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August 25, 2016

The Honorable Raul Ruiz
1319 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Patrick Meehan
434 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Ruiz and Representative Meehan,

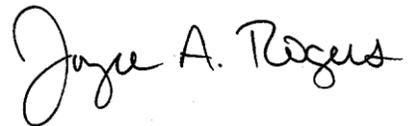
Thank you for introducing the *Beneficiary Enrollment Notification and Eligibility Simplification (BENES) Act of 2016* (H.R. 5772). AARP, with its nearly 38 million members in all 50 States and the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and U.S. Virgin Islands, is a nonpartisan, nonprofit, nationwide organization that helps people turn their goals and dreams into real possibilities, strengthens communities and fights for the issues that matter most to families such as healthcare, employment and income security, retirement planning, affordable utilities and protection from financial abuse. AARP is pleased to endorse the BENES Act, which helps people approaching age 65 to punctually and properly enroll in Medicare, thereby preventing delays in coverage and costly penalties.

AARP has long recommended that the Social Security Administration should notify potential Medicare beneficiaries, several months before they reach Medicare eligibility at age 65, about the steps to take if they want to enroll and about the circumstances under which premium penalties may be assessed. Your bill will direct the Social Security Administration to work with the Department of Health and Human Services to inform potential Medicare beneficiaries of the eligibility six months prior to an individual's Initial Enrollment Period (IEP) and again one month prior to an individual's IEP. This will help ensure potential Medicare beneficiaries approaching age 65 have adequate time to plan for their transition to Medicare.

Equally important, your bill eliminates current coverage gaps in the fifth, sixth, and seventh month of a newly eligible Medicare beneficiary's IEP and gaps in the annual General Enrollment Period (GEP), by establishing that Part B coverage begins the month immediately following enrollment in all IEP and GEP months. It also aligns the GEP with the annual Medicare open enrollment period for Medicare Advantage (MA) and Part D. This will help reduce confusion about when an individual has to enroll themselves in which program.

Again, thank you for your leadership and introducing the BENES Act. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me, or have your staff contact Andrew Scholnick, of our Government Affairs staff, at ascholnick@aarp.org or 202-434-3770.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joyce A. Rogers". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "J".

Joyce A. Rogers
Senior Vice President
Government Affairs