

## **Introduction**

Beginning in January 2006, Medicare will begin offering prescription drug coverage to help people with Medicare pay for their prescriptions. While this is one of the most dramatic changes in Medicare history, many people still do not fully understand the variety of choices that they have concerning the new drug coverage. That's why the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) needs your help in getting the word out about the new drug coverage.

## **We Need Your Help!**

CMS is working with new and existing partners to help inform and educate people with Medicare about the new drug coverage. We hope you will use our **READY, SET, GO!** Event Resource Guide to plan, develop, or implement an educational event about the new coverage or an event during which you can offer people with Medicare personalized counseling about joining a Medicare drug plan. With your help, the people with Medicare within your state, county, and/or neighborhood will be able to receive the new benefits to which they are entitled.

**Here's how hosting a Medicare prescription drug coverage outreach event can help your organization! It can help you:**

- ***Be a Resource to the Medicare Beneficiaries You Serve***  
You will be informing people with Medicare and their family and friends about the new, cost-saving Medicare prescription drug plans. This is an opportunity for you to serve your members in a unique way and ensure that they get the information they need to live long and healthy lives.
- ***Generate Public Awareness***  
Community educational events and one-on-one assistance events provide a valuable forum for seniors and people with disabilities to hear from knowledgeable individuals about the new coverage and learn how to join a Medicare drug plan. You will be providing people with Medicare with up-to-date answers to their Medicare questions and assisting them in joining a Medicare drug plan that will help them save money on their prescriptions. By partnering with CMS on this project, you will further establish your organization as a trusted source of information in your area.
- ***Expand Your Partnership Network***  
Holding an event in your community can help you expand your partnership network and encourage collaboration with other organizations serving people with Medicare and/or their family and friends. CMS can help put your organization in touch with other potential partners in your area.

## How Do I Use This Kit?

This kit is broken into three main sections:

- **READY:** This section will help you get ready for your event. These tips will help you plot out an event timeline, choose a location, recruit partners, and plan the other logistical components for your event.
- **SET:** This section will guide you in targeting an audience, developing messages for the event, and choosing materials that will be appropriate for your events.
- **GO!:** This section will discuss the “day of” activities for your event, as well as offer suggestions for follow-up activities for your event.

The guide also features a section of materials, which includes a sample media advisory, press release, and an evaluation form, and a section of other helpful information, which includes fact sheets about the new coverage and a list of online resources.

We hope you find this guide useful, and we look forward to working with you to inform people with Medicare about the new prescription drug coverage!

# **I. GET READY!**

This section will help you get ready for your event. Here you will learn to plot out an event timeline, choose a location, recruit partners, and plan the other logistical components of the event. The following are some suggested steps you should take:

<p><b>SAMPLE TIMELINE FOR EVENT</b></p> <p><b>1 Month Before Event</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Brainstorm an action plan.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Choose a planning team.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Develop a budget.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Identify and engage partners</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Determine the location, date, and time for event.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Identify and invite speakers and moderator.</li></ul> <p><b>3 Weeks Before Event</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Finalize date, location, and time of event.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Begin outreach and/or advertising for event.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Compile list of local reporters to invite to event.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Send invitations to selected partners and VIPs.</li></ul> <p><b>2 Weeks Before Event</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Re-confirm speakers/participant involvement.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Increase outreach and promotion of event.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Prepare handouts for the meeting.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Choose main spokesperson for event.</li></ul> <p><b>5 Days Before Event</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Reach out to local media through a media advisory.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Finalize all handout material.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Call partners to gauge attendance.</li></ul> <p><b>2 Days Before Event</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Contact media that have not responded to the media advisory.</li></ul> <p><b>Day of Event</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Be prepared to talk to the media.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Get to the venue early.</li></ul> <p><b>After Event</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Record number of people who attended.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Evaluate your event.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Follow up with reporters.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Contact and thank the participants for their involvement.</li></ul>
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## **1.A Brainstorm an Action Plan**

Brainstorming an action plan will help you set the goals and create the framework for your event – whether it is an educational event or a personalized assistance event. Think about what would be the most effective method for educating the people that you serve about the new coverage.

This plan should guide your event planning and help you build a timeline similar to the one shown on the left. The comprehensiveness of the plan and timeline will depend on the type, scope, and size of your event. At the very least, the plan should address the following questions:

- What is the goal? Helping people with Medicare to join a plan? Providing information? Both?
- Who is your audience?
- When and where will the event be held?
- Who—among your staff and partners—will be helping organize the event?
- How much will the event cost? How can you work with your partners to share the cost?
- Who would you like to participate in the event?
- How will you work with your local media to generate coverage?

## **1.B Appoint an Event Organizer and Planning Team**

Build a planning team and appoint an event organizer from your staff who will be in charge of supervising all aspects of the event. In addition to the event organizer, the planning team should include people to secure a location, reach out to additional partners, invite participants and speakers, draft an agenda, and coordinate the event's promotion (e.g., create and disseminate fliers).

The size of your team depends on the scope and size of your event. If you are hosting a smaller educational event about the new coverage at your organization, an event organizer to coordinate speakers and/or materials may be sufficient. On the other hand, if you are hosting a personalized assistance event, you may need a slightly larger team in order to coordinate the additional tasks, such as securing a location with Internet-ready computers and supervising the volunteer counselors.

## **1.C Recruit Partners**

Whether you are planning an educational event or personalized assistance event, having partners is important. Partnering with other groups within your community expands your outreach capacity and your resources. Invite these groups to partner with you for the event, help plan it, and/or send participants to it. Encourage your partners to promote the event among their membership through e-mails, newsletters, Web sites, fliers, or phone trees. You could also send one of your staff to publicize your event at the partner's next membership meeting.

Do not limit your partnership network just to your existing partners. Make a list of additional groups or organizations that could add value to your existing partnership network or to the outreach event. Think about potential partners who reach your targeted population as part of their business. Many local businesses will "partner" for a single event that affects the community they serve. For example, if you are planning a personalized assistance fair geared toward helping Hispanic people with Medicare to join a drug plan, partner with an organization that works with that community. People with Medicare will be more likely to attend an event co-sponsored by a group with which they are already familiar.

