

## DINGELL ON OVERRIDING THE PRESIDENT'S VETO OF MEDICARE BILL

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July 15, 2008

Rep.

John D. Dingell (D-MI ), Chairman of the Committee on Energy and Commerce and co-author of H.R. 6331, the "Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act of 2008," today delivered the following statement on the House floor following President Bush's veto of this legislation. H.R. 6331 would prevent the pending 10 percent payment reduction for physicians in Medicare, enhance Medicare preventive and mental health benefits, improve and extend programs for low-income Medicare beneficiaries, and extend expiring provisions for rural and other providers.

On Tuesday, June 24, 2008, the House of Representatives passed H.R. 6331 by a veto-proof vote of 355 to 59. On July 9, the Senate passed the bill and sent it to the President after invoking cloture to proceed to the bill by a veto-proof margin of 69 to 30. The House will vote today to override the President's veto.

Once again the White House has vetoed legislation that matters to real people. This legislation is critical to ensuring access to high-quality physician services for Medicare beneficiaries.

If we fail to override this veto, physicians will face a 10 percent pay cut, which will jeopardize access to care for seniors and the disabled.

If we fail to override this veto, low-income beneficiaries will lose out on additional protections and benefits in the traditional Medicare program such as coverage for more preventive benefits.

Finally, if we fail to override this veto, we will miss out on an opportunity to begin addressing the most egregious abuses made by private health plans operating in Medicare. Private Fee-For-Service (PFFS) plans, one type of Medicare Advantage (MA) plan, do not have to sign providers to be a part of their networks. The result is that beneficiaries have no idea which physicians accept payments from their plan, and if the physician does not accept the payment, the beneficiary is left holding the bag. These plans create tremendous uncertainty and confusion for both beneficiaries and providers.

I urge Members to vote to override the President's veto.

Prepared by the Committee on Energy and Commerce

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