



U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE ON

# Finance

SENATOR CHUCK GRASSLEY, OF IOWA - CHAIRMAN

<http://finance.senate.gov>

## MEMORANDUM

To: Reporters and Editor  
Re: Medicare Today partnership  
Da: Friday, Nov. 19, 2004

Sen. Chuck Grassley, chairman of the Committee on Finance, issued the following comment on the announcement of the Medicare Today partnership.

“The nearly one hundred organizations that have come together to form the Medicare Today partnership merit recognition for their efforts to educate Medicare beneficiaries about the benefits available under the new Medicare law.

“Over the past several months, I’ve been disturbed by reports that some beneficiaries have chosen not to learn more about the law because of the negative information they’ve seen. That’s a shame. Study after study shows that the drug card program offers seniors real savings, especially those with low incomes who qualify for the \$1,200 in cash assistance. When the drug benefit begins in 2006, drug spending for the typical beneficiary will fall by 53 percent. Beneficiaries with low incomes will receive additional assistance and will have 85 percent to 98 percent of their drug costs covered. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) estimates that one-third of beneficiaries will qualify for this additional assistance. The new preventive benefits will help keep beneficiaries healthy and improve their quality of life.

“Beneficiaries deserve to receive objective and easily understood information about the Medicare law. And there’s much work to be done in this area. This year, I held 41 meetings on the Medicare law throughout Iowa. I learned that beneficiaries naturally have a lot of good questions about the new law, and they appreciate getting more information. The survey released by the Medicare Today partnership finds that after a description of the MMA’s benefits, the beneficiaries’ approval of the MMA increased by 27 percentage points from 35 percent to 62 percent. Improving awareness and knowledge is a crucial step in increasing approval and participation, according to the Medicare Today survey.

“I also learned that any education campaign must be multi-faceted. It must reach out not only to beneficiaries, but also to their providers and caregivers. The Medicare Today partnership fits this bill and will complement the education efforts under way by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.”