Your partner outreach list should include the organization's name, key contact, phone number, e-mail address, and the organization's ability to do personalized outreach. You can use this list to find spokespeople and/or presenters for your event. Some examples of potential partners include:

- Senior housing facilities and senior centers
- Congregate meal sites
- Public libraries, including bookmobile services and outreach services to the homebound
- Retiree organizations and civic groups (e.g., Lions Club, Rotary Club)
- Chronic disease organizations (e.g., Alzheimer's Association, Arthritis Foundation)
- Senior volunteer organizations (e.g., Retired Seniors Volunteer Program–RSVP)
- Organizations serving communities of color (e.g., Urban League, The National Council of La Raza, Organization of Chinese Americans)
- Organizations serving people with disabilities (e.g., The Arc, Easter Seals)
- Caregiver and respite organizations
- Faith-based organizations (e.g., churches, synagogues, mosques, temples, Catholic Charities, Lutheran Social Services, St. Vincent de Paul societies)

- Hospitals and free or low-cost medical clinics
- City, county, or state elected officials

### 1.D Reach Out to Your Local SHIP Agencies

The State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) has counselors in every State and several Territories that are available to provide free personalized help with Medicare questions or problems. In some states, the SHIP program goes by a different name. For example, in Region 10, the SHIP program is known as the State Health Insurance Benefits Advisors (SHIBA) program. To locate the SHIP office in your state, check out the contact list for the state SHIP offices on Medicare’s Web site ([www.medicare.gov/contacts/static/allStateContacts.asp](http://www.medicare.gov/contacts/static/allStateContacts.asp)).

### 1.E Plan Your Event with Your Audience in Mind

Everything about your forum—including the discussion topics, participants, the venue, the time, and the date—should be developed with people with Medicare and their families and friends in mind. For instance, make certain that the venue is accessible to people with disabilities and/or has parking nearby.

### 1.F Set a Budget

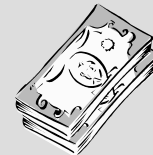
Putting on an event does not have to be costly. CMS can offer you materials and non-financial assistance to make your event a success. In most cases, particularly if you are hosting the event at your own facility, the costs from hosting an educational or personalized assistance program would be minimal. For example, if a senior center were hosting an educational event about the new coverage, it could hold the event on-site and draw speakers from its staff, the SHIP and/or the Social Security Administration (SSA) – none of whom would charge for their services. The few expenses the senior center would incur are copying costs (if there is not a copy machine on-site) and perhaps, snacks.

For a personalized assistance event, partnering with other organizations is a way to stretch the resources that you have even further. For example, a church that is not large enough to host an event for its parishioners on-site may partner with a local community or technical college or public library that has meeting space and Internet-ready computers. The church could also work with its local SHIP or RSVP program to staff the event with CMS-trained volunteers.

Other cost-saving event tips are included below.

#### **Strategies for Saving Money:**

- **Trade advertisements for copies.** Create relationships with local copy shops. You may be able to get free copies in exchange for advertising their name/shop on the back of handouts or take-away materials.



#### **Money-Saving Tip:**

Many newspapers, radio, and television stations run community service announcements of local events in their community calendars at no cost.

You can find the media outlets’ contact information by looking them up in the phone book, calling their offices, or visiting the news outlets’ Web sites.

Once you have the contact information, you should call and ask for the community calendar assignment editor.

- **Find co-sponsors.** Offer local hospitals, senior housing or assisted living facilities, food banks, retiree groups, businesses, community organizations, or local agencies an opportunity to co-sponsor the event with you. Contact the organization’s community relations department to discuss the details of the potential co-sponsorship. You could offer your partners an opportunity to add their logo to your materials and have their organizational materials on-hand at the event. In exchange, your co-sponsors could supply you with free or low-cost meeting space, food, or copy or phone privileges. Ask your co-sponsor to promote the event in its company newsletter, on its Web site and/or bulletin board, throughout its partnership network, and through office communications, such as e-mail or meetings.
- **Ask the media for public service announcements.** Ask local TV or radio station staff to facilitate your meeting in exchange for free promotion of the event on their programs in the days and hours leading up to, and through, your event. **See “Plan Media Outreach” in section 4.D for other tips for promoting your event.**

### 1.G Choose a Location

First, consider whether your organization can host the event. If it cannot, look to your partner organizations and explore whether they can host the event. Local churches, senior centers, senior housing facilities, community centers, libraries, hospitals, community or technical colleges, and health clinics are also good places to host meetings. These venues may also offer the space for free if they can co-sponsor the event. The location should be as convenient as possible for your desired audience, as well as easily accessible for people with disabilities.

Educational events can be hosted almost anywhere that there is enough space, but there are special considerations for personalized assistance events. For these types of events, you should select a location that has several Internet-ready computers available. You will be using these computers to assist people with Medicare in joining a prescription drug plan. Community or technical colleges, libraries, and community centers may be good potential partners for assistance events.

CMS recognizes that, in some cases, personalized assistance will be provided in environments without Internet access. In these cases, “The Medicare Rx Help is Here Resource Kit” and the “Medicare & You” handbook will be your primary tools. For more information on these tools, see the box to the right.



### Helpful Hint...

CMS offers a wealth of helpful tools and resources for partners on its Web site [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov). These tools include:

- **The Medicare Prescription Drug Plan Finder** – This interactive tool will help people decide whether they want to join a Medicare drug coverage plan. It will help people with Medicare to compare the Medicare drug plans in specific geographic areas and select a plan that meets their needs.
- **The Medicare Rx Help is Here Resource Kit** – This kit contains general background information about Medicare prescription drug coverage and tools, such as fact sheets, CDs, and a worksheet, that will help staff members who provide personalized assistance understand how to help people with their Medicare prescription drug coverage decisions.

You can use information in those tools to help people with Medicare understand drug coverage and the basic information about the plans that are available to them.

However, “The Medicare Rx Help is Here Resource Kit” and the “Medicare & You” handbook do not contain enough information as stand-alone tools to make some kinds of plan comparisons, particularly when comparing plans based on specific drug needs, pharmacy preferences, or lowest cost for prescription drugs the individual is currently taking. In those cases, you should help the person with Medicare complete the information worksheet in “The Medicare Rx Help is Here Resource Kit.” The person with Medicare can use the information collected on that worksheet when he or she chooses and joins a drug plan at a later time.

### **1.H Pick a Date and Time for the Meeting**

The date that you choose should be at least a month in advance to give you plenty of time to make the arrangements, find speakers, and publicize your event. Make sure your event will not compete with events that may also appeal to people with Medicare and/or their families and friends. You should also keep your audience in mind when selecting a time. Where your community’s events geared toward the elderly tend to be held on Wednesdays, do not select these days for your events if competing events are scheduled. To help get media coverage for your event, choose a date that tends to be a slow news day, such as Thursday or Friday.

### **1.I Confirm your Material and Equipment Needs**

There are a variety of materials in this kit, including fact sheets, information for ordering CMS materials, and a sample sign-in sheet and evaluation form. Look closely at the materials contained within this kit and decide which materials work best for your event’s format. Plan your material needs based on your audience. For example, if you know that a large portion of your audience is visually or hearing impaired, make sure that you have materials in Braille or an interpreter available. Both CMS and SSA have materials in Braille, and a partner organization should be able to connect you with an interpreter. If Spanish speakers make up a large portion of your audience, have Spanish-translated materials on hand. The majority of CMS’ and SSA’s materials are translated into a variety of languages.

