

September 19, 2005

United States Congress  
Washington, DC

Dear Senator/Representative:

The undersigned members of the Leadership Council of Aging Organizations (LCAO) write to urge you to approve re-authorization of the Qualifying Individual (QI-1) program which is set to expire on September 30, 2005. The QI-1 benefit provides critical help to low-income people with Medicare in paying health care costs. Without immediate action, this important benefit will be lost.

The Medicare Savings Program known as QI-1 pays the Part B Medicare premiums for individuals with annual incomes between 120% and 135% of the federal poverty level. This amounts to a benefit of over \$900 annually that many older and Americans with disabilities depend upon to pay for a portion of their health care costs. People covered by QI-1 will also have their enrollment into Part D drug plans facilitated by CMS in 2006, and if they lose coverage, they will no longer receive this extra assistance with enrollment.

Over 161,000 people nationwide currently rely on the QI-1 program and could not afford Medicare coverage without this assistance.

We strongly urge you to prevent the expiration of existing low-income protections by approving extension of QI-1 permanently or at least through the end of next year. Immediate action to reauthorize QI-1 will prevent thousands of low-income older and disabled Americans from losing this crucial assistance.

Sincerely,

*AARP*

*AFL-CIO*

*Alliance for Retired Americans*

*Alzheimer's Association*

*American Association for International Aging*

*American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging*

*American Federation of Teachers Program on Retirement & Retirees*

*American Foundation for the Blind*

*American Geriatrics Society*

*American Public Health Association*

*American Society of Consultant Pharmacists*

*Asociacion Nacional Pro Personas Mayores*

*B'nai B'rith International Center*

*Catholic Health Association of the United States*

*Families USA*

*Gray Panthers*

*Military Officers Association of America*

*National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys*

*National Asian Pacific Center on Aging*

*National Association for Home Care and Hospice*  
*National Association of Area Agencies on Aging*  
*National Association of Nutrition and Aging Services Programs*  
*National Association of Professional Geriatric Care Managers*  
*National Association of Senior Companion Project Directors*  
*National Association of Social Workers*  
*National Association of State Units on Aging*  
*National Caucus and Center on Black Aged, Inc.*  
*National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare*  
*National Council on Aging*  
*National Hispanic Council on Aging*  
*National Indian Council on Aging, Inc.*  
*National Senior Citizens Law Center*  
*OWL, the voice of midlife and older women*  
*Service Employees International Union*  
*United Jewish Communities*