

Meeting Summary
Advisory Panel on Medicare Education (APME)
Thursday, February 5, 2004, 9:15 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Agenda

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services Update
Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement, and Modernization Act of 2003
Overview of the Drug Discount Card and Transitional Assistance Program
The Drug Card Education and Outreach Strategy
Private Sector Drug Education

Location:

The meeting was held at Wyndham Washington, 1400 M Street, NW, Washington, D.C., 20005.

Federal Register Announcement:

The meeting was announced in the January 6, 2004 *Federal Register*, (Volume 6, Number 3, Pages 665-666) (Attachment A)

Panel Members Present:

Dr. Susan Reinhard, Chair, Advisory Panel on Medicare Education; Co-Director, Center for State Health Policy, Rutgers University
Dr. Jane Delgado, President and Chief Executive Officer, National Alliance for Hispanic Health
Joyce Dubow, Senior Policy Advisor, Public Policy Institute, AARP
Clayton Fong, President and Chief Executive Officer, National Asian Pacific Center on Aging
Thomas Hall, Chairman/Chief Executive Officer, Cardio-Kinetics, Inc.
David Knutson, Director, Health System Studies, Park Nicollet Institute for Research and Education
Katherine Metzger, Director, Medicare and Medicaid Programs, Fallon Community Health Plan
Dr. Marlon Priest, Professor of Emergency Medicine, University of Alabama at Birmingham
Dr. Everard Rutledge, Vice President of Community Health, Bon Secours Health Systems
Dallas Salisbury, President and Chief Executive Officer, Employee Benefit Research Institute
Bruce Taylor, Director, Employee Benefit Policy and Plans, Verizon Communications

Panel Members Absent:

Timothy Fuller, Executive Director, Gray Panthers
John H. Graham, IV, Chief Executive Officer, American Diabetes Association
Dr. William Haggett, President and Chief Executive Officer, Amerihealth Insurance of New Jersey, Amerihealth HMO, Inc.
Brian Lindberg, Executive Director, Consumer Coalition for Quality Health Care
Dr. Laurie Powers, Co-Director, Center on Self-Determination, Oregon Health Sciences University
Jay Sackman, Executive Vice President, 1199 Service Employees International Union,
Rosemarie Sweeney, Vice President, Socioeconomic Affairs and Policy Analysis, American Academy of Family Physicians

Designated Federal Official:

Lynne Johnson, Center for Beneficiary Choices, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services

Others:

A sign-in sheet listing other attendees is incorporated as Attachment B.

Welcome and Open Meeting

Lynne Johnson, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS)

Ms. Johnson, the Designated Federal Official for the Advisory Panel on Medicare Education (APME), called the meeting to order at 9:15 a.m.

Introduction of Members/Review of Previous Meeting

Dr. Susan Reinhard, Chairperson, APME

Dr. Reinhard welcomed the panel members and public participants. Dr. Reinhard reviewed highlights of the previous meeting (Attachment C). She noted that the Long-Term Care web site was recently launched and urged the members to visit the site. She thanked the members who participated in reviewing and commenting on the draft copy of the prescription drug manual.

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services Update

Gail McGrath, Director, Center for Beneficiary Choices (CBC), CMS

Ms. McGrath highlighted CMS' efforts to educate Medicare beneficiaries about the provisions of the Medicare Modernization Act (MMA). CMS created a Medicare fact sheet explaining major points of the legislation that will be mailed to every Medicare beneficiary. Along with the fact sheet, beneficiaries will receive a letter from the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services. On February 3, 2004, CMS started running television ads explaining the changes. Information about the changes has been posted on the medicare.gov web site.

Ms. McGrath also provided updates on the following issues:

- **Discount Drug Card Solicitations.** The drug card is going to be available through organizations capable of offering and providing discounts for Medicare beneficiaries. CMS sent out solicitations for applications and a panel of CMS experts is reviewing the applications to determine the drug card sponsors.
- **medicare.gov.** The new Medicare fact sheet is available on the web. Ms. McGrath asked the Panel to review the web site and make recommendations as to what might work better.
- **Call Center.** Customers can get Medicare information quickly. The wait time is down, as more representatives have been hired. The call center now uses voice recognition to make the calling experience easier.
- **Next Generation Desktop (NGD).** The concept of the Next Generation Desktop is the opportunity for customer service representatives (CSRs) to answer any questions via 1-800 MEDICARE. With NGD, all CSRs will be trained to answer all questions. The Agency is working toward one-stop shopping.
- **Managed Care Plan Renewals.** Many plans have expressed to CMS the ways in which they will reduce premiums and enhance benefits to beneficiaries. Medicare payments to plans will increase by 10.6 percent as a result of the passage of MMA.
- **Preventive Care.** Under the MMA legislation, there are more benefits for prevention that will help seniors stay healthier. People with Medicare will get a physical exam when

they join Medicare. Medicare will also cover screening tests for cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and other conditions.