You should also have a good idea of your equipment needs. Check with your speakers or presenters to see what their audiovisual needs are. Confirm with your venue that they are able to provide a microphone, projection screen, or a projector, if needed, or have a laptop and screen available for slide show presentations. If possible, visit the venue before the event. Confirm the audiovisual (A/V) details and check the room where the meeting will be held. Get a demonstration on how the A/V equipment works before the meeting, and/or make sure that the venue will have a technician on-hand to help you if you run into problems.

If you are hosting a personalized assistance event, you need a room that contains several tables or desks and chairs in order to do confidential, personalized consultations. You will also need several Internet-ready computers. If you will be conducting personalized assistance in a location that does not

have Internet-ready computers, use “The Medicare Rx Help is Here Resource Kit” and the “Medicare & You” handbook. You can help people with Medicare complete the Resource Kit’s informational worksheet, which they can use when they are joining the plan at a later date.



### **Helpful Tips for Hosting Events Focused on People with Medicare**

- Whenever possible, invite people from the communities you are trying to reach to volunteer for Medicare educational events or to act as personal counselors for assistance events. People with Medicare are often more willing to listen—and trust—their peers.
- Do not conduct a personalized assistance event in cooperation with another entertainment event – i.e., Bingo night. Otherwise, participants are likely to be distracted and miss vital information.
- Allow for time for questions during the presentation.
- Take cultural and/or linguistic diversity into consideration when planning an event for specific target audiences.
- Offer door prizes or other free giveaways as a way to boost event attendance.
- If you are using computers for your assistance fair, make sure that they are located in the back of the room, if possible. Computer equipment can be intimidating to older audiences, and there should be some privacy for people providing personal information. Make sure to have computer-savvy staff and volunteers on-hand to operate the computers.



## II. GET SET!

This section will guide you through targeting an audience, developing messages for the event, selecting panelists, and choosing materials that will be appropriate for your event.

### 2.A Determine your Target Audience

People with Medicare should always be your primary audience for a Medicare educational or personalized assistance event. You may decide, however, to tailor your event to a particular subgroup of this target group based on your constituents or members, as well as other events in your area. For example, you may partner with a local caregiver association to host an educational event to explain the new coverage to the family and friends of people with Medicare and to encourage them to help people who decide to join one of the new drug plans.

### 2.B Develop a Format

Choose the most appropriate format—an educational presentation or personalized assistance event—to achieve your goals and accommodate the people you want to attract. You should select a format that complements your organizational structure, as well as the needs of your people with Medicare. You know what works best for your organization and what will resonate with the people you serve.

You may decide that an educational presentation may work best with your existing program structure, or as a great precursor to an assistance event. Many senior centers, for example, host regular educational presentations as part of their outreach activities. Senior centers could draw speakers from the community, SSA, and SHIP to discuss how the new prescription drug coverage helps save money for people with Medicare. *See more about the SHIP program in section 1.D.*

A Medicare drug coverage personalized assistance event will likely be the best option for most organizations. (For more information on how to conduct personal assistance, see pages 10 - 12). This approach gives people with Medicare the opportunity to speak with knowledgeable staff who can assist them with their questions and walk them through the enrollment process.

### 2.C Draft an Agenda

The “flow” of your agenda depends on the format of your event. If you are hosting a personalized assistance event, you should include an educational presentation component to your agenda. Sample

### Drug Coverage Messages

Here are some key points that people with Medicare should know about the new coverage:

- Starting in 2006, Medicare will offer drug coverage that helps people with Medicare pay for their prescriptions.
- Medicare prescription drug coverage is available to *all* people with Medicare.
- There is extra help with premiums and co-payments for those who need it most.
- Medicare prescription drug coverage pays for brand name and generic drugs.
- You can choose between at least two Medicare drug plans and pick a plan that is best for you.

agendas for both a personalized assistance event and an educational presentation/panel discussion are included in the Materials Section.

## **2.D Select Speakers or Discussion Leaders**

Good speakers are essential to a good event. Choose speakers or discussion leaders who are engaging and knowledgeable. Possible speakers could be SHIP advisors, representatives from your local Social Security office, or community leaders and/or educators from key partner organizations, such as the Organization of Chinese Americans or Catholic Charities.

Also, when selecting speakers, consider choosing non-partisan, credible speakers who will bring media attention to your event. On the other hand, you could also raise your event's media status by selecting a high-profile moderator. Choose a moderator (e.g., a local news anchor, media personality, health advocate) who is respected in the community and who can also generate interest among the community and the media.

## **2.E Train Your Staff**

Everyone from your staff who is participating in the event should know at least the basics of the prescription drug coverage, and ideally, those who are assisting people in joining drug plans should have participated in CMS training about the new coverage. The fact sheets and handouts included in this guide, as well as the on-line partner resources, provide a wonderful primer.

The "Medicare Rx Help is Here Resource Kit" contains general background information about Medicare prescription drug coverage and tools, such as fact sheets, CDs, and a worksheet, that will help staff members who provide personalized assistance understand how to help people with Medicare at all stages of the decision-making process.

That said, you are **not** expected to know all the answers. Remember, you can always refer participants to 1-800 MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227; TTY users call 1-877-486-2048), and **www.medicare.gov** for additional information and clarification.

## **2.F Promote Your Event in the Community**

In order to get the maximum number of people at your event, you will need to raise awareness about your event in the community. Utilizing the media is a great low-cost way to let your community know about your outreach, education, and assistance capabilities. The earlier you can start promoting the event, the better. Distribute fliers where people with Medicare typically gather (e.g., senior centers,

### **It's Okay Not to Have All the Answers!**

That's why we have CMS! If you get a question that you cannot answer or if a person with Medicare needs additional information on a topic, refer them to CMS.

They can:

- Call 1-800 MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227; TTY users call 1-877-486-2048),
- Visit **www.medicare.gov**, or
- Use "The Medicare Prescription Drug Plan Finder" or "The Medicare Rx Help is Here Resource Kit" (Access both on **www.medicare.gov**)

public libraries, senior housing facilities, congregate meal sites, community service groups) at least two weeks before your event. Make sure that the fliers include all of the necessary information about the event—time, location, date, a point of contact, and the people who will be involved. Let the coordinators at these locations know about your event and ask them to publicize it, as well.

## How To Give Personal Assistance – A Four-Step Process

People who are helping people with Medicare make decisions about Medicare drug coverage should use these four basic steps to help them understand, and decide about, the new coverage.



- **Step 1:** Ask specific questions about a person's financial and medical situations.
- **Step 2:** Use the answers to explain the person's options for coverage.
- **Step 3:** Explain how to compare plans if the person wishes to proceed with choosing a plan.
- **Step 4:** If the person chooses a Medicare drug plan and wishes to join, help the person fill out the necessary forms, or explain where to go for further assistance.

