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June 22, 2011

The Honorable Thomas Carper
United States Senate
513 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Tom Coburn
United States Senate
172 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senators Carper and Coburn:

AARP is pleased to endorse the Medicare and Medicaid Fighting Fraud and Abuse to Save Taxpayers' Dollars Act (otherwise known as the Medicare and Medicaid FAST Act). Your bipartisan legislation seeks to curb waste and fraud from the Medicare and Medicaid programs.

For years AARP has been working to fight health care fraud. We have educated our members about what they need to know in order to protect themselves and report fraudulent activity when it occurs. We are pleased to see that your legislation would improve upon the Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP), which will help educate beneficiaries to detect and report waste, fraud, and abuse in the Medicare program. Your legislation would also prohibit the display of Social Security Account Numbers on newly issued Medicare identification cards. Most Medicare beneficiaries carry their Medicare card with them, which leaves them vulnerable to the potential for identity theft if their wallets or purses are lost or stolen.

In addition, your legislation seeks to strengthen and improve upon many programs that already exist in the Medicare and Medicaid programs. For example, your legislation will improve data sharing across federal agencies and programs to ensure that information is shared in more real time to discourage fraudulent claims. Your legislation also includes additional penalties for those who illegally distribute Medicare, Medicaid, or CHIP beneficiary identification information or provider billing privileges.

We thank you for your leadership on efforts to eliminate fraud in the health care system, and we look forward to working with you to enact the Medicare and Medicaid FAST Act. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me, or Anna Schwamlein Howard of our Government Affairs staff at (202) 434-3770.

Sincerely,



Joyce Rogers
Senior Vice President
Government Affairs