

# Spotlight on Health Care



## Medicare Part D: Helping Seniors Enjoy Better Quality Of Life

(NAPSA)—When it comes to improving health and limiting health care costs, the Medicare prescription drug program is a unique success. The latest evidence comes from a study recently published in *The New England Journal of Medicine*.

Improved access to medicines via the Part D program allows seniors to avoid hospitalizations and researchers point to numerous studies showing that improved access to medicines helps control costly chronic diseases such as diabetes and hypertension. The study found that the drug benefit saves Medicare overall about \$1,200 per year in hospital, nursing home and other costs for each senior who previously lacked comprehensive prescription drug coverage. Experts concluded that this equals about \$12.5 billion in annual savings.

“Part D is an unparalleled success and a true model for effective health care,” said John J. Castellani, president and CEO of the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA). “This is a program that improves the health of elderly Americans and lowers costs for both seniors and the federal government.”

Today, over 29 million Medicare enrollees have joined Part D and more than 90 percent of seniors have comprehensive drug coverage. And their costs are decreasing. Recently, the Medicare program said that average Part D premiums in 2012 will be \$30—a slight drop from this year and 44 percent less than originally pro-



**The Medicare Part D program is helping more seniors get the medicine they need and save money.**

jected. Importantly, both seniors and taxpayers are paying less than anticipated for the program. Recent Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimates show that for the first 10 years of the program, Part D will have spent 41 percent less than the initial CBO estimate.

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