***CAUTION: Your role is to provide guidance only. You cannot make recommendations about specific plans; you must allow people to make independent decisions.***

### **Step 1 – Ask specific questions about a person's financial and medical situation.**

Ask questions that will help identify the person with Medicare's options. You will need to ask about:

- Current health insurance coverage, if any. (It is essential to find out if the person has any kind of retiree drug coverage, a Medigap policy with drug coverage, Federal Employees Health Benefits Program, TRICARE, or VA health coverage)
- Prescription drugs the person takes
- Pharmacy preferences
- Income and resources (Ask if he or she is aware of the extra help available to people with limited incomes and/or resources. Be prepared to assist in the completion of either the online or paper application for the extra help. For more information, see the SSA section in the Other Resources section.)

The "Medicare Prescription Drug Plan Finder" ([www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov)) will walk you through the right questions to ask, and will provide much of the information the person with Medicare will need to make an informed choice. If you do not have Internet access, you can use the "Medicare Rx Help is Here Resource Kit" and consult the "Medicare & You" handbook for basic information about the plans.

### **Step 2 – Use the answers to explain the person's options for coverage**

The information gathered in Step 1 will help you decide whether you have enough information from the person with Medicare to move forward with the process. If there is not enough information, you

should explain exactly what information the person still needs to collect.

If you have enough basic information, explain what options the person with Medicare has for getting Medicare drug coverage and what decisions he or she needs to make. For example, a person who has retiree drug coverage will be asked questions to determine whether the person's existing coverage is at least as good as the new Medicare prescription drug coverage. If his or her existing drug coverage is at least as good, the person may decide not to join in a Medicare drug plan.

The Plan Finder will feature tools that have built-in questions and information that will help guide this discussion and provide information to assist people in making an informed decision about whether to join a Medicare prescription drug plan. Use the "Medicare Rx Help is Here Resource Kit" or the "Medicare & You" handbook as a guide for these questions if you do not have Internet access.

**Step 3 – If the person with Medicare wishes to proceed with choosing a plan, explain how to compare plans.**

When a person with Medicare decides to join a Medicare drug plan, use the Drug Plan Finder The Medicare Rx Help is Here Resource Kit, or the "Medicare & You" handbook to compare and choose a plan. Several key factors will vary in the plans available, and some of the factors will be more important to some people than to others. These tools will show how the drug plans differ, and will either illustrate how, or assist in, identifying plans that match a person's needs and preferences. Remember, you **SHOULD NOT** make recommendations about specific plans and **MUST** clearly step back and allow people to make independent decisions.

You should **not** enter into any relationship with a Medicare drug plan that would involve payment or other compensation being provided by a plan based on the number of people you or your organization enrolls in a specific plan(s).

If the person with Medicare does not have enough background information; is unable to understand the material; or is unable to make a final decision about which plan to choose, you should stop the process and let the person know what gaps will need to be filled to finish the process at a later time. This may happen and that's okay. In these cases, you should offer to assist the person in contacting friends, relatives, social workers, or others who may be able to help.

**Step 4 – If the person chooses a plan and wants to join, help the person fill out the necessary forms, or explain where to go for further assistance.**

Once a person chooses a plan, he or she may join that plan using one of the following methods:

- Contact the Medicare prescription drug plan directly, either by telephone, or by filling out the plan's application form.
- Go online to **www.medicare.gov** and join a plan using the site's enrollment tool.
- Call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227; TTY users call 1-877-486-2048).

CMS encourages organizations that provide personalized assistance to offer the additional service of completing the online enrollment process for people who have chosen a Medicare drug plan. The

Drug Plan Finder allows people to join either a participating Medicare Prescription Drug Plan or Medicare Advantage Prescription Drug plan online. At the conclusion of the session, the tool will give a confirmation number indicating that the person is now enrolled in a Medicare drug plan. If you do not have Internet access, you should help the person complete the information worksheet in the "Medicare Rx Help is Here Resource Kit." The person with Medicare can refer to the information collected on that worksheet when he or she chooses and joins a drug plan at a later time. If you receive any difficult or unusual questions, please refer them to 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227; TTY users call 1-877-486-2048).

### **Changing Plans**

If a person with Medicare is unhappy with the plan he or she chooses, the person will have at least one opportunity to change plans between November 15, 2005 and May 15, 2006. As a general rule, the person with Medicare can always cancel an enrollment prior to its effective date. So, for example, between November 15, 2005 and December 31, 2005, the person with Medicare could have changed his/her choice of plans several times. The last complete enrollment request received is the one that will be effective on January 1, 2006.

## **III. GO!**

This section will discuss the "day of" activities for your event, as well as offer suggestions for follow-up activities.

### **3.A Arrive Early to the Event**

On the day of the event, arrive at your venue at least an hour early (2-3 hours early if you will be hosting a large group) to leave time for setting up the room and addressing any last-minute logistical issues. You should have a clearly visible sign outside of the meeting location that directs your audience to the exact event location, and if your room is not immediately visible once people enter the venue, additional signs should clearly direct them to the meeting room.

### **3.B Set Up the Room**

Set up your venue according to the format of your program. For example, for an educational presentation, you may want to use a "U"-shape format. The lecturer and/or speakers are centered in the middle of the room and the audience's chairs and/or tables are situated on the sides and in front of the presenters, forming a "U" shape.

For a personalized assistance event, you should have several enrollment stations (tables and chairs) set up around the room. You want to make sure that the stations are spaced far enough apart to give participants some privacy during their sessions.

For either event, place a sign-in table either outside of the room or in a central location once you enter the room. Assign someone to staff the table in order to welcome guests and ask them to fill out a sign-in sheet. A sample sign-in sheet is included in this kit and will give your organization valuable information to use for mailing lists or outreach for future events. Also, if your budget allows, invest in nametags that your participants can complete or that you can complete for them. Nametags are a relatively inexpensive way to foster a feeling of community for your event.

In addition, get to know your meeting space, including where the restrooms, water fountains, and telephones are located, and where people can park.

### **3.C Double-Check Your Materials and Supplies**

Make sure that you have counted out enough agendas, fact sheets, handouts, and other presentation materials to distribute to at least 10%-25% more participants than you expect to attend. You always want to make sure that you have enough materials on hand. You can place material packets at each seat prior to the event, distribute the materials as people come into the event, or disseminate them during the event. You could also place materials on the sign-in table and encourage participants to pick up their packets when they arrive.

Remember to bring office supplies to the meeting (pens, scissors, tape, markers, clipboards, notepads, etc.). This will give people with Medicare supplies that they can use to take notes during the presentation and during the personalized assistance event. It will also help you be prepared any unexpected tasks that may arise, such as mending a broken sign or making name cards for the speakers.

### **3.D Do a Practice Run with Your A/V Equipment**

Test your A/V equipment before the event begins. Conduct a mini practice run to ensure that all the equipment works and that you know how to operate it. Address any problems or questions with the hosting facility's A/V technicians before the event begins. Before a personalized assistance event, check all your computers to make sure that they are working and can connect to the Internet.



