



Community-Based Education Program

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www.MyMedicareMatters.org

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MY MEDICARE MATTERS™

NEW EDUCATION PROGRAM ON PRESCRIPTION DRUG COVERAGE DEPLOYS

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At these events, beneficiaries will be able to sit down one-on-one with the educators who will provide personalized guidance to help them find answers to their questions about the new coverage. Using Internet-based tools, including NCOA's BenefitsCheckUpRx and Medicare's Prescription Drug Plan Finder, the educators will help beneficiaries gather information, assess their options, compare plans, and if they wish, join a plan through the online enrollment process.

"The fact that My Medicare Matters™ teams will be in so many communities like ours, helping beneficiaries throughout the entire enrollment period, will be especially valuable in expanding our ability to reach more people," said John N. Skirven, executive director of Senior Services of Southeastern Virginia, a local ABC partner. "The work that we have already done in educating and enrolling people is important. What we will now be able to do with these new resources is even more important."

In a second initiative, My Medicare Matters™ will donate more than 700 wireless laptop computers (preloaded with the software programs that the benefits educators are using) to community-based organizations to use for their own grassroots education and enrollment activities.

The third strategy, a new Web site found at www.MyMedicareMatters.org, also extends the reach of the program. The Web site will provide information written in easy-to-understand language so that people with Medicare can work on their own to assess their options, find and compare plans and enroll online if they choose to.

Firman emphasized that the Web site will be a valuable resource not only for individuals, community organizations and professionals, but also for family members and friends of people with Medicare.

"It's time for all Americans to step up and help our parents and grandparents, friends and neighbors," he said. "We should be asking them 'Have you looked at the new coverage,' and if they have not, help them understand their rights and options and how to make the right choice."

My Medicare Matters™ is being supported by a grant from AstraZeneca Pharmaceuticals LP.

Tony Zook, President and CEO Designate, AstraZeneca, said the Company was supporting the national effort because "as a company committed to improving patient health, we think the Medicare Prescription Drug Benefit can make a tremendous contribution to millions of Americans. We commend the NCOA and the ABC for bringing this crucial educational program to people across the country."

"We think it is important for seniors to be able to access to the medicines they need to help maintain their health. By treating diseases and medical conditions, they may be able to prevent more serious health problems, and that's a great thing for our families' health and the health of our communities," said Zook.

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EDITORS: A listing of the cities where My Medicare Matters™ will have on-the-ground mobile technology and educators is attached.

Founded in 1950, The National Council on the Aging is a national network of organizations and individuals dedicated to improving the health and independence of older persons and to increasing their continuing contributions to communities, society, and future generations. For more information on NCOA, visit www.ncoa.org.

The Access to Benefits Coalition (ABC) is dedicated to ensuring that Medicare beneficiaries with limited incomes know about and can make the best use of all available resources for reducing the costs of prescription drugs, including the extra help available through the Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage (starting in 2006).