Oakland Livingston Human Service Agency
A Community Action Agency Since 1964
Helping people. Changing lives.
"Equal Opportunity Employer/Program"

January 23, 2008

Ronald B. Borngesser
Chief Executive Officer

North Oakland
196 Cesar E. Chavez Avenue
P.O. Box 430598
Pontiac, Michigan
48343-0598
t 248/209.2600
f 248/209.2645
e info@olhsa.org

South Oakland
25 East Nine Mile Road
Ferndale, Michigan
48220-1719
t 248/542-5860
f 248/542-5897

Livingston County
2300 E. Grand River
Suite 107
Howell, Michigan
48843-7574
t 517/546.8500
f 517/546.3057
e livingston@olhsa.org

The Honorable Joseph Knollenberg
2349 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Re: The Children's Health and Medicare Protection Act of 2007 (CHAMP Act)

Dear Representative Knollenberg: Joe

The Oakland Livingston Human Service Agency's (OLHSA) Board of Directors voted unanimously at its January 23rd meeting to urge you to support of the following CHAMP measures when revising the Medicare legislation

- Increasing the Part D subsidy asset allowance: The Children's Health and Medicare Protection Act of 2007 (CHAMP) increases the asset allowance for Part D to $17,000 for an individual ($34,000 for a couple). This will allow low-income beneficiaries to retain modest retirement savings and still qualify for help with Part D drug costs.

- Updating the income and asset allowances for Medicare Savings Programs: These programs pay for Parts A & B cost-sharing for low-income beneficiaries. Currently, the income eligibility limit is lower than for Part D assistance. The asset limit has been frozen at $4,000 individual ($6,000 for a couple) since these programs were enacted. CHAMP instead aligns income and asset rules with the requirements for the Part D subsidy, and makes all of these programs permanent. The Medicare Payment Advisory Commission (MedPAC) made a similar recommendation of aligning income and asset criteria across all programs serving low-income Medicare beneficiaries.

- Improving enrollment in Medicare Savings Programs and the Part D subsidy: Enrollment in Medicare Saving Programs has been disappointingly low since their inception. Part D low-income subsidy enrollment is only slightly better. CHAMP contains several provisions to improve enrollment rates, including simplifying applications, eliminating estate recovery, and increasing the Social Security Administration's role in MSP enrollment. Additional funding for community-based outreach will also increase enrollment.

OLHSA's Board of Directors, has monitored issues and taken positions on policies which affect older adults. OLHSA is a private, non-profit Community Action Agency that has served the low-income, handicapped and elderly of Oakland and Livingston counties since 1964. We urge the Congress to enact these measures that would provide targeted help directly to needy seniors and people with disabilities as they cope with rising health care costs.

Sincerely,

Nancy Dingeldey

Nancy Dingeldey, Chair
OLHSA Board of Directors