### **What Do I Give to Reporters?**

The media folders that you hand out to members of the media on the day of your event should include:

- Meeting agenda
- Statements from speakers or organizations
- Copies of the presentations
- Fact sheets on Medicare prescription drug coverage

### **3.E Clearly Designate Staff Responsibilities**

To help the event run smoothly on the day-of, your staff should be given certain roles. The size of your team depends on the scope and size of your event. If you are hosting a larger, educational event, for example, you should assign your staff members such roles as troubleshooter, program/speaker coordinator, media coordinator, and timekeeper.

For example, the event organizer would probably be in the best position to act as the event troubleshooter who addresses any problems or concerns that arise during the event. The person who was responsible for promoting the event should be in charge of the media on the day of the event. That person should greet reporters as they arrive, coordinate interviews, and distribute media packets. The program/speaker coordinator would be responsible for addressing any needs of the speakers and moderator, as well as any

programmatic problems. If the program is running long, for example, the program/speaker coordinator would work with the timekeeper to determine how best to get the event back on track (e.g., make one presentation shorter, etc.).

If you are hosting a personalized assistance event, on the other hand, you may need a slightly larger team. In addition to many of the people noted above, you may also need someone to supervise the volunteer counselors and coordinate the scheduling for the sessions (i.e., direct people to available counselors and/or make sure people have completed the necessary forms).

### **3.F Evaluate Your Presentation**

Distribute evaluation forms at the end of your presentation or assistance event, and encourage all participants to complete the forms and return them to you. A sample event evaluation form is included in the Materials Section of this guide. When your event is over, tally up the returned forms and analyze the findings. You can use the feedback from these forms to inform the planning and implementation of your next event.

### **3.G Follow Up**

Conduct a debriefing session with your staff and volunteers after the event. Discuss what worked well and any issues, concerns, or comments the staff received from participants. If you have completed your analysis of the evaluation forms, talk about those findings, as well.

The day after your event, follow up with the reporters who attended your event and make sure that they have the information they need for their stories. Offer interviews, materials, and any other resources that the reporter might need. Ask them when the story on your event should run. Make a copy of the completed article or story, or request one from the reporter.

You should also follow up with reporters who expressed interest but did not attend your event. Offer to send them a media packet, as well as set up interviews for them.

# Materials for Your Prescription Drug Coverage Event

## 4.A Ten Facts about Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage

1. Medicare is a health insurance program for people age 65 years or older, people under the age of 65 with certain disabilities, and people of all ages with End-Stage Renal Disease (permanent kidney failure).
2. Starting Nov. 15, 2005, all people with Medicare can join a Medicare drug plan that covers prescription drugs. Medicare prescription drug coverage will be available beginning Jan. 1, 2006.
3. Join a prescription drug plan by Dec. 31, 2005 in order not to miss a day of Medicare drug coverage. If you join by Dec. 31, your coverage will begin Jan. 1, 2006.
4. Every person with Medicare will have a choice of at least two drug plans in their area that cover both brand name and generic drugs.
5. If you have limited income and/or resources, you may qualify for extra help paying for your prescription drugs. The amount of extra help you receive depends on your income and resources.
6. For people with Medicare and Medicaid, after Jan. 1, 2006, Medicare will pay for your drugs instead of Medicaid. You will need to join a Medicare drug plan for Medicare to pay for your drugs. Medicaid will still pay for your other health costs.
7. When you join a Medicare drug plan, your costs will vary depending on which plan you choose. In general, you pay a monthly premium (generally around \$32.20 in 2006) and a yearly deductible (up to the first \$250 in 2006).
8. The Medicare drug plans are different from the Medicare-approved drug discount cards that were available in 2004 and 2005. You can use your Medicare-approved drug discount card until May 15, 2006, or until you join a Medicare drug plan, whichever comes first.
9. Employers and unions that offer plans with drug coverage are required to notify their employees and retirees with Medicare whether their plans' drug coverage is at least as good as Medicare's.
10. If you already have prescription drug coverage through your Medicare private health plan or other insurance, check with your current plan to see if the coverage is changing.



## 4.B Sample Agenda for an Enrollment Fair

### Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage Informational Session & Enrollment Fair

Saturday, November 19, 2005  
10 a.m. - 3 p.m.  
Happy Seniors Senior Center  
City, State

- |                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| <b>10:00 – 10:05 a.m.</b>      | <b>Welcome and Overview of the Day</b><br>Sue R., Moderator<br>Director of Happy Seniors Senior Center                   |
| <b>10:05 – 10:15 a.m.</b>      | <b>Introduction of Speaker(s)</b><br>Jill T., Senior Activities Director<br>Happy Seniors Senior Center                  |
| <b>10:15 – 11:00 a.m.</b>      | <b>Overview of New Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage</b><br>Sarah S., Oregon SHIBA Office                              |
| <b>11:00 – 11:20 a.m.</b>      | <b>Resources Available for Those with Limited Incomes and/or Resources</b><br>Allison A., Social Security Administration |
| <b>11:20 a.m. – 11:40 a.m.</b> | <b>Question and Answer Session</b><br>Sue R., Moderator  |
| <b>11:40 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.</b> | <b>Wrap Up of Forum and Introduction of Next Activity: One-on-one Assistance Event*</b><br>Sue R., Moderator             |
| <b>11:45 a.m. – Noon</b>       | <b>Break</b>   |
| <b>Noon – 3 p.m.</b>           | <b>Personalized Assistance Event*</b>  |

*\* During your wrap up, remember to remind participants to complete and return the evaluation surveys.*

## 4.C Sample Agenda for Educational Forum/Panel Discussion

### Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage Informational Session

Saturday, November 19, 2005  
10 a.m. - 3 p.m.  
Happy Seniors Senior Center  
City, State

- 10:00 – 10:05 a.m.**            **Welcome and Overview of the Day**  
Sue R., Moderator  
Director of Happy Seniors Senior Center
- 10:05 – 10:15 a.m.**            **Introduction of Speaker(s)**  
Jill T., Senior Activities Director  
Happy Seniors Senior Center
- 10:15 – 11:00 a.m.**            **Overview of New Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage**  
Sarah S., Oregon SHIBA Office
- 11:00 – 11:20 a.m.**            **Resources Available for Those with Limited Incomes and/or Resources**  
Allison A., Social Security Administration
- 11:20 a.m. – 11:40 a.m.**        **Question and Answer Session**  
Sue R., Moderator
- 11:40 a.m. – 11:50 a.m.**        **Wrap Up and Thank You**  
Sue R., Moderator
- 11:50 a.m. – Noon**            **Distribution of Evaluation Forms**

## 4.D Planning media outreach

If you have the time and the resources available, working with your local media is a wonderful way of generating coverage for your event. First, compile a list of media contacts. You can create a basic media list by contacting each outlet—newspaper, radio, or television—to check which reporter(s) should receive your event information and materials (see a sample media advisory in section 4.E and a sample fact sheet about Medicare prescription drug coverage in section 4.A). You can also find this information by visiting the news outlet’s Web site.

