to affordable prescription drugs

"Two years ago, every federal candidate promised seniors a prescription drug benefit under Medicare. Those seniors are still waiting in line for a real prescription drug benefit. They've been bumped out of line by the airlines who were bailed out by Congress. They have been displaced by a very few rich dead people who were excused from the estate tax," Schakowsky said.

"As the front of the line appeared closer and closer, what seniors were offered by the House Republicans was a sham and not a plan. The House Republican bill was written by the drug companies, for the drug companies. It does nothing to control the high cost of prescription drugs, provides no guaranteed benefit, no predictable premium or co-payment, and no guarantee that insurance companies will even offer a prescription 'drug only' plan," Schakowsky added.

"Democrats believe that all of America's seniors deserve an affordable and quality prescription drug benefit under Medicare," Schakowsky concluded.

**The Democratic Plan:**

- **Lowers prices.** The Democratic plan enables Medicare to negotiate with pharmaceutical companies for the best possible price, just like the Veterans Administration does.

- **Covers all seniors under Medicare.** The Democratic prescription drug benefit would be voluntary and universal - every senior would have access, no matter where they live or what their income.

- **Comprehensive.** All seniors will have coverage for any drug their doctor

prescribes, and they can fill their prescription at any pharmacy.[] []

- **Voluntary.**[] If you already have prescription coverage, you can keep it.[] [] []

- **Affordable.**[] Seniors will have a deductible of \$100 a year, a \$25 a month premium, and Medicare will pay for 80% of each prescription.[] Seniors' expenses are capped at \$2,000 per year.[] There is no gap in coverage.[] []

#### The Republican Plan:

- **Does not guarantee coverage for all seniors.**[] The Republican plan fails to provide seniors with any real coverage because it relies on fictional insurance policies.[] The insurance industry has already said that it will not provide prescription-only health plans.[]

- **Privatize Medicare.**[] The Republican bill forces seniors to obtain coverage through private drug-only insurance plans or HMOs.[] Under the plan, there is no universal, Medicare-sponsored prescription drug plan.

- **Does nothing to lower prices.**[] The Republican plan does nothing to lower the soaring prices of prescription drugs.[] In fact, it explicitly prevents Medicare from negotiating on behalf of seniors for the best possible prices.