

CMS Special Open Door Forum:

October 22, 2004

12:30PM to 2:30PM (Eastern Time)

Factors for Determining Medicare Advantage and Prescription Drug Plan Regions to Maximize Beneficiary Choice

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) invites you to participate in a Special Open Door Forum on Factors for Determining Medicare Advantage and Prescription Drug Plan Regions to Maximize Beneficiary Choice, to be held on October 22, 2004 from 12:30 PM to 2:30 PM (Eastern Time). The purpose of this Open Door Forum (ODF) is to follow up on the discussion held at the public meeting on July 21, 2004: "Establishing Regions for Medicare Advantage Regional Plans and Prescription Drug Plans under the MMA" (CMS-4069-N). At this forum, we intend to discuss the factors that The Secretary of Health and Human Services should use to determine the regions for Medicare Advantage (MA) regional plans and Medicare Part D prescription drug plans (PDPs), as outlined in the MMA.

The MMA directed the Secretary to establish no fewer than 10 and no more than 50 regions in the states and the District of Columbia for MA regional plans, and to establish PDP regions in a manner consistent with the requirements for establishing the MA regions. The MMA also directed that the regions be defined to maximize the availability of MA regional plans to all eligible individuals, especially those in rural areas.

During this Special ODF conference call we will review several factors that have been identified to date for configuring MA plan and PDP regions. To facilitate the discussion, CMS will post slides on our website no later than 3:00 on Tuesday, October 19, 2004 at <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/medicarerereform/> (click on "Establishing Regional Medicare PPOs and PDPs under the Medicare Modernization Act"). We will also solicit input from participants on these factors and any other factors that the Secretary should take into consideration. In addition, we will solicit input from participants on the relative priority of the various factors. Finally, we will provide information on the written comment process for regions and next steps.

We look forward to your participation in this discussion of factors for determining MA and PDP regions to maximize beneficiary choice.

SUBMISSION OF COMMENTS (OPTIONAL):

Persons who wish to submit comments prior to or following the Open Door Forum on the Factors for Determining MA and PDP regions, may submit them no later than 3:00 p.m. on Friday, October 29th, 2004 by e-mail to Jandrews@cms.hhs.gov.

Information on Participation

This ODF will be held only by teleconference, and will not include an in-person participation option. There is no need to RSVP for this call.

Telephone call-in participants will be given an opportunity to comment or ask questions and may be under time limitations depending upon the number of participants requesting to provide input.

To participate:

Dial: 1-800-837-1935 & Reference Conference ID: **1461886**

Note: TTY Communications Relay Services are available for the Hearing Impaired. For TTY services dial 7-1-1 or 1-800-855-2880 and for Internet Relay services click here <http://www.consumer.att.com/relay/which/index.html>. A Relay Communications Assistant will help.

For Forum Schedule updates, Listserv registration and Frequently Asked Questions please visit our website at www.cms.hhs.gov/opendoor/

Thank you.