Medicare-Approved Drug Discount Card and Transitional Assistance Overview
Cynthia Moreno, Acting Director, Health Plan Benefits Group, CBC, CMS (Attachment D)

In her overview, Ms. Moreno explained that the transitional assistance program will be in place until the Medicare Part D Drug Benefit takes effect in January 2006. She highlighted the three essential goals of the program: Provide beneficiaries with discounts on prescription drugs; provide a \$600 a year credit for low-income beneficiaries; and educate beneficiaries about prescription drug benefits. Ms. Moreno also reviewed information about the drug discount card program that was covered by Gail McGrath. In addition, Ms. Moreno discussed the following areas of the program's structure: Eligibility requirements and enrollment processes; qualifications for becoming an approved prescription drug sponsor; covered drugs (and what categories are not), use of formularies, and pricing; transitional assistance; privacy; CMS oversight and reporting; Medicare Part C plans; special endorsement for territories, Indian health and long-term care; and the relationship of the drug program with State drug assistance programs.

Discussion

The panel discussed a number of issues: CMS's plans for small independent pharmacies that cater to non-English speaking customers; usage of the \$600 credit for M+C beneficiaries; educating beneficiaries to select the drug card that will best fit their needs; ways to reach low-income beneficiaries and beneficiaries with limited English skills; and drug card limitations due to statutory requirements.

The Drug Card Education and Outreach Strategy (Attachment E)
Walter Gutowski, Director, Division of Beneficiary Communications, CBC, CMS
Thomas Dudley, Information Technology Specialist, Beneficiary Services Information Group, CBC, CMS
Suzanne Lewis, Health Insurance Specialist, Provider Communication Group, Division of Provider Information and Planning, CMS

Mr. Gutowski highlighted the following CMS education and outreach objectives: Developing and disseminating effective messages and materials to appropriate target audiences; coordinating the education process to reduce duplication; and ensuring consistency of CMS' messages. There are a variety of information channels used to reach targeted audiences. These information channels include 1-800-MEDICARE, medicare.gov, print materials, multimedia campaign, and community-based local outreach.

Mr. Gutowski reviewed the main messages CMS wants to communicate to targeted audiences: The prescription drug discount cards can help save money on prescriptions; look for the Medicare-approved seal when comparing cards to differentiate it from others in the marketplace; beneficiaries may be eligible for a \$600 credit to help pay for prescriptions; and call 1-800-MEDICARE for additional information.

He also highlighted the launch of the advertising campaign. Mr. Gutowski showed a video news release introducing the new Medicare law and the television ad that will run for the next eight weeks. CMS is planning for the launch of another multimedia campaign in the spring to promote the Medicare-approved drug discount cards.

Mr. Gutowski stated that CMS's community-based local outreach not only includes CMS's regional offices, the REACH program, and SHIPs, it will include leveraging key external non CMS information intermediaries, including partners, providers, states, and other stakeholders. He announced the drug card kick-off conference that will take place on April 7 and 8 in Washington, D.C.

Price Comparison

Mr. Dudley explained that CMS will integrate the existing Prescription Drug and Other Assistance Programs (PDAP), located on medicare.gov, with the new price comparison database. The database will list the maximum price for each drug available through each card program at the pharmacy level for each respective sponsor's program. Pricing information will be provided for brand name, generic, and mail order prescriptions. Drug card sponsors will update drug pricing information weekly. General sponsor information will be available on April 1, 2004, and the actual drug pricing data is scheduled to go "live" on April 29, 2004. Individuals will also be able to access drug pricing data by calling 1-800 MEDICARE, or by contacting the drug card sponsors directly. Mr. Dudley demonstrated the PDAP price comparison database. In addition, he provided an update on 1-800 Medicare that now has the capability to handle 5.5 million additional calls.

Provider Education and Outreach Strategy

Ms. Lewis highlighted the following activities designed to reach providers: A direct mail letter the Secretary of Health and Human Services sent to physicians and providers explaining the drug discount cards; train-the-trainer activities; articles and brochures for physicians and pharmacists; professional journal articles; beneficiary posters for physician offices and pharmacies, including tear-off information cards; provider call centers; open door forums; and direct communication with provider associations. She noted that the train-the-trainer activities in January 2004 were highly successful and that educational resources and materials for providers and contractors are posted on the MedLearn web site located at www.cms.hhs.gov/medlearn/drugcard.asp.

