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McMorris Rodgers Supports Eastern Washington Doctors & Pharmacists

(Washington, D.C.) Today, Congresswoman Cathy McMorris Rodgers voted to improve Medicare coverage for Eastern Washington seniors and prevent a drastic cut to Medicare reimbursement rates for physicians.

McMorris Rodgers voted for the Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act (H.R. 6331). Among other things, the bill would:

- Prevent a 10.6% cut to Medicare physician reimbursements that were to take effect on June 30th, 2008;
- Provide a 1.1% increase in physician reimbursement rates for 2009;
- Provide incentives for doctors to use electronic prescription systems;
- Require Medicare to reimburse pharmacists for drugs prescribed within 14 days if pharmacists submit their claims electronically and within 30 days if submitted otherwise;
- Reexamines a competitive bidding process that would have prevented many small businesses from providing medical equipment to Medicare beneficiaries;
- Delay implementation of the new Average Manufacturing Price system, which may cause some pharmacists to be reimbursed 36% below cost to distribute generic Medicaid prescriptions;
- Allow Medicare to cover additional preventative services, and waive the deductible with respect to the initial physical exam that Medicare subscribers receive when they first enroll

“I have heard from a number of health care providers throughout Eastern Washington who tell me it is harder to see Medicare patients because the government doesn’t pay its bills,” McMorris Rodgers said. “It is important we do more to fully reimburse doctors and pharmacists for the care and attention they give to our Medicare subscribers.”

McMorris Rodgers is a co-founder of the Community Pharmacy Caucus which is working hard to preserve access to community pharmacies. The loss of these pharmacies would leave many people, including a large number of seniors in rural areas of Eastern Washington, without a way to receive necessary medications.