

**Fifty-eighth Legislative Assembly of North Dakota
In Regular Session Commencing Tuesday, January 7, 2003**

**SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 4023
(Senators Stenehjem, Holmberg, J. Lee)
(Representatives Berg, Devlin, Price)**

A concurrent resolution urging the Congress to enact a Medicare prescription drug benefit.

WHEREAS, the use of prescription drugs improves the quality of care and helps patients live healthier, longer, and more productive lives while keeping them out of more costly acute care settings in the long term; and

WHEREAS, the increased use of new and improved prescription drugs has changed the delivery of health care in the United States since Medicare was enacted, and while two-thirds of the Medicare population has some form of prescription drug coverage, although many times it is inadequate, one-third of Medicare beneficiaries have no coverage at all; and

WHEREAS, Congress did not enact a drug benefit in the Medicare program therefore, the program is inadequate in providing the elderly and disabled the most appropriate drug therapies, preventing the delivery of quality health care at an affordable cost; and

WHEREAS, the private sector provides affordable coverage by negotiating discounts on drugs and meeting the needs of special populations with chronic diseases and those with comorbidities through coordinating care with disease management, drug utilization review, and patient education programs, all of which aid in ameliorating medical errors; and

WHEREAS, comprehensive reform of the Medicare program could utilize the successful tools of the private sector in coordinating care for this population and use the marketplace to foster competition among private plans, resulting in more choices of quality coverage for seniors and the disabled while maintaining the financial sustainability of the program; and

WHEREAS, Congress's inaction has failed to provide for comprehensive reform of Medicare, encouraging states to use their own resources to ease the burden of their elderly and disabled populations and effectively assume an unfunded, informal mandate; and

WHEREAS, in implementing state programs to assist the Medicare population, state budgetary constraints can often result in requirements to restrict and limit the patients' access to needed prescription drugs and enact anticompetitive price controls;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF NORTH DAKOTA, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN:

That the Fifty-eighth Legislative Assembly urges the Congress of the United States to enact financially sustainable, voluntary, universal, outpatient prescription drug coverage with consideration for privately administered plans as part of the federal Medicare program; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Secretary of State forward copies of this resolution to the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives and the President of the United States Senate and to each member of the North Dakota Congressional Delegation.

President of the Senate

Speaker of the House

Secretary of the Senate

Chief Clerk of the House

Filed in this office this _____ day of _____, 2003,
at _____ o'clock _____ M.

Secretary of State