



November 10, 2011

The Honorable Peter Roskam
United States House of Representatives
227 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Carney
United States House of Representatives
1429 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Roskam and Carney:

AARP is pleased to endorse the Medicare and Medicaid Fighting Fraud and Abuse to Save Taxpayers' Dollars Act (otherwise known as the Medicare and Medicaid FAST Act) which you are introducing today. This bipartisan legislation seeks to curb waste and fraud from both the Medicare and Medicaid programs.

For years AARP has been working to fight health care fraud, including efforts to educate our members about what they need to know in order to protect themselves and report fraudulent activity when it occurs. Therefore, we are especially pleased to see that your legislation would improve upon the Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP), which helps educate beneficiaries to detect and report waste, fraud, and abuse in the Medicare program. Also, your legislation would develop Medicare "smart cards" which would prohibit the display of Social Security Account Numbers on newly issued Medicare cards. Since most Medicare beneficiaries carry their Medicare card with them, they can be vulnerable to identity theft if their wallets or purses are lost or stolen. This proposed change should reduce not only fraud against the Medicare program, but also identity theft directed against beneficiaries.

In addition, your legislation seeks to strengthen and improve upon many programs that already exist in the Medicare and Medicaid programs. For example, your legislation will improve data sharing across federal agencies and programs to ensure that information is shared in more real time to discourage fraudulent claims. Your legislation also includes additional penalties for those who illegally distribute Medicare, Medicaid, or CHIP beneficiary identification information or provider billing privileges, and uses incentives to encourage the identification of fraud, particularly related to pharmaceutical issues.

We thank you for your leadership on efforts to eliminate fraud in the health care system, and we look forward to working with you to enact the Medicare and Medicaid FAST Act. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me, or Anna Schwamlein Howard of our Government Affairs staff at (202) 434-3770.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Joyce A. Rogers". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Joyce A. Rogers
Senior Vice President
Government Affairs