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mso-font-pitch:variable; mso-font-signature:-1610611985 1107304683 0 0 159 0;} @font-face
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mso-font-signature:-1610611985 1073741899 0 0 159 0;} @font-face {font-family:Calibri;
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1073750139 0 0 159 0;} @font-face {font-family:Times; panose-1:2 2 6 3 5 4 5 2 3 4;
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### **Holt Supported Reform Bill, Which Includes Prescription Drug Help for Seniors Falling in the “Donut Hole” Coverage Gap**

(Washington, D.C.) – U.S. Rep. Rush Holt (NJ-12) announced that beginning this week, New Jersey seniors who face the prescription drug “donut hole” coverage gap will start receiving \$250 checks from Medicare. The health reform law, which Holt supported, provides seniors who fall in the prescription coverage gap in 2010 this one-time tax-free \$250 rebate check. These checks will continue to be mailed monthly over the next several months as seniors enter the coverage gap. The checks are just the first benefit from health reform for seniors in the Medicare Prescription Drug program. Beginning in January 2011, seniors in the donut hole will receive a 50 percent discount on brand name drugs. By 2020, the donut hole will be completely closed.

Last year, 8,300 seniors on Medicare in New Jersey's Twelfth District, and 227,000 statewide experienced the coverage gap, which is at more than \$3,600 – and increases each year. The millions of seniors who fall into the donut hole each year keep paying premiums while paying 100 percent of drug costs.

“Under health reform, Medicare not only is protected, it is strengthened,” Holt said. “Helping seniors who are struggling to buy the prescriptions they need is one way reform benefits Medicare beneficiaries. In addition to lower drug costs, seniors can expect free preventive care, better primary care, and a 12-year extension of the life of the Medicare Trust Fund.”

Health reform also includes the following benefits for seniors:

- **Better Primary Care:** Currently, about 12 million seniors lack access to a primary care doctor in their community. Reform will ensure seniors have access to and can spend more time with their primary care doctor, and receive better coordinated care and recommended treatments.
- **Free Preventive Care:** Seniors will pay nothing on recommended preventive services, including mammograms and colonoscopies. They also can take advantage of a free annual wellness visit.
- **Protection of Medicare:** The bill extends the solvency of the Medicare Trust Fund by at least 12 years, according to the Chief Medicare Actuary.
- **Greater Oversight:** Reform will crack down on waste, fraud, abuse that increase costs for everyone. Last year, improper Medicare payments that were discovered and stopped totaled more than \$450 million.

“To those who favor full repeal of health reform, I wonder what they will say to seniors who soon will receive a \$250 check to help with prescription drugs, and who are anticipating better primary care and free preventive care,” Holt said.

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