



Medicare: Issue of the Day

August 2, 2004

BETTER BENEFITS – MORE CHOICES

*Good News about the Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement
and Modernization Act of 2003!*

ENROLLMENT IN THE MEDICARE-APPROVED PRESCRIPTION DRUG CARD PROGRAM HAS SURPASSED THE 4 MILLION MARK

Continuing Enrollment

- ❖ Millions of seniors are reaping substantial benefits through the drug card already. Plus, over *100,000 beneficiaries are signing up for a discount card every week.*
- ❖ The steady increase and continuing enrollment in the Medicare-approved drug discount card program shows that **beneficiaries have discovered that the cards provide real savings and are helpful in lowering their prescription drug costs** – and many of them are telling their friends.
- ❖ The most important step people with Medicare can take to get information and to begin the enrollment process is to call 1-800-MEDICARE or to visit www.medicare.gov.

One of Fastest Growing New Programs

- ❖ The more than four million seniors currently enrolled represent well over 50 percent of the 7.3 million seniors who CMS estimated would sign up for the card by December of 2005.
- ❖ The **sign up rate** for the Medicare Discount Drug Card program makes it one of the **fastest growing new federal health programs** – 12 months after the State Children's Health Insurance Program began in 1998, two million children were enrolled.
- ❖ Since early June, there has been steady growth in beneficiaries signing up for the card with drug card sponsors now receiving an average of around **25,000 sign ups every day** – reaching the 4 million mark on July 19.
 - Of the more than 4 million who are enrolled, nearly 1 million are receiving the \$600 low-income credit.
 - Medicare beneficiaries began signing up for drug cards on May 3, with discounts beginning June 1.
 - On May 31, 2.9 million beneficiaries were enrolled in a card, approximately 2.3 million were automatically enrolled in a card by their health plans.

- ❖ A recent Kaiser Family Foundation study reported that top **Medicare drug cards provide savings as compared to retail of between 19 and 24 percent for urban retail prices, 17 to 22 percent for rural retail and 27-32 percent urban mail order.**
 - These results compare well with CMS studies, which have shown similar savings.