Ms. Lewis also highlighted CMS messages to physicians and pharmacists. Specifically, they should know that the drug card is temporary and available to all, regardless of income, unless the patient is receiving payment for outpatient medications through a State Medicaid program. They should also be aware that some people could receive up to \$600 per year in credit to help pay for prescription drugs, and that the Medicare-approved drug discount card is one of many pharmacy assistance programs available. Physicians should tell their patients to call 1-800 MEDICARE or visit medicare.gov for information. Pharmacist messages are similar to the physicians messages, but the educational materials will suggest that people with Medicare consider their relationship with their pharmacist when selecting a discount card. Pharmacist messages also stress that the Medicare-approved drug discount card does not require people to use mail-order services and that qualified sponsors must have pharmacies in suburban, urban, and rural areas.

DISCUSSION

The panel suggested ways to improve the PDAP database. The panel also suggested that CSRs be trained to ask callers if they want a printout of information sent to them, rather than waiting for callers to ask. The panel discussed CMS' budget for education and outreach and recommended that CMS strengthen its outreach efforts to target low-income population. CMS called on the Panel to help reach to this population.

Listening Session with CMS Leadership

Gail McGrath, Director, Center for Beneficiary Choices, CMS

During the listening session, the panel recommended that: CMS use nurses, emergency room staff, in addition to physicians and pharmacists to reach Medicare beneficiaries; prescription pads be printed with the 1-800 MEDICARE number at the bottom; CMS place kiosks in public places to offer Medicare information to those who do not have computers; and CMS partner with organizations such as the National Council on Churches to help in education and outreach efforts.

Ms. McGrath invited the members to attend the Medicare drug card kick-off conference. She stressed that outreach is critical, and asked for the Panel's continued advice on how to reach the maximum number of people. Jane Delgado, Clayton Fong, and Susan Reinhard volunteered to participate in a subgroup that would come up with ways to reach hard-to-reach populations.

Discussion

In addition to discussing how CMS would handle drug diversion (both narcotic and non-narcotic), the panel discussed issues pertaining to the Long-Term Care Awareness campaign.

Going Forward: American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) Education and Advocacy Campaign (Attachment F)

Joyce Dubow, Senior Policy Advisor, the Public Policy Institute, AARP

Joyce Dubow reviewed the ways AARP intends to meet the needs of Medicare beneficiaries and others; what AARP Services Inc., (ASI) can offer; and how CMS can help AARP in its efforts. AARP was planning an integrated information and education campaign that's going to consist of advocacy efforts at Federal and State level. As part of the education campaign, AARP will inform people about the new Medicare reform law so that they can make informed choices. The education campaign is aimed at AARP staff and volunteers, AARP members, and Medicare beneficiaries. AARP intends to act as a watchdog to ensure that the regulations are implemented in a way to address beneficiary needs. AARP intends to reach members through its core publications, call centers, web site, member events, and other media. Ms. Dubow highlighted two AARP publications: *Medicare Changes That Could Affect You* (Attachment G) and *The New Law and You* (Attachment H). Ms. Dubow stated that AARP can benefit from CMS' research findings about presenting materials so that AARP's materials can be more informed, in addition to looking to CMS as a repository of the right answers.

Educating Medicare Members on Prescription Drug Benefits (Attachment I)

Daniel Lyons, MD, MPH, Senior Vice President, Government Programs, Independent Blue Cross (IBC)

Dr. Lyons reviewed what IBC offers in terms of prescription drug benefits. He stated that IBC is trying to educate members with drug coverage on getting the most out of their benefit. IBC is trying to educate all members with and without drug coverage about its drug discount program. The organization is also trying to educate members and the community about health savings programs and other prescription drug resources available to them. To educate and provide outreach to its members, IBC uses automated phone calls with member specific messages. The web site remains a crucial tool in getting information out. Member and community events, especially those offering one-on-one assistance is extremely helpful. IBC produces printed materials that are mailed to members. In addition, IBC has a 1-800 help line and works closely

with the State Department of Aging and community-based organizations. Dr. Lyons noted that CMS continue its education and outreach to seniors via direct written communication, 1-800 MEDICARE, television advertising, partnering with state and local agencies on aging and grassroots organizations.

Public Comment

Dr. Susan Reinhard

There were four public comments.

Melinda Roberts of the Medicare Rights Center noted that the program offers good benefits for individuals but a better effort is needed to reach vulnerable populations. Ms. Roberts also expressed concern that the drug discount card opens the door to fraud and identity theft.

Brian Cote identified himself as a member of the press, representing a new publication entitled “The Medicare Reform Advisor.” Mr. Cote asked several questions about the drug card program. Answers to his questions had already been provided during the morning session. Mr. Cote was given answers to his questions after the meeting.

John Greene, of the National Association of Health Underwriters, stated that beneficiaries may possess more than one drug card and asked if there was going to be any coordination to collect data on utilization with programs like PhRMA cards, Together Rx. CMS responded to Mr. Greene by stating that the Agency does not have the authority collect data on utilization with these programs under the current statute.

