

**Owings, MD** - Congressman Steny H. Hoyer (D-MD) met today with about two dozen local AARP officials and members to talk about the [benefits for older Americans](#) in the newly-enacted health insurance reform law and how leaders can work together to inform communities about these benefits. The organization also presented Rep. Hoyer with its [2009 Congressional Leadership Award](#), for his leadership on preventing age discrimination and working to ensure equal rights for all workers, including passage of the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, which strengthened laws prohibiting wage discrimination on the basis of age, among other individual characteristics.

“For many seniors, Medicare is an absolute necessity, and by enacting health insurance reform, we are working to ensure that it remains strong for many years to come,” **said Rep. Hoyer.**

“The health insurance reform law makes Medicare work better, strengthening benefits by lowering prescription drug costs and eliminating co-pays for preventive care, giving seniors the option of having a free preventive check-up each year, and investing in the program to extend its solvency by nine more years. As we work to bring quality, affordable care to all Americans, we are making sure that seniors can keep relying on Medicare for their peace of mind.”

With health reform, seniors will see a strong, new package of benefits that includes lowering the cost of Medicare prescription drugs by closing the Part D “donut hole” and expanding access to the drug program for low-income seniors. The bill also provides for higher-quality, more cost-efficient care through new incentives for doctors to share patient care information on patients and coordinate treatments. And to save patients and the system in the long run, the current reform plan encourages greater preventive care—everything from blood pressure tests to cancer screenings—by eliminating preventive care co-payments.

In addition to its work on health insurance reform as one of its first acts, the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress passed the [Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act](#) to strengthen laws prohibiting wage discrimination on the basis of age, among other individual characteristics. Congressman Hoyer was a leader in this effort, and continues to work on behalf of those who are victims of unjustified inequality.

“As our Nation continues to recover from an economic crisis, many Americans are still struggling to make ends meet, and now more than ever, we must stand in opposition to discrimination against older Americans, or any American, on the basis of age or any individual characteristic,” **said Hoyer.** “I am honored to be recognized for the work this Congress has done to strengthen the rights of older workers, and all workers.”

"We recognize the hard work that our lawmakers have done on the issues that are most critical to our members and all older Americans," **said AARP Maryland Senior State Director Rawle Andrews, Jr.**

"Because of Leader Hoyer's continued commitment to equal treatment for all workers, more Marylanders will be protected from illegal discriminatory compensation practices."

**Organizations representing older Americans that endorsed health insurance reform include:**

AARP

Alliance for Retired Americans  
Alzheimer's Foundation of America

American Association for Geriatric Psychiatry

American Hospice Foundation

Center for Medicare Advocacy, Inc.

Leadership Council of Aging Organizations

Medicare Rights Center

National Alliance for Caregiving

National Association of Area Agencies on Aging

National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare

National Consumer Voice for Quality Long Term Care

National Council on Aging

National Council on Independent Living

National Family Caregivers Association

National Senior Citizens Law Center

National Senior Corps Association

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