

# Medicare Facts *for* Seniors



## How does the new law benefit you?

Congress and President Bush made good on our pledge to strengthen Medicare. Endorsed by the AARP, the new law offers a prescription drug benefit to all 40 million seniors to help them afford the cost of the medicine they need.

In addition, Americans of all ages can benefit from the creation of health savings accounts, which will give individuals more control over the costs of their health care and access to affordable, flexible coverage.

### Medicare has caught up with modern medicine.

Inside this brochure you'll find facts about the prescription drug benefit and other improvements to the Medicare system that may help you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Roy Blunt".

CONGRESSMAN ROY BLUNT



## Prescription Drug Benefit

- Beginning in 2006, seniors can choose a prescription drug plan that best fits their needs: either a standard benefit administered by Medicare or a plan offered through a private provider.
- Seniors can stay in traditional Medicare and still get prescription drug coverage. Seniors can also choose a private healthcare plan where the drug benefit is integrated into broader medical coverage, including disease management programs and protections against high out-of-pocket medical spending. If they are satisfied with their current plan, they can stay with it. The choice is entirely up to them.
- Private provider benefits must at least be equal to the standard benefit, which includes:
  - ✓ Premium of about \$35/month
  - ✓ Deductible of \$250
  - ✓ Drug coverage of 75% up to \$2250
  - ✓ 100% catastrophic coverage after \$3600
  - ✓ Copays of \$2 for generics and \$5 for brand-name drugs

## Drug Discount Card

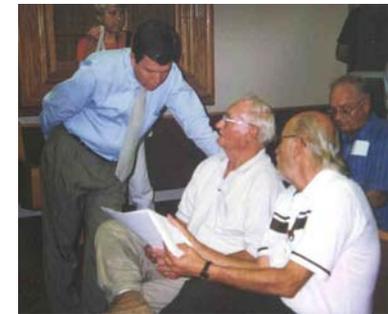


Immediate help is available to make prescription drugs more affordable through a prescription drug discount card.

Seniors save 10 – 25% off the cost of most medicines with this card.

Seniors simply take their card to participating local pharmacies to receive the discount.

If requested, the discount card will be sent to seniors in the mail in June and will remain active until the prescription drug benefit under Medicare goes into effect.



## More Help for Low-Income Seniors

- Seniors who need the most help to pay for prescription drugs receive the most help under the new Medicare law.
- Low-income seniors will receive immediate assistance in the form of a \$600 credit on their Medicare prescription drug discount card for 2004 and 2005.
- When the drug benefit takes effect in 2006, low-income seniors will receive additional help to pay for premiums and copays.
- The poorest seniors – those with incomes below about \$13,000 who are eligible for full benefits under Medicaid – will pay no premiums, but will have a small copay for each prescription filled.



**Medicare Hotline**  
**1-800-MEDICARE**  
**(1-800-633-4227)**



## Better Medicare

- **Traditional Medicare is improved** and strengthened to keep up with advancements in health care, including disease management and preventive care.
- Seniors can have a **“Welcome to Medicare” physical**, which includes services such as vaccinations, cancer screening, diabetes self-management, cardiovascular screening, and glaucoma screening.
- To ensure that seniors live longer, healthier lives, **preventive care is expanded** to pay for a senior to stay healthy. For instance, under the old system, Medicare would pay for kidney dialysis, but not the medicine that would have prevented such a treatment.
- **Seniors have more choices:**
  - ✓ Seniors can choose to stay in traditional Medicare.
  - ✓ Seniors can choose to stay in traditional Medicare and choose a Medicare-sponsored prescription drug benefit.
  - ✓ Seniors can choose a Medicare-Advantage plan, which offers the same type of health care insurance available to Members of Congress and other federal employees.