

## **The Affordable Care Act Helps Seniors**

President Obama believes affordable health care you can rely on is part of the middle class bargain whether you're working or retired. The Affordable Care Act strengthens and protects Medicare for seniors who have earned and paid for the guaranteed coverage it provides. Nearly 50 million older Americans and Americans with disabilities rely on Medicare each year, and the new health care law makes Medicare stronger by adding new benefits, fighting fraud, and improving care for patients. The life of the Medicare Trust Fund will be extended to at least 2024 as a result of reducing waste, fraud, and abuse, and slowing cost growth in Medicare. And, over the next ten years, the law will save the average person in Medicare \$4,200. People with Medicare who have the prescription drug costs that hit the so-called donut hole will save an average of over \$16,000.

*Health reform is already making a difference by:*

### ***Making Prescription Drugs Affordable***

In the past, as many as one in four seniors went without a prescription every year because they couldn't afford it. To help these seniors, the law provides relief for people in the donut hole – the ones with the highest prescription drug costs. In 2010 and 2011, over 5.1 million seniors and people with disabilities on Medicare saved over \$3.1 billion on prescription drugs thanks to the Affordable Care Act. These savings include a one-time \$250 rebate check to seniors who fell into the prescription drug coverage gap known as the “donut hole” in 2010, and a 50 percent discount on brand-name drugs worth a total of \$2.1 billion, or an average of \$604 per person. Through the first two months of 2012, 70,000 seniors and people with disabilities have already received \$65 million in savings in the donut hole. Seniors will see additional savings on covered brand-name and generic drugs while in the coverage gap until the gap is closed in 2020.

### ***Covering Preventive Services With No Deductible or Co-Pay***

Under the new law, seniors can receive recommended preventive services such as flu shots, diabetes screenings, as well as a new Annual Wellness Visit, free of charge. So far, more than 32.5 million seniors have already received one or more free preventive services, including the new Annual Wellness Visit.

### ***Protecting Medicare Benefits***

Under the new health reform law, your existing Medicare-covered benefits can't be reduced or taken away. As always, you will be able to choose your own doctors.

### ***Fighting Fraud***

The health care law helps stop fraud with tougher screening procedures, stronger penalties, and new technology. Thanks in part to these efforts, we recovered \$4.1 billion in taxpayer dollars in 2011, the second year recoveries hit this record-breaking level. Total recoveries over the last

three years were \$10.7 billion. Prosecutions are way up, too: the number of individuals charged with fraud increased from 821 in fiscal year 2008 to 1,430 in fiscal year 2011 – nearly a 75 percent increase.

### ***Improving Care Coordination and Quality***

Through the newly established Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation, the Obama Administration is testing and supporting innovative new health care models that can reduce costs and strengthen the quality of health care. So far, it has introduced 16 initiatives involving over 50,000 health care providers that will touch the lives of Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries in all 50 states. Many doctors, hospitals, and other providers are taking advantage of new options to help them work better as teams to provide you the highest quality care possible. They are working to get you the care you need at the time you need it.

### ***Providing Choices while Lowering Costs***

The average person with Medicare will save approximately \$4,200 from 2011 to 2021, while those with high prescription drug costs will save much more – as much as \$16,000 over the same period. This is especially good news for people with chronic conditions such as diabetes and high blood pressure who must take their medication every day for many years. The number of seniors who joined Medicare Advantage plans increased by 17% between 2010 and 2012 while the premiums for such plans dropped by 16% – and seniors across the nation have a choice of health plans. And Part B premiums have remained stable while the Part B deductible fell by \$22 in 2012.