For all outlets, verify the address, telephone number, e-mail, fax numbers, and the correct spelling of each contact’s name and title. Make notes of any interesting information from your conversation with the media outlet on your media list (e.g., best time to reach the person; preferred communications format – e-mail, phone, fax; deadlines, etc.). Learn about special sections (i.e., health section, senior issues section) and the journalists who write for those sections.

Reporters are inundated with numerous requests, also known as pitches, asking them to write about certain issues, organizations, or events each day. Because reporters are typically short on time, they will not likely be able to listen to a long pitch. Keep your pitch short, concise, and on-message. Do not get sidetracked! Here are some things to keep in mind about what a reporter is looking for in a good story and some responses you can offer:

- **Timeliness: Is the story happening now?** Yes, enrollment for Medicare’s new prescription drug coverage begins Nov. 15, 2005. People with low-incomes and/or limited resources can qualify for extra help from the government to pay for their prescriptions.
- **Relevance: Will readers/viewers be affected?** Yes, the new drug coverage is one of the largest changes in Medicare history, but many people still do not know about the new benefits they can receive. Medicare prescription drug coverage is available to all people with Medicare, and there is extra help for those who need it most.
- **Human Interest: Who’s the face for the story?** Reporters like to have a “face” for their stories – someone whom they can interview who will provide a “real world” perspective. Always have a few people (people with Medicare, their friends and families, senior health activists, etc.) who you can offer to the reporter to interview. For example, have a person with Medicare who the reporter can interview that can speak about how expensive his or her drugs are and how the drug coverage will save him or her money.

The people you offer for reporters to interview must be credible and knowledgeable about the issue and your organization, and good speakers who can tell their story quickly and precisely. Give these people key points that you would like them to make during the interview (**See the key drug coverage messages in the Get Set! section**). While they will not likely be able to make all these points, they should be able to make a few of them. You may also want to do a practice interview with them, with you pretending to be the reporter.

Some other media tips include:

- Designate a spokesperson for your event that will be available to members of the press. Her/his name should be on all materials that you distribute to the media. This person should be knowledgeable about your event, the new coverage, and your organization.
- Send a media advisory or press release to the desired reporters. A media advisory is a very concise notice that denotes the event time, location, participants, as well as the event's purpose and content. A press release is a more detailed media advisory. There are a sample media advisory and press release in the Materials Section of this guide.
- Be aware of what is happening in the local news of your area so that you can put your event into context of recent news. This will help you increase the timeliness and relevance of your event to reporters. For example, if there is a change to your community's social or health services that affect people with Medicare, you can talk about how the new drug coverage will allow seniors and people with disabilities to stretch their resources even further.
- Two or three days before the event, call reporters. Ask them if they received your materials and ask them if they are interested in attending. If they have not received the material, confirm their e-mail or fax and offer to send the information again. To increase the chance of the media covering your event, be sure to develop your media materials ahead of time.
- Samples of these materials—a media advisory and press release—are included on the following pages. When sending out these materials to the media, you should also include a one-page fact sheet about the coverage<sup>1</sup>.

## 4.E Sample Media Advisory

### MEDIA ADVISORY

*Media Contact: Beth Smith, Program Assistant  
Happy Seniors Senior Center  
555-555-5555*

#### **Happy Seniors Senior Center to Host Medicare Drug Coverage**

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<sup>1</sup> **Ten Facts about Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage** (4.A) or CMS' "Quick Facts about Medicare's New Coverage for Prescription Drugs," which can be downloaded from the Publications Section of [www.medicare.gov/pdphome.asp](http://www.medicare.gov/pdphome.asp), should be included in any handouts that you give to members of the media at your event(s).

## **Educational Event, Assistance Event**

PORTLAND, OREGON, (November 14, 2005) – Happy Seniors Senior Center will be hosting an educational presentation about the new Medicare prescription drug coverage and a personalized assistance event. Starting in January 2006, Medicare will offer coverage to help people with Medicare pay for their prescriptions. The event is designed to prepare people with Medicare to select and to join a Medicare drug plan. Enrollment in the new coverage—the largest change to Medicare since the program’s inception in 1965—begins on Nov. 15<sup>th</sup> and ends on May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2006.

**When:** Saturday, November 19, 2005  
10 a.m. - 3 p.m.

**Where:** Happy Seniors Senior Center  
1234 Happy Trails Lane  
City, State 12345

**Who:** Speakers include representatives from the Oregon State Health Insurance Benefits Advisors and Social Security Administration:

**Why:** To learn more about the new Medicare prescription drug coverage and to join a Medicare drug plan

## 4.F Sample Press Release

### **PRESS RELEASE**

For Immediate Release

**Contact:** Beth Smith, Program Assistant  
Happy Seniors Senior Center, 555-555-5555

#### **Senior Center to Host Drug Coverage Assistance Fair, Educational Presentation**

PORTLAND, OREGON - Happy Seniors Senior Center will be hosting a personalized assistance event and educational presentation about Medicare's new prescription drug coverage, which will give more than 457,000 people with Medicare in Oregon help in paying for their brand-name and generic prescription drugs.

The event will be held on Saturday, Nov. 19<sup>th</sup>, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., at the Happy Seniors Senior Center, which is located at 1234 Happy Trails Lane in Portland. The assistance event and educational presentation is designed to prepare seniors to select and to join a Medicare drug plan.

Starting in January 2006, Medicare will offer coverage to help people with Medicare pay for their prescriptions. Enrolling in the new coverage—the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services' (CMS) largest change to Medicare since the program's inception in 1965—begins this Nov. 15<sup>th</sup> and ends on May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2006. Unfortunately, many people with Medicare still do not know about the new drug coverage.

The educational presentation, which will begin at 10 a.m., will provide people with Medicare with an overview of the new coverage, descriptions of the available drug plans, and information about the extra help available for people with limited incomes and/or resources. Speakers include representatives from the State Health Insurance Benefits Advisors and the Social Security Administration. The personalized assistance event, which will begin at noon, will assist people with Medicare in joining a drug plan.

"The difficulty that many seniors have with the program is the complexity of the enrollment process," said Susan R, director of the Happy Seniors Senior Center. "That's why we are holding this event - to serve as a resource that seniors can utilize to join the new drug plans."

For more information on the new Medicare drug coverage, visit [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov) or call 1-800-MEDICARE (800-633-4227)/ TTY users: 1-877-486-2048.

###

#### 4.G Sample Sign-In Sheet

### SIGN UP TO RECEIVE MORE INFORMATION ON THE MEDICARE PRESCRIPTION DRUG COVERAGE

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Name/Title	Mailing Address	Phone (include area code)	Fax	E-mail Address

#### 4.H Sample Evaluation Sheet for Participants

## *Evaluation*

Please help us improve future events by providing your feedback below. Your responses will remain confidential. Thank you!

