



## National Health Council

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### NEWS RELEASE

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### National Health Council Applauds Effort to Reduce Out-of-Pocket Costs

(Washington, DC) -- The National Health Council (NHC) has issued a statement in support of proposed legislation to help close the coverage gap in the Medicare prescription drug program, commonly known as the “doughnut hole.”

Under Medicare Part D, beneficiaries are required to pay the entire cost of their prescriptions after initial coverage is exhausted but before catastrophic coverage begins. The Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA) announced today its support of legislation to provide a 50 percent discount to most beneficiaries on brand-name medicines covered by Part D when purchased in the coverage gap.

The following statement is from NHC Executive Vice President and COO Marc Boutin.

We know that excessive health care costs discourage patients from adhering to their medical treatment plans. National surveys have shown that, due to cost, a significant percentage of the population delays getting medical care, didn't get tests, or can't fill prescriptions. This financial burden has a significant impact on people with chronic diseases and disabilities. Of those who are 65 years or older, nearly half have three or more chronic conditions.

We support legislation to help close the coverage gap in Medicare Part D. Such action aligns with the National Health Council's principles for Putting Patients First.<sup>®</sup> By curbing costs responsibly and in a way that does not place undue burden on patients with chronic conditions, our country is moving in the right direction toward rational health care reform that will result in better health outcomes.

The National Health Council is the only organization of its kind that brings together all segments of the health care community to provide a united voice for the more than 133 million people with chronic diseases and disabilities and their family caregivers. Made up of 115

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national health-related organizations, its core membership includes approximately 50 of the nation's leading patient advocacy groups. Other members include professional and membership associations, nonprofit organizations with an interest in health, and major pharmaceutical, medical device, and biotechnology companies.

**Key Facts:**

- In 2005, 133 million people had at least one chronic condition – <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/overview.htm>
- By 2025, chronic diseases will affect an estimated 164 million Americans, nearly half the U.S. population – <http://www.rwjf.org/files/research/chronicbook2002.pdf>
- Chronic diseases account for more than 75 percent of the nation's \$2 trillion medical care costs – <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/overview.htm>

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