Kimberly Fox, of the Center for State Health Policy at Rutgers University, asked if states can coordinate with CMS and the discount drug sponsors to maximize enrollment in the Medicare Savings Program or should states contact the sponsors themselves? CMS noted that the statute restricts the marketing of other products but probably would not extend to the Medicare Savings Program and that the agency would get back to her on the issue of the states directly contacting the drug sponsors.

Katherine Metzger, Director, Medicare and Medicaid Programs, Fallon Community Health Plan (Attachment J)

Ms. Metzger’s overview included a comparison of premiums and co-payments for different products, the process of prescribing and filling prescriptions, and the formulary, which includes both generic and brand name drugs. She explained Fallon’s three-tiered co-payment system and the coverage offered to members. Fallon communicates to its members through an annual notice, a summary of benefits, a quarterly magazine, its web site, new member contact, customer service, and by partnering with the Area Agencies on Aging and local community groups. Ms. Metzger stated that CMS is providing a tremendous amount of useful information to plans, and asked if CMS could alert plans to its timelines for mailings so they can be prepare for questions their members may have regarding Medicare.

Bruce Taylor, Director, Employee Benefit Policy and Plans, Verizon Communications, White Plains, NY, *Managed Rx Benefits...Discussion Ideas on How To Do It Just Right* (Attachment K)

Mr. Taylor explained Verizon's lessons learned about buying healthcare, including the role of physicians, patients, health plans, and claim administrators. He noted that technology and communication are very important and go hand-in-hand in helping to find out what people need. He urged communication in a variety of formats, including electronic, by phone, by mail, event-based, on demand, at home, and at work. Communication should be specific, fact based, and cover topics broadly with data-specific follow-up to individuals. He outlined Verizon's basic prescription drug plan design, as well as its initiatives in health care. He also stressed quality and safety, and reviewed a list of "dos" and "don'ts" for an effective prescription drug program, including determining the purpose of the drug being prescribed, and recognizing the plan is not only about cost, but about serving the people who need prescription medication.

Mr. Taylor also noted that the prescription discount card is not necessarily for everyone, as some people, such as a Verizon retiree, will be covered by their own plans. He noted Verizon sends out materials and encourages recipients to pay attention and read up on their benefits. Mr. Taylor highlighted the handout, *Some Specific Communications: Appendix C* (Attachment L) and the article, *Preventing Falls* (Attachment M). He urged CMS to engage employer groups to spread the message about the program.

DISCUSSION

The panel discussed the importance of a heads-up on CMS mailings and suggested that CMS put information that a mailing is imminent on its web site. The panel noted the importance of getting messages out to community organizations.

Next Steps Discussion

Dr. Susan Reinhard

Dr. Reinhard announced the next meeting scheduled for May 11, 2004. She also discussed next steps and solicited ideas for discussion topics:

- Highlight of CMS's plans for monitoring the utilization of drugs through use of discount drug card;
- Overview of Part D Drug Benefits;
- Possibly form a workgroup to determine how to reach low-income people on Medicare.

Adjournment

Dr. Reinhard thanked the panel members and other participants. There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 3:45 p.m.

Prepared by:

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Approved by:

Dr. Susan Reinhard, Chairperson
Advisory Panel on Medicare Education

Attachments

- A.** *Federal Register*, Notice, January 6, 2004, Volume 6, Number 3, Pages 665-666.
- B.** Sign-in Sheet
- C.** Meeting Summary, Advisory Panel on Medicare Education, November 20, 2003.
- D.** *Medicare-Approved Drug Discount Card Overview*: Slide Presentation.
- E.** *The Drug Card Education and Outreach Strategy*: Slide Presentation.
- F.** *Going Forward: AARP Education and Advocacy Campaign*: Slide Presentation.
- G.** *Medicare Changes that Could Affect You*, AARP.
- H.** *The New Law and You*, AARP.
- I.** *Educating Members on Prescription Drug Benefits*: Slide Presentation.
- J.** *Fallon Senior Plan™ Prescription Drug Benefit*: Slide Presentation.
- K.** *Managed Rx Benefits: Discussion Ideas on How to Do it “Just Right”*: Slide Presentation
- L.** *Some Specific Communications: Appendix C*, Verizon Communications.
- M.** *Preventing Falls*, Verizon Communications.
- N.** *A Guide to Health Care Savings for Medicare Beneficiaries*, Independence Blue Cross.
- O.** *Comments on Medicare’s Guide to Choosing a Drug Discount Card*, National Asian Pacific Center on Aging.
- P.** *Access to Benefits Coalition for Prescription Drugs (ABC-Rx)*, National Council on the Aging.