

(May 24, 2005) Rep. Dan Lipinski Fights to Give Medicare Power to Negotiate Lower Drug Prices

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WASHINGTON, DC - Rep. Dan Lipinski (IL-3d) has announced his support for H.R. 376, legislation that would grant Medicare the power to negotiate with drug companies for lower prices for seniors and people with disabilities. Rep. Lipinski signed a discharge petition that would bring the Medicare's Equitable Drugs for Seniors Act to the floor for a fair up-or-down vote.

"Unfortunately, the Medicare drug law that Congress passed in 2003 did absolutely nothing to actually bring down the costs of prescription drugs," Congressman Lipinski said. "Indeed, at the bidding of the big drug companies, the law actually prohibited Medicare from negotiating for lower prices. We must stand up for seniors and people with disabilities and reverse this provision - giving Medicare the ability to get the lowest possible prices for its 44 million beneficiaries."

Currently, Medicare is the only entity in this country that cannot bargain for lower drug prices. The states, Fortune 500 companies, large pharmacy chains, and the Veterans' Administration all use their bargaining clout to obtain lower drug prices for the patients they represent. Medicare should have the same ability.

"It is a disgrace in our country that so many seniors and people with disabilities have to choose between buying the medications their doctors have prescribed and buying their groceries," stated Rep. Lipinski "Many take their pills only every other day. Others take only one of the three or four medications their doctor has prescribed."

"This legislation would lower drug costs for Medicare beneficiaries by allowing the government to negotiate lower drug prices," said Congressman Lipinski. "It is only by enacting this legislation that we can begin to bring down drug prices and make drugs truly affordable for the millions of seniors and people with disabilities whose lives depend on them."