

## (December 17, 2005) Congressman Lipinski Addresses the New Medicare Prescription Drug Program

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the New Medicare Prescription Drug Program:

Statement Before the House of Representatives

Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that I be allow to address the house for one minute.

There is one issue of great concern that I hear about over and over again back home, the needlessly complicated Medicare Prescription Drug Benefit Program. Seniors are confused and frustrated as they attempt to study 60 plans in order to first decide whether to join, and then to choose which plan to sign up for. Many are simply giving up. I have already held half a dozen informational seminars on the program and every session has been packed. There is clearly a problem.

Congress could - and should - make the program better, more affordable, and less confusing by allowing Medicare to negotiate prices with drug companies. But the very least that Congress must do is pass the Medicare Informed Choice Act, which would delay the late enrollment penalty, prevent beneficiaries from losing their employer-based coverage, and allow seniors to switch plans if they make a mistake. Given the current confusion it is essential that we allow beneficiaries to take their time, check the facts, and know their options without being rushed to choose. We owe no less to our seniors.