

Monthly Premiums For New Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage Program Will Cost Up to 40 Percent Less Than Originally Estimated

(NAPSA)—For seniors paying out of their own pockets for their medications, the new Medicare prescription drug coverage program brings welcome relief—at an even lower cost than originally anticipated. Recent estimates issued by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services found that as more prescription drug plans offer options to seniors, the savings are increasing.

When the plans take effect beginning on January 1, 2006, Medicare beneficiaries will be offered options for prescription drug coverage with premiums at \$20 per month or less—approximately \$10 to \$12 less per month than experts originally estimated.

“All of the options under the new Medicare prescription drug plan were already slated to offer seniors substantial savings on drug costs. This drop in premiums, coming as a result of competition between prescription drug plans, means more affordable ways for seniors to get the medications they need,” said Mary Grealy, president of the Healthcare Leadership Council, which administers Medicare Today—a program aimed at increasing awareness about the new Medicare prescription coverage among both seniors and their loved ones.

A study released in late August 2005 by Medicare Today showed that all Medicare beneficiaries who are not receiving other federal health assistance could save an average of nearly \$700 a year in out-of-pocket spending on drug costs and pay just \$32 a month for coverage. With recent reviews of the Medicare-approved drug plans indicating that monthly costs could be \$20 or less, many seniors will see even greater savings.



“It’s important that everyone age 65 and older take the time to find out more about this new Medicare benefit and see if it makes sense for them,” said Grealy. “The competition among prescription plans is resulting in even more affordable options for seniors. Since all of the plans are relatively reasonable in cost, seniors should take the time to carefully evaluate which plan will provide them with the best coverage—depending upon what illnesses or conditions they may have and what medications they take regularly.”

To help seniors with this evaluation process, Medicare Today has engaged organizers in all 50 states and the District of Columbia to coordinate local informational events in senior centers, senior housing facilities, pharmacies, grocery stores and other gathering places. Seniors can locate events by visiting www.MedicareToday.org and clicking on “Beneficiaries & Caregivers,” then the state in which they live. More information about the Medicare prescription drug program is also available 24 hours a day at 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227).