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Dear Friends,

Thank you for inviting me to the Health Care That Works for All Americans: Seattle Community Meeting. I regret that due to scheduling conflicts I am unable to attend and share in this important discussion.

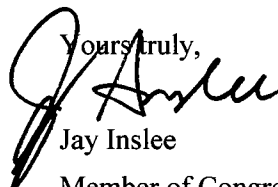
We must continue to work to expand affordable, high quality coverage. Our ultimate goal is to make sure that every American has access to high quality, affordable health care. Let me assure you that I am committed to improving our national health care system and I will do everything I can to support responsible legislation that expands health care coverage to the uninsured.

As you may know, I voted against the Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement and Modernization Act of 2003, because it only offers prescription drug coverage through private insurance companies. It is not necessary to privatize Medicare in order to give seniors a good prescription drug benefit. Unlike every other Medicare benefit, a beneficiary does not get coverage through Medicare for prescription drugs but has to purchase coverage through a private insurer. This is a fundamental flaw in the bill.

My efforts to protect beneficiaries include but are not limited to co-sponsoring two important acts of legislation.

- The Medicare Informed Choice Act, H.R. 3861, would extend the Medicare Part D enrollment period through 2006, without charging a late enrollment fee, to ensure that those choosing a plan would have additional time to make a decision to best match their prescription drug needs.
- The Medicare Prescription Drug Emergency Guarantee Act, H.R. 4685, would provide uninterrupted access to medicines for seniors and persons with disabilities who enrolled in new privately-run Medicare drug plans. This legislation would guarantee that beneficiaries do not leave pharmacies empty-handed.

Clearly, these efforts are just first steps rather than perfect solutions. I will continue to look for opportunities to improve our health care system and to make sure that every American has access to affordable and quality health care.

Yours truly,  
  
Jay Inslee  
Member of Congress