

8/29/2008 Moran, Health Experts Discuss Medicare Legislation

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Information Session Held to Explain Benefits of H.R. 6331

HAYS - Congressman Jerry Moran and health care experts from across Kansas spoke to senior citizens at the Hays Senior Center today about the passage of the Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act, H.R. 6331. Moran and guest speakers visited the center today to explain that the passage of H.R. 6331 allows hospitals, doctors, physical therapists and pharmacists to continue serving the 114,000 Medicare recipients in the First Congressional District. Importantly, the legislation fixes provisions for pharmacies, which is an issue Moran has championed since first coming to Congress.

"It seems that too often we don't have enough success in Washington," Moran said. "Finally, on an important issue that affects the health of Kansans, Congress has done something right."

Guest speakers that Moran invited to the event included: David Wilson of Topeka, President AARP Kansas; Fred Lucky of Topeka, Kansas Hospital Association; Dr. Michael Machen of Quinter, Kansas Medical Society; Jim Rorstrom of Hays, President of the Kansas Society of Health System Pharmacists and Dave Sanderson of Salina, Kansas Physical Therapy Association. Following the discussion of the legislation, Moran and the guest speakers hosted a Question and Answer session for the senior citizens at the center.

Additional guests who attended the event included: Ernie Kutzley of Topeka, AARP Kansas; Mary Tritsch of Topeka, AARP Kansas; Gerald and Dianna Schmitt of Wichita, AARP volunteers; Dan Morin with the Kansas Medical Society; Alberta Klaus of Hays, President of AARP chapter in Hays.

The Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act, H.R. 6331, requires pharmacies to be reimbursed in a timely manner for prescriptions already dispensed to patients. The bill also delays the implementation of the Average Manufacturing Price payment system, which would reimburse pharmacists for less than what it costs to fill Medicaid prescriptions. This legislation also suspends for 18 months a reduction in Medicare payments to physicians, establishes new grants for mental health services to Iraq war veterans in rural areas and begins a demonstration program for integrating care in rural communities. Finally, this bill will suspend the current bidding program for Durable Medical Equipment.

The current program could compromise Kansans' access to equipment and create more overhead costs for equipment providers. Moran has previously sponsored legislation to address each of these issues.

The legislation was introduced in the House of Representatives June 20, 2008, and became Public Law July 15, 2008.

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