

Overview: Medicare Outreach Strategy to Target Low Income Individuals May 2008

Purpose

Since the initial enrollment period of Medicare Part D, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), the Social Security Administration (SSA) and countless partners have worked diligently to assist individuals across the country to obtain the new prescription drug coverage and the low income subsidy to lessen the out-of-pocket costs for those with limited incomes and resources who may be paying the full cost of their medicines. Our efforts have been successful, yet there remain some individuals who do not have a known current source of prescription drug coverage. Of these individuals, it is estimated that some of them may also qualify for the Low Income Subsidy, where Medicare would cover a significant portion of their prescription drug coverage costs. CMS is committed to providing prescription drug coverage that is affordable to all people with Medicare, especially those who are most in need.

The CMS spring/summer outreach effort concentrates on finding and assisting individuals with limited means to apply for the subsidy and enroll in Medicare prescription drug coverage (Part D). This effort has been established apart from other existing-LIS and open enrollment outreach efforts to fully dedicate resources to engage this hard-to-reach population in applying for the subsidy.

Objectives

CMS will work with other federal agencies and partners to conduct a nationally-organized, locally-implemented outreach effort aimed to:

- Increase the number of applications for extra help by those who may potentially qualify, and ultimately increase the number of Medicare beneficiaries receiving Part D coverage.
- Raise awareness of the extra help by Medicare consumers and caregivers to obtain affordable prescription drug coverage and better manage their healthcare.

Strategies

CMS will employ a concentrated effort from May through July, 2008 in conjunction with our partners to provide localized assistance to lower income people with Medicare through a multi-pronged approach:

- Inform outreach efforts through data and research
- Provide key products
- Strengthen partnerships in the community
- Leverage media

Tactics

Inform outreach efforts through data and research

- Provide research findings and case studies of recent outreach conducted locally by partners through a CMS partner summit to external audiences in order to assist them in developing outreach tactics reaching target audiences in their communities.
- Expand innovative outreach in the community through sharing of lessons learned and success stories of recent outreach effort in the field.
- Update and distribute targeting data of possible low income individuals without a known form of current prescription drug coverage to assist community organizations in targeting appropriate counties and zip codes with outreach and support to lower income Medicare consumers.

Provide Key Products

- Disseminate updated and key publications to stakeholders and partners on LIS qualifications and tools to assist individuals in applying and understanding the subsidy program within Medicare Part D.
- Update the online LIS toolkit (<http://www.cms.hhs.gov/Partnerships/Toolkits/list.asp>) to house new materials and resources useful to those assisting lower income individuals apply for the subsidy.
- Develop additional versions of the successful LIS photo novella to promote greater understanding of the application process by those primarily speaking Chinese, Korean and Vietnamese.
- Share media materials for expanded use on the local level through national partner affiliates, state entities, community and faith-based organizations.

Strengthen Partnerships in the Community

- Host LIS partner summits, both in Washington, DC and in CMS Regions, with national and local organizations to share updated information and discuss recommended practices conducted by partners to reach target populations in their communities.
- Collaborate with the Social Security Administration to compliment and further expand LIS outreach and messages surrounding spring family gatherings, such as Mother's Day and Father's Day.
- Advance focus on LIS outreach by State Health Insurance Assistance Programs (SHIPs) by providing supplemental support for continued LIS outreach to lower income Medicare consumers.
- Support Asian language assistance to Chinese, Korean and Vietnamese communities through an Inter-Agency agreement with the Administration on Aging and the National Asian Pacific Center on Aging to provide a toll-free Helpline with customer service representatives who can assist individuals in these languages.
- Enhance LIS outreach in key rural and urban communities through existing National Association of Area Agencies on Aging relationship with 31 organizations specifically conducting outreach and counseling in targeted LIS-eligible areas across the country.

- Share information with key information intermediaries assisting those with lower incomes, such as providers, Indian Health Service, employer/union benefit coordinators, AoA Aging & Disability Resource Center and others who can encourage greater understanding and application for the subsidy.
- Share LIS campaign information and enrollment outreach ideas with officials from state-sponsored programs, like State Prescription Assistance Programs and the Medicare Savings Program.
- Collaborate with local community organizations in target areas to promote the availability of personalized assistance in applying for LIS.

Leverage Media

- Conduct paid media advertising in select markets to promote LIS and refer individuals to a local partner in the community to assist them with their questions and applying. Media outreach will include messages to the general, African American, Hispanic and Asian American Pacific Islander populations.
- Promote the dissemination of key information in publications with possible earned-media placement of LIS drop-in articles.
- Engage media outlets in informing the public on the importance of the LIS through regular news pitching, interviews and promotion.
- Conduct a Hispanic Radio/Satellite media tour to expand LIS messages to Spanish-speaking Medicare consumers across the country.

Media Placement Overview

- Advertising will occur from late May through July in select markets across the country, based on most current targeting data to reach lower income individuals who may qualify for the subsidy.
- All media placements will direct consumers to a local partner and/or national resource able to assist them in obtaining more information and applying for the subsidy.
- General Population Outreach – Advertising will consist of print or radio placements in 35 states across the country.
- African American Community Outreach – Community events supported by print advertising will occur in five targeted markets, Philadelphia, Memphis, Dallas, St. Louis, and Los Angeles. Events are geared to engage both Medicare beneficiaries and a younger audience who may be able to assist them in obtaining this extra help.
- Hispanic Community Outreach – Ten key states will be exposed to both print and radio advertising in Spanish promoting LIS and directing consumers and family members to local Spanish-speaking partners who can assist them.
- Asian American Pacific Islander Populations Outreach – Advertising will consist of print or radio placements in select areas within eight states nationwide. Messages will be available in Chinese, Korean or Vietnamese based on the dominant language spoken in the target markets and seek to engage both Medicare consumers and those assisting them with their healthcare decisions.