



Don Nickles, Chairman
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FY05 BUDGET RESOLUTION...SECURITY, OPPORTUNITY, RESPONSIBILITY

Health Care

Uninsured. Millions of Americans do not have access to affordable health insurance. The budget provides a deficit neutral reserve fund for legislation that addresses access to health care services and health insurance for the uninsured.

Medicare. Last year, the budget reserved \$400 billion to add a prescription drug benefit to the Medicare program. This year's budget reflects enactment of that bill. Seniors will see benefits beginning this year, when a drug discount card becomes available. Low-income seniors will receive additional federal assistance for the purchase of their drugs.

Medical Malpractice Reform. The cost of medical malpractice lawsuits has skyrocketed, forcing up the price of health care and in many cases limiting access for millions of Americans. Reforming the system would return these dollars from the pockets of trial lawyers back into health care, saving more than \$5 billion in costs to consumers and the government.

Medicaid. Medicaid in 2003 was added for the first time to GAO's list of high-risk programs, "owing to the program's size, growth, diversity, and fiscal management weaknesses." The budget includes spending of \$1 trillion on Medicaid over five years, but calls for Congress to address waste, fraud and abuse in the program to ensure these dollars are being spent on critical health care services, not being diverted to other uses.

Veterans Health. The budget provides increased funds for veterans health care so those who have served well are well-served in return. The budget provides \$29.1 billion, an increase of \$1.4 billion or 5 percent over last year. Spending on veterans health care has doubled since 1993 and 42 percent since President Bush submitted his first budget in FY 2001.

Global AIDS/HIV Initiatives. The budget includes \$2.8 billion in FY 2005 to slow the global spread of HIV/AIDS and deliver treatment to millions of infected people in developing countries. This amount is consistent with meeting the President's commitment to investing \$15 billion over five years to help eradicate this disease. By contrast, total U.S. global AIDS spending between 1993 and 2001 was just \$1.9 billion.

National Institutes of Health. The budget builds on momentum from the recent doubling of the NIH budget to fund new scientific ideas that can lead to treatments and cures for the world's diseases. Specifically, the budget provides \$28.7 billion for NIH, an increase of \$0.7 billion over last year. This is on top of the completed five-year doubling of the NIH budget from \$13.7 billion in 1998 to \$27.1 billion in 2003.