



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

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

### ***Assisting Homebound Seniors***

**Secretary Thompson will announce a new Medicare demonstration project that will help promote greater freedom and independence for people with disabilities who require daily assistance.**

#### ***Helping to Live Full Lives:***

- This demonstration will **give those with chronically disabling conditions a chance to live full lives and contribute to their communities** while still receiving services in their homes.
- They **need not fear that they will lose home-based services that they depend on just because they try their best to have lives outside the home.**
- By **eliminating current restrictions**, this group of persons who require substantial daily assistance **will have access to more normal lives in their own communities.**

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

- HHS has identified **three states for a Medicare demonstration of a new, less restrictive homebound definition.**
  - ✓ This will **allow Medicare beneficiaries receiving home health benefits to leave their home more frequently and for longer periods without risking the loss of those benefits.**
  - ✓ **Up to 15,000 beneficiaries will be eligible to enroll** in the two-year demonstration, which will begin in the fall.
  - ✓ The demonstration was authorized by the Medicare Modernization Act.
  - ✓ The demonstration in **Missouri, Colorado and Massachusetts** and was authorized by the Medicare Modernization Act.
- This demonstration **represents another step forward in President Bush's New Freedom Initiative**, which is **breaking down barriers to community living for people with disabilities** and addressing the requests of persons with disabilities.
- Current rules used to determine who qualifies for Medicare payment of services at home require that any time away from home must be "infrequent or of short duration."
- Congress and CMS have refined this definition in recent years, by **clarifying that leaving home for adult day care or religious services is allowed.**
- The demonstration project **removes a limitation based on actual time spent away from home**, eliminating the concern among many homebound persons that they will lose their home-based care if they attempt to take advantage of activities outside the home.

- HHS has played a critical role in advancing the New Freedom Initiative since its launch on Feb. 1, 2001, less than two weeks after President Bush's inauguration.
  - ✓ To date, **about 60,000 people with disabilities now have Medicaid health coverage through the Ticket to Work and Work Incentive Improvement Act Medicaid Buy-in Program.**
  - ✓ HHS also has **approved waivers for nine states that give about 22,000 individuals with disabilities the option to direct their own health care.**
  - ✓ In addition, HHS' fiscal year 2005 budget **plan would authorize more than \$2.2 billion in new spending over the next five years to build on and expand the President's New Freedom Initiative to promote greater independence for Americans of all ages with a disability or long-term illness.**