The President Promotes New Medicare Prescription Drug Benefit

Today's Presidential Action

Today, President Bush Delivered Remarks At The Department Of Health And Human Services To Inform Medicare Beneficiaries About The New Prescription Drug Benefit Available To Them Beginning In January 2006.

- **The President Is Kicking Off A National Outreach Effort.** This campaign will bring medical, community, and local partners together with the Federal government to educate seniors and Americans with disabilities about the new prescription drug benefit. All beneficiaries will receive a new handbook, "Medicare and You," in October, containing specific information about the new prescription drug plans available. Those with questions can also call 1-800-MEDICARE or visit www.medicare.gov for answers.
- **Millions Of Americans Are Already Taking Part In Medicare's Expanded Range Of Health Care Services.** Medicare offers a variety of new programs, including: a prescription drug discount card; preventive care like the "Welcome to Medicare" physical; and cardiovascular and blood sugar screening that can help identify and prevent obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure, and heart disease.

Background: President Bush Wants Seniors And Americans With Disabilities To Know About New Medicare Benefits

New Medicare Coverage Will Help All Medicare Beneficiaries Pay For Prescription Drugs.

- **Everyone On Medicare Can Get Help, No Matter How They Pay For Their Drugs.** Medicare will provide an average of more than $1,300 in federal help to each beneficiary.
- **Medicare Will Provide Extra Help To Beneficiaries With High Prescription Costs.** Starting in January, Medicare also will cover 95 percent of all prescription costs once beneficiaries spend $3,600 of their own money each year.

New Medicare Coverage Will Offer Everyone On Medicare Better Choices.

- **Medicare Advantage Plans Allow Seniors And Americans With Disabilities To Choose Their Plans And Get Better Drug Benefits.** Seniors and Americans with disabilities who enroll in Medicare Advantage Plans can choose the plan that works best for their needs and lifestyle, and will save an average of $100 each month over traditional Medicare.
- **Medicare Drug Benefits Offer Choice And Flexibility.** Everyone on Medicare will be able to choose brand name drugs or generic drugs – and pick them up at local pharmacies or receive them by mail.
- **Seniors Can Keep Retiree Plans If They Wish.** Seniors with good retiree drug coverage from a former employer or union can choose to keep those benefits and count on Medicare to help them save on premiums, or join a Medicare prescription drug plan.

New Medicare Coverage Will Provide Extra Help To Beneficiaries With Limited Income And Resources.

- **Medicare Will Pay Nearly All Of Low-Income Beneficiaries' Drug Bills.** About one-third of seniors will be eligible for a Medicare drug benefit without premiums, deductibles, or gaps in coverage. Co-payments will amount to no more than $5 for most people, and more than 95 percent of their drug bills will be covered.
- **Eligibility Forms Are Available Now.** Millions of current Medicaid beneficiaries will be automatically enrolled, and subsidy applications have been mailed to many low-income seniors and Americans with disabilities who are likely to be eligible. Forms are also available at locations around the country, including over 30,000 pharmacies. No financial documents or complicated records are required.
- **Medicare Is A Critical Safety Net For Americans With Disabilities.** Millions of Americans with developmental and physical disabilities, mental illness, and HIV/AIDS count on Medicare, and new Medicare coverage brings modern medicine to them.

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