



## ***BETTER BENEFITS – MORE CHOICES***

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

### ***Educating Medicare Beneficiaries***

**New Grants:** Today, Secretary Thompson announced **\$125 million in grants to states to help educate low-income Medicare beneficiaries who currently get their prescription drugs through state-funded programs** about the new Medicare drug benefit coming in 2006.

#### **Educate Beneficiaries:**

- ❖ We will **work with states to identify and use the best approaches to educate beneficiaries** about their important new options for better drug coverage.
- ❖ Our goal is to **make sure people who now rely on state programs** to help with prescription drugs **will understand how the new Medicare benefit in 2006 will work** together with those programs.
- ❖ These grants will go a long way toward meeting that goal.

#### **Today's Announcement:**

- ❖ This financial assistance for states **will help Medicare work with states to help beneficiaries get the most out of the new drug benefit** and the additional benefits that state programs can provide.
  - ✓ The funds were set aside in the Medicare Modernization Act (MMA) for grants to state pharmaceutical assistance programs (SPAPs) for fiscal years 2005 and 2006.
  - ✓ The amount each state operating an SPAP will receive is based on the number of participants enrolled in each program as of October 1, 2003.
- ❖ States with qualifying SPAPs can **use the grant funds to educate their enrollees about the new Medicare Part D (drug) benefit.**
  - ✓ The funds can be used to establish telephone support and counseling for those eligible for the new prescription drug benefit to help them select and enroll in one of the new Part D plans.
  - ✓ CMS will work with states to share “best practices” in outreach and education that have proven effective in helping Medicare beneficiaries make the drug card choice that is best for them, and that states and other organizations have used to help beneficiaries understand how to take advantage of other new benefits.
- ❖ Today's announcement, made in a letter to all state health officials, closely follows the announcement by Secretary Thompson of a new commission to study ways to ease the transition of low-income Medicare beneficiaries from state-sponsored programs to the new Medicare benefit.
  - ✓ The 24-member commission will hold its first meeting in Washington on July 7 and make its report to the President and Congress in January of 2005.

- ❖ State **SPAP programs have until August 9, 2004 to submit a grant application.** States will be notified of application approval and grant amount by September 30, 2004.
  - ✓ Applications should be submitted to Larry Reed or Deirdre Duzor, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, Medicaid Pharmacy Team, 7500 Security Blvd., Mailstop S2-01-16, Baltimore, Maryland 21244.