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March 14th, 2007

Member of Congress
U.S. Senate and House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Member of Congress:

I am writing on behalf of the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) - the oldest and largest Hispanic membership organization in the United States - to urge your opposition to efforts by some Members of Congress to reduce funding for the Medicare Advantage (MA) program.

LULAC's mission is to advance the economic condition, educational attainment, health and civil rights of Hispanic Americans. Ensuring access to high quality, affordable health care is one of our top priorities, and one that is especially critical in the Hispanic community. We firmly believe Medicare Advantage is helping meet this challenge for Hispanic seniors.

Medicare Advantage is vital to the well-being of Hispanic Medicare beneficiaries. According to a 2005 study by Ken Thorpe, Ph.D., of Emory University, Hispanics rely disproportionately on the Medicare Advantage program. According to this study, more than half (53 percent) of Hispanic beneficiaries without Medicaid or employer-based coverage are enrolled in an MA plans where they are available.

MA plans are important because they provide enhanced benefits and lower cost-sharing than traditional Medicare. According to CMS, MA enrollees save \$86 per month when compared to beneficiaries in traditional Medicare. We are concerned that additional cuts in funding for Medicare Advantage will threaten access to comprehensive benefits, result in higher out-of-pocket health care costs, and create financial barriers to care that will be particularly harmful for Hispanic seniors.

The coordinated care and disease management offered under Medicare Advantage plans is especially critical for Hispanic Medicare beneficiaries, who are more likely to suffer from chronic conditions such as diabetes, asthma, and certain forms of cancer. These programs help assure that members with chronic conditions benefit from care management and coordination initiatives, which promote appropriate treatment and medication use, reduce the risk of adverse events, and optimize therapeutic outcomes.

LULAC calls upon your leadership to oppose these reduction cuts and fund MA programs to sustainable levels.

Sincerely,

Rosa Rosales
LULAC National President