



The SNP Alliance

For Immediate Release

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SNP Alliance Applauds Senate's Historic Vote Advancing Specialty Care for Vulnerable Seniors

Washington, DC, July 10, 2008 – The SNP Alliance, a Washington, DC-based leadership health policy group for Medicare Special Needs Plans (SNPs), scored a major and long-fought victory yesterday when the Senate passed a Medicare bill that among other provisions would lift the current moratorium and advance the ongoing development of SNPs, if the bill becomes law.

The legislation, which passed the House earlier and now the Senate with veto-proof margins, would refine SNP requirements to strengthen their focus on high-risk beneficiaries and enhance specialty care approaches and interventions in relation to the specific health needs of the targeted population.

The SNP Alliance applauds yesterday's vote. "The bill will advance the long-term viability of Special Needs Plans and pave the way for the replication of these important models of care for the neediest Medicare beneficiaries," explains Rich Bringewatt, chair of The SNP Alliance. "By enhancing SNP targeting and specialization requirements, Congress was able to reauthorize this critical program and lift the moratorium that was jeopardizing the financial viability of this program. We are very grateful to Senator Max Baucus (D-MT), Congressmen Charlie Rangel (D-NY) and Pete Stark (D-CA) and other House and Senate leaders that have worked to protect and advance Medicare beneficiaries' access to specialty care."

SNPs are required to limit enrollment to beneficiaries with special needs. If enacted, HR 6331 would:

- Stabilize and reauthorize SNPs through 2010
- Strengthen targeting of high-risk beneficiaries and specialty models of care
- Ensure better coordination of Medicare and Medicaid for dually eligible beneficiaries

"We still have a ways to go to improve care for frail, disabled, chronically-ill beneficiaries, but this legislation provides a critical next step toward high quality, efficient care for Medicare's most costly and vulnerable populations," notes Dr. Lora Wiggins, chief medical officer for Care Wisconsin, a dual SNP in Madison, Wisconsin.

While SNPs are Medicare Advantage programs, they hold great promise as a platform for better coordinating Medicare and Medicaid benefits and services for dually eligible beneficiaries. Pamela Parker, manager of Special Needs Purchasing at the Minnesota Department of Human Services hailed passage of HR 6331, indicating that "the SNP moratorium has been a serious barrier to alignment of Medicare and Medicaid purchasing arrangements" and that "lifting the moratorium is critical to preserving our investment in these coordinated care models."

While the White House indicates the President intends to veto the bill, Senate Majority Leader Reid expressed skepticism about such a veto since “the writing is on the wall,” as to the outcome.

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About The SNP Alliance

The SNP Alliance is a leadership organization for SNPs that includes all SNP models and legacy demonstrations that laid the foundation for specialty care. Members are committed to keeping the bar high for SNPs by targeting high-risk beneficiaries, promoting innovation in high-risk care and committing to SNP Alliance quality standards. www.nhpg.org