Prescription Drug Benefits

[SUPPORTING EFFORTS TO EXPAND THE SCOPE OF BENEFITS UNDER MEDICARE TO INCLUDE AN OUTPATIENT PRESCRIPTION DRUG BENEFIT FOR MEDICARE BENEFICIARIES AND URGING THE U.S. CONGRESS AND THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES TO ENACT A PRESCRIPTION DRUG BENEFIT MEETING THE REQUIREMENTS OF H.R. 4770]

WHEREAS, Today, pharmaceutical therapies are a primary form of medical care and often substitute for more costly therapies like hospitalization and surgery; and,

WHEREAS, The growing importance and increased use of prescription drugs disproportionately impacts the elderly, who account for 13% of the nation’s population but over one third of the nation’s total drug expenditures; and,

WHEREAS, The costs of prescription drugs are rising and are projected to increase 165% over the next decade; and,

WHEREAS, Spending for prescription drugs has increased much faster than spending for other types of health care; and,

WHEREAS, Medicare provides health insurance to people age 65 and over; and,

WHEREAS, Medicare does not generally cover prescription drugs on an outpatient basis because when Medicare was first enacted in 1965, pharmaceutical therapies were not as commonly available as they are now; and,

WHEREAS, The lack of drug coverage can expose Medicare beneficiaries to high out-of-pocket spending that, in turn, may
result in under-utilization of prescribed medication and adverse health outcomes; and,

WHEREAS, Our seniors should have the wherewithal to live with dignity and in economic health and should not have to choose between filling their prescriptions and spending money on other necessities; and,

WHEREAS, An outpatient prescription drug benefit should be part of the Medicare program to ensure that beneficiaries do not go without medications or bear exorbitant out-of-pocket costs; and

WHEREAS, Such prescription drug benefit should provide for discounts on all prescription purchases and be offered under reasonably affordable premium and co-pay arrangements with catastrophic out-of-pocket protections; and,

WHEREAS, Support for providing drug coverage to seniors is broad, with over three-fourths (76%) of the public favoring guaranteeing prescription drug coverage to everyone on Medicare, even if it means more government spending to pay for it and sixty-two percent (62%) prefer expanding Medicare to pay directly for part of prescription medicine costs for people age 65 and over; and,

WHEREAS, H.R. 4770, the Medicare Guaranteed and Defined RX Benefit and Health Provider Relief Act, sponsored by Representative Stark and supported by San Francisco Representatives Pelosi and Lantos, successfully provides for a comprehensive Medicare prescription drug benefit for all seniors; now, therefore be it

SUPERVISOR BECERRIL
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Board of Supervisors supports efforts to expand the scope of benefits under Medicare to include an outpatient prescription drug benefit; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco hereby urges the U.S. Congress and the President of the United States to enact a prescription drug benefit meeting the requirements of H.R. 4770.
Resolution supporting efforts to expand the scope of benefits under Medicare to include an outpatient prescription drug benefit for Medicare beneficiaries and urging the U.S. Congress and the President of the United States to enact a prescription drug benefit meeting the requirements of H.R. 4770.

October 23, 2000 Board of Supervisors — ADOPTED

Ayes: 9 - Ammiano, Becerril, Bierman, Brown, Katz, Leno, Newsom, Teng, Yaki
Absent: 2 - Kaufman, Yee
File No. 001816

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was ADOPTED on October 23, 2000 by the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco.

Gloria L. Young
Clerk of the Board

Date Approved

Mayor Willie L. Brown Jr.