

DRUG LEGISLATION

Seniors' Prescriptions Hot News Topic



“A drug benefit is a good idea, but it ought to be genuinely financed, and the price of enactment ought not be either unrelated tax cuts that the government can't afford or a hasty restructuring of Medicare that would undercut some of the program's undeniable strengths. Those are the real world problems in what remains of this Congress.”

-The Washington Post; April 1, 2000

“Obstacles to Reform: The biggest obstacle is the Clinton administration...President Clinton proposed a modest drug benefit under Medicare last year that would do little to help those with high costs. Recently, he added money for catastrophic drug costs. However, the coverage is far from complete and the proposal does nothing to solve the problems of Medicare.”

-National Center For Policy Analysis; March 16, 2000

“The Clinton administration is renewing pressure on Congress to create a new prescription drug benefit for the elderly this year. ‘It's an issue of a political will, not an issue of resources,’ said Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala.”

-Newsweek; March 31, 2000

Medical advances have given birth to numerous new miracle drugs that can help ensure seniors a longer life. However, the price tag for these drugs is often high —

What's the dilemma?

- Clinton is pressuring Congress to create a new drug benefit for Medicare — without a complete answer to funding.
- Congress is divided along party lines. Republicans and Democrats are looking at an election year and not necessarily the best long term solution for Medicare and Seniors.
- Drug corporations do not want extensive government regulations & price controls which could effect their profits drastically. They're pushing for insurance to solve the problem.
- Private insurers want any enacted legislation to be well thought-out. The answer to the problem should be broad enough to include a mix of well and chronically ill people. This is so that premium costs will not become prohibitive.
- Consumer groups want a resolution, NOW! And, this is understandable. They see Seniors who must make choices between the cost of purchasing the medications they need and eating.

A long term, well thought out, answer is the best one.

Toward that goal Torchmark executives have communicated with members of Congress their desire to meet in an effort to explain our ideas and provide useful advice. Due to years of experience in working with the Medicare program and providing Medigap insurance, Torchmark has a special knowledge in this complicated area. Sharing this knowledge could prove valuable in the end for all who want the right answer found.