

**SJM 8039 - H AMD 1014**

By Representative Ericksen

1           On page 1, line 8, beginning with "WHEREAS" strike all material  
2 through "medications." on page 3, line 14, and insert the  
3 following:  
4

5           "WHEREAS, the Washington state legislature has failed to  
6 address the underlying causes to the rising cost of health care,  
7 which has led to an increase in the number of uninsured and  
8 underinsured in our state; and

9           WHEREAS, on December 8, 2003, the Medicare Prescription Drug,  
10 Improvement, and Modernization Act was signed into law, which  
11 established the largest entitlement program, Medicare Part D, since  
12 the establishment of Medicare and Medicaid in 1965, along with the  
13 very successful health savings accounts; and

14           WHEREAS, Nearly one million residents of Washington state  
15 receive health coverage through Medicare and thus became eligible  
16 to purchase prescription drug coverage through the Medicare Part D  
17 program on January 1, 2006; and

18           WHEREAS, the Medicare Part D program introduces market based  
19 principles into a government program that has increased competition  
20 that has resulted in lower than expected premiums, and offers  
21 beneficiaries choice in selecting a prescription drug plan that  
22 meets their individual needs and budget; and

23           WHEREAS, many Medicare beneficiaries who did not previously  
24 have prescription drug coverage, now have the opportunity to  
25 receive assistance with their prescription drug costs; and

26           WHEREAS, as of January 13, 2006, 61,233 Washington state  
27 citizens had enrolled in a Medicare Part D prescription drug plan  
28 stand-alone plan (excluding dual Medicaid-Medicare eligibles), the  
29 majority of these individuals did not previously have prescription  
30 drug coverage, or had substantially less prescription drug  
31 coverage; and

1           WHEREAS, as of January 13, 2006, an additional 72,341  
2 Washington state citizens had enrolled in a Medicare Advantage Plan  
3 that now includes a prescription drug benefit which is generally  
4 much more extensive and does not include caps on coverage that were  
5 common in these plans prior to the implementation of Medicare Part  
6 D. Enrollees in Medicare Advantage Plans now save an average of  
7 about \$100 in out-of-pocket costs compared to traditional Medicare;  
8 and

9           WHEREAS, enrollment in Medicare Part D and Medicare Advantage  
10 Plans continue to increase each month; and

11           WHEREAS, the Medicare Part D program utilizes electronic  
12 prescribing, which enables a physician to transmit a prescription  
13 electronically to a patient's pharmacy of choice. This not only can  
14 be easier for the physician, pharmacy, and patient than paper  
15 prescriptions, but it also can improve patient safety and reduce  
16 avoidable health care costs by decreasing prescription errors  
17 caused by hard-to-read handwriting and communication errors, and by  
18 automating the process of checking for drug interactions and  
19 allergies; and

20           WHEREAS, some individuals have experienced difficulties in  
21 choosing a Medicare Part D plan and/or in the transition to a  
22 Medicare Part D plan; and

23           WHEREAS, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS)  
24 has been working cooperatively with individual citizens, states,  
25 and organizations involved in or effected by Medicare Part D to  
26 resolve problems arising out of the implementation of this large  
27 and complex entitlement program.

28           NOW, THEREFORE, Your Memorialists respectfully pray that the  
29 Congress and the Administration continue to work cooperatively with  
30 individual citizens, states, and organizations involved in or  
31 affected by Medicare Part D to enhance the programs success in  
32 providing prescription drugs to the senior and disabled citizens of  
33 our country.

34           AND FURTHERMORE, we request that Congress and the  
35 Administration continue the progress underway towards consumer  
36 directed health care, such as widening access to health savings  
37 accounts.

38           BE IT RESOLVED, That copies of this Memorial be immediately  
39 transmitted to the Honorable George W. Bush, President of the

1 United States, the President of the United States Senate, the  
2 Speaker of the House of Representatives, and each member of  
3 Congress from the State of Washington."

**EFFECT:** Requests Congress and the Federal Government to continue working cooperatively with individuals, the States, and organizations to enhance the Medicare Part D prescription drug program for senior citizens and disabled adults.