

**Washington, DC – Congressman Wally Herger (R-CA), the Ways and Means Health Subcommittee Ranking Member, today questioned AARP's unequivocal endorsement of legislation expected to be considered in the coming days by the Senate that will result in massive Medicare premium increases for its members.**

“It makes no sense for AARP to abandon their long-stated legislative priorities, which had included ensuring Medicare physician payment reform wouldn't increase seniors' premiums,” said Herger. “The Senate bill will increase seniors' Part B premiums by more than \$60 billion. AARP's endorsement of higher costs on its members raises the question of whether or not they're only looking out for their own interests in Washington, D.C. We need a permanent fix of the physician reimbursement system but it should be done in a fiscally responsible way that doesn't punish America's seniors.”

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) announced last week that the Senate would take up S. 1776, which would adjust payment rates to doctors serving Medicare patients and increase spending by \$247 billion. By law, 25 percent of Medicare Part B program spending, the part of Medicare that pays for physician office visits, must come from beneficiaries' premiums. By increasing federal spending on physicians by \$247 billion, S.1776 would result in a \$61 billion increase in out-of-pocket costs for seniors.

BACKGROUND: On its website, under 2009 legislative priorities, AARP states that, “We believe we can ensure that all Americans have access to affordable, quality health care and that we can make prescription drugs more accessible by... [protection against premium increases when addressing physician payment reform](#).” Despite this position, AARP released a letter Friday in which the organization “strongly urge[d]” Reid to pass S. 1776 which offers no such protection.