1) How would you rate your knowledge of the Medicare prescription drug coverage prior to this workshop? (*Circle one*)

Beginner                      Intermediate                      Advanced Intermediate                      Advanced

2) Using a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 = *Strongly Agree* and 5 = *Strongly Disagree*, how would you rate how clearly the information was presented? (*Circle one*)

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

3) The information presented at this meeting was: (*Circle one*)

Too simplistic      Just right      Too detailed      Other \_\_\_\_\_

4) I have a better understanding of the Medicare prescription drug coverage as a result of this event. (*Circle one*)

Yes      No. If no please explain \_\_\_\_\_

5) I feel better prepared to join a Medicare drug plan as a result of this workshop. (*Circle one*)

Yes      No. If no, please explain \_\_\_\_\_

6) I plan on sharing the information provided at the meeting with people with Medicare and/or their family and friends. (*Circle one*)

Yes      No. If no, please explain \_\_\_\_\_

7) Additional Comments: Please state what you found most valuable in today's event, areas that could be improved upon, or other feedback that you would like to share with us.

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## **Other Resources**

### **5.A Key Dates to Remember for the Medicare Drug Coverage**



Fall 2005		November 2005	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Medicare-approved prescription drug plans will begin to release details of the coverage they will provide.</li> <li>People with Medicare can begin to compare the savings of the drug plans offered in their areas at <a href="http://www.medicare.gov">www.medicare.gov</a> and 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227)/ TTY users: 1-877-486-2048.</li> <li>Employers and unions must notify their members how their current drug coverage compares with the new Medicare drug coverage.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>People can join a Medicare drug plan beginning Nov. 15<sup>th</sup>.</b></li> <li>Beginning on this date and over the next six months, tens of thousands of enrollment events will be held across the country.</li> <li><b>Individuals can join a Medicare drug plan by:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Calling approved Medicare drug plans directly, or visiting their websites.</b></li> <li><b>Calling 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227)/ TTY users: 1-877-486-2048.</b></li> <li><b>Visiting <a href="http://www.medicare.gov">www.medicare.gov</a>.</b></li> <li><b>Attending community enrollment events.</b></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
<p><b>December 2005</b></p> <p>People with Medicare are now in the enrollment period.</p> <p>Joining a drug plan by Dec. 31, 2005 ensures that drug coverage begins Jan. 1, 2006.</p>		<p><b>January 2006</b></p> <p>Medicare prescription drug coverage begins Jan. 1, 2006 for everyone who joins a drug plan by Dec. 31, 2005.</p>	
<p><b>February/March 2006</b></p> <p>Enrollment continues. Medicare coverage begins in the following month.</p>		<p><b>April/May 2006</b></p> <p>Reminders will be sent to everyone who is eligible for coverage but has not joined a plan.</p> <p>May 15, 2006 is the last day for most people to join a plan and not pay a penalty.</p>	



## 5.B CMS Publications & Handout Materials

CMS has an extensive online library of free publications and materials that are available in English and in Spanish. This section will help you sign up for the CMS Publications Mailing List, which will give you access to the online library. To help you select the right material(s) for your event, we have included, at the end of this section, descriptions of some of CMS' most frequently ordered publications.

### Mailing List

- **Signing up:** If you are a new user and would like to order CMS publications online, you must first e-mail Mailpubs@cms.hhs.gov with your organization's name and program type (for example, "XYZ Partnership Group," an advocacy group for seniors with diabetes). This will allow you to set up an account to order publications. Sign up as soon as possible, because it will take a few days for your request to be granted. Once your request is granted, you will receive an e-mail that gives you a temporary password.
- **Logging on:** Once you receive your temporary password, you can log onto the site. Go to <http://pubordering.cms.hhs.gov/maillinglist> and type in your e-mail and temporary password. You may want to change your password; make sure you change it to something you can easily remember. You will then proceed with setting up an account.
  1. Once logged on, click the "Next" button at the bottom of the screen. This will take you to the "Order Publications" screen.
  2. Click the "Current" button. This will take you to the publications that CMS has currently available. (The "New and Revised" screen shows publications that are in development and are available for pre-ordering . There is also an index and search feature on this screen that partners can use to find publications.)
  3. On the "Current" page, you will see a list of the available publications that you can order. The publications are sorted by categories: "Beneficiary – MMA;" "Beneficiary – M&Y (Medicare and You);" "Beneficiary – Misc.;" "Other – MMA;" "Other – Misc.;" and "All." Most of the publications that you would need for an enrollment or educational event (e.g., fact sheets, handouts) can be found under "Beneficiary – MMA." Your staff that will be answering questions about the Prescription Drug Coverage may find the Medicare and You series ("Beneficiary – M&Y") helpful.
  4. Select the publication(s) that you would like to order and enter the quantity you would like in the box next to the publication name. When your order is complete, click "Continue."
  5. Verify your order and click "Next."
  6. Print the next screen that confirms your order and keep it for your records.

7. Continue to submit your order. Your order is not finalized until you have selected the order button.
  8. Your materials should arrive in 4-6 weeks.
- **Questions:** The “Help” button, located in the red “CMS Publications Mailing List” banner, is a great resource for frequently asked questions. If you have additional questions about the site or about your order, you can also e-mail [Mailpubs@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:Mailpubs@cms.hhs.gov) with your query.

### **Most Frequently Ordered Publications on CMS Web sites**

- *Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage:* This fact sheet gives an overview of the new Medicare prescription drug coverage.
- *Introduction for Medicare’s New Prescription Drug Coverage:* This document provides a checklist of things that people with Medicare should consider before joining a specific drug plan.
- *Help with Medicare Prescription Drug Plan Costs:* This fact sheet explains the different groups that are eligible for financial assistance with prescription drug costs. The fact sheet also offers a detailed explanation of the resources that will be considered in determining assistance.
- *Employment-Related Drug Coverage:* Some employers and unions already offer plans with drug coverage to their retirees. This fact sheet explains what options are available to people with Medicare.
- *Prescription Drug Coverage Brochure:* This brochure provides basic information about the new prescription drug coverage and some important dates for people with Medicare to remember.
- *Calendar Poster:* This 11-by-17-inch poster is a calendar that documents the important dates for the new Medicare prescription drug coverage through May 2006.

## 5.C CMS Online Resources for Partners

### **CMS Partnership Tools ([www.cms.hhs.gov/partnerships/](http://www.cms.hhs.gov/partnerships/))**

The CMS Partner Center includes a variety of educational and outreach research tools for its partners, including an Information Folder—an electronic “folder” that includes fact sheets, handouts, presentations, timelines for implementation, beneficiary calendars—translated in English and Spanish, and an Outreach Toolkit. The Outreach Toolkit, which can be ordered online or downloaded at the above link, also includes fact sheets, presentations, visual aids, and enrollment forms and applications.

On this site, you can also find out more information about resources available for people with limited resources and/or low-income, and about the Social Security Administration’s efforts to reach out to this underserved group. To access the application for the extra help for people with limited incomes and/or resources, visit SSA’s Web site at [www.ssa.gov/prescriptionhelp/](http://www.ssa.gov/prescriptionhelp/) and click on the link “Apply for help,” or go to the form directly at (<https://s044a90.ssa.gov/apps6z/i1020/main.html>).

### **Other Resources Available on the CMS Web site ([www.cms.hhs.gov](http://www.cms.hhs.gov)):**

- **Open Door Forums.** These free events/teleconferences provide an opportunity for live dialogue between CMS and the community. CMS also holds Special Forums throughout the year to independently discuss new and important program topics. ([www.cms.hhs.gov/OpenDoorForums/](http://www.cms.hhs.gov/OpenDoorForums/))
- **CMS Mailing Lists.** Those interested in receiving the latest CMS news can subscribe to an electronic mailing list. (<http://new.cms.hhs.gov/apps/maillinglists/>)
- **Conferences.** Find out about conferences taking place in your area on various Medicare-related topics. (<http://new.cms.hhs.gov/apps/events/>)
- **Publications.** CMS provides access to publications, reports, and policy materials on various Medicare-related topics in English, Spanish, large print, and Braille. ([www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov))
- **Tribal Technical Advisory Group.** The Tribal Technical Advisory Group (TTAG) is a group of elected tribal leaders, or an appointed representative from their area, who are nominated from the 12 areas of the Indian Health Service (IHS) delivery system. The TTAG serves as an advisory committee to CMS on important healthcare matters associated with the Medicare, Medicaid, and State Children Health Insurance Programs ([http://new.cms.hhs.gov/AIAN/02\\_Consultation.asp](http://new.cms.hhs.gov/AIAN/02_Consultation.asp))

### **Other Helpful Web sites:**

- **U.S. Department of Health & Human Services.** The Department of Health and Human Services is the U.S. government's principal agency for protecting the health of all Americans

and providing essential human services. This Web site features a comprehensive section on aging, and data on older Americans, health insurance information, nursing homes and care facilities, safety and wellness information, and other resources for older Americans.

**([www.hhs.gov](http://www.hhs.gov))**

- **Health Center Locator:** This page on the Health Resources and Services Administration Web site identifies federally qualified health clinics throughout the country where people can receive free or low-cost healthcare services. You can search by geographic area, clinic name and location, program type, or type of service available. (**<http://ask.hrsa.gov/pc/>**)
- **State and County Quick Facts.** This page on the U.S. Census Bureau's Web site provides easy access to demographic information in states and counties throughout the nation. By choosing a particular state, county, or city, you can determine the number of people over the age of 65 and the number of people with disabilities, income, and the presence of various racial and ethnic populations in that area. (**<http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/>**)

## 5.D Other Helpful Resources

### **Centers for Medicaid & Medicare Services ([www.cms.hhs.gov](http://www.cms.hhs.gov))**

The Centers for Medicaid & Medicare Services (CMS) administers the Medicare program and works in partnership with the states to administer Medicaid, the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), and the health portability standards.

### **Official Government Site for People with Medicare ([www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov))**

This official Department of Health & Human Services Web site for people with Medicare provides recent changes to Medicare coverage and benefits, Frequently Asked Questions, and information on everything about Medicare, from Medicare billing to ordering replacement drug cards. You can access "The Medicare Prescription Drug Plan Finder," an interactive drug plan comparison tool, and "The Medicare Rx Help is Here Resource Kit," an online information packet on the new drug coverage, on this site.

### **State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP)**

The State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) has counselors in every State and several Territories that are available to provide free one-on-one help with your Medicare questions or problems. Through federal grants directed to states, SHIPs provide free counseling and assistance via telephone and face-to-face interactive sessions, public education presentations and programs, and media activities. For the contact information for your state SHIP office, visit [www.medicare.gov/contacts/static/allStateContacts.asp](http://www.medicare.gov/contacts/static/allStateContacts.asp).

### **Social Security Administration ([www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov))**

Social Security's site ([www.ssa.gov/prescriptionhelp/](http://www.ssa.gov/prescriptionhelp/)) features an online tool to help people decide if they qualify for help with Medicare prescription drug plan costs, a sample application for extra help, tips on completing it, and posters in multiple languages that can be downloaded. To access the application for the extra help for people with limited incomes and/or resources, visit SSA's Web site at [www.ssa.gov/prescriptionhelp/](http://www.ssa.gov/prescriptionhelp/) and click on the link "Apply for help," or go to the form directly at <https://s044a90.ssa.gov/apps6z/i1020/main.html>.

### **U.S. Administration on Aging ([www.aoa.gov/medicare/About/default.asp](http://www.aoa.gov/medicare/About/default.asp))**

The U.S. Administration on Aging (AoA) is an advocate agency for older persons and their concerns. AOA offers an on-line training video series that offers an overview of the Medicare prescription drug coverage. Your computer must be able to read wmv (Windows Media Video) to access these files.

The links for the "Your Guide to the Basics" video series are as follows:

- \* Part One (MPV) - <http://www.aoa.gov/medicare/resources/videos/Medicare-P1.wmv>
- \* Part Two (MPV) - <http://www.aoa.gov/medicare/resources/videos/Medicare-P2.wmv>
- \* Part Three (MPV) - <http://www.aoa.gov/medicare/resources/videos/Medicare-P3.wmv>
- \* Part Four (MPV) - <http://www.aoa.gov/medicare/resources/videos/Medicare-P4.wmv>

### **Access to Benefits Coalition ([www.accesstobenefits.org/default.aspx](http://www.accesstobenefits.org/default.aspx) )**

The Access to Benefits Coalition (ABC) is a public-private partnership led by a group of the nation's leading non-profit organizations that is committed to ensuring that all lower-income people with Medicare know about, and can make the best use of, both public and private prescription drug savings programs. The coalition is dedicated to ensuring that people with Medicare can make the best use of all available resources for reducing the costs of their prescription drugs, including Medicare prescription drug coverage, the extra help available for paying prescription drug costs, the Medicare-approved drug discount card program, State Pharmacy Assistance Programs, and Patient Assistance Programs.

### **National Association of Area Agencies on Aging and the National Association of State Units on Aging ([www.medicarerxoutreach.org/](http://www.medicarerxoutreach.org/))**

Through a supplemental grant from AoA under the Eldercare Locator Program, the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a) and the National Association of State Units on Aging (NASUA) have launched an initiative to assist state and local aging agencies. The National Aging Services Network—which includes 56 State Units on Aging (SUA), 655 Area Agencies on Aging (AAA), 30,000+ aging service providers, and 240 Title VI Native American aging programs—delivers aging services in every community in the nation. Every day, SUA, AAAs, and service providers across the country work either directly or indirectly with people with Medicare to educate and connect them to needed services.