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SunSolutions **SPOTLIGHT** News Break

MEDICARE ADVANTAGE REMAINS STRONG

Enrollment in the Medicare Advantage (MA) program is projected to increase by 11 percent in the next year and premiums will remain steady, Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius announced today. Since the Affordable Care Act was passed in 2010, Medicare Advantage premiums have fallen by 10 percent and enrollment has risen by 28 percent.

"Thanks to the Affordable Care Act, the Medicare Advantage and Prescription Drug programs have been strengthened and continue to improve for beneficiaries," said Secretary Sebelius. "Since the law was enacted in 2010, average premiums have gone down, enrollment has gone up, and new benefits and lower drug costs continue to help millions of seniors and people with disabilities."

For the third year in a row, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) used authority provided by the Affordable Care Act to protect beneficiaries from significant increases in costs or cuts in benefits. Access to supplemental benefits remains steