

## **OPENING STATEMENT**

**SENATOR JOHN BREAUX**

**JULY 22, 2003**

### **“Direct-to-Consumer Advertising of Prescription Drugs: What Are The Consequences?”**

Mr. Chairman, thank you for holding today’s hearing. While the subject of prescription drugs is not new to this Committee, the aspect of direct-to-consumer (DTC) advertising is a new topic which we have not addressed. While there are many known benefits to DTC advertising, there are some concerns. We hope to explore some of these issues today.

This subject is very timely as Congress works to iron out differences between the House and Senate versions of Medicare reform bills which include prescription drug coverage. Clearly, we are seeking to find ways to provide prescription drug coverage so taxpayers, especially seniors, get the biggest bang for their buck. Because prescription drug spending is the fastest growing component of health care spending in the U.S., it is appropriate to take a look at DTC advertising to see what role – if any – it plays in rising health care costs.

Finally, this Committee has a longstanding history of protecting the interests of consumers, especially Older Americans. Since older Americans utilize prescription drugs at greater rates than other segments of the population, we should ensure that consumers are receiving adequate information about prescription drugs so they can make informed decisions about which drugs may or may not be safe and effective for them. This morning we can explore how the Food and Drug Administration, consumers, pharmaceutical manufactures and the medical community address this issue.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

