

*U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515-1102*

**NEWS RELEASE**

April 2, 2003

**CASE JOINS FELLOW MEMBERS OF NEW DEMOCRAT COALITION IN  
INTRODUCING MEDICARE PRESCRIPTION DRUG PLAN**

U.S. Congressman Ed Case (Hawaii, Second District) today joined fellow members of the House New Democrat Coalition in introducing a Medicare prescription drug plan.

The following is the text of his statement:

The New Democrat Medicare prescription drug proposal is universal, progressive, and affordable. It establishes a foundation for expanded drug coverage that most of us can agree with.

The New Democrat proposal offers universal eligibility for Medicare Part B enrollees without creating a separate premium and without increasing Part B premiums. It will not require Medicare beneficiaries to join private drug plans. At the same time, it will work in concert with the Medicaid program and private drug plans. Its universal, high-deductible drug benefit will cover 80 percent of drug costs after a beneficiary's total drug costs exceed \$4,000 in a calendar year. What is more, it will provide low-income beneficiaries with enhanced drug coverage via Medicare drug discount cards. Because the New Democrat drug proposal offers higher reimbursement rates for cheaper generic drugs, it also provides a powerful incentive to contain rising drug costs.

We all recognize that existing Medicare drug coverage is inadequate. The New Democrat Medicare prescription drug proposal expands this coverage yet remains affordable, reasonable, immediately operational, and targeted to those most in need. I urge all my colleagues to support this well-considered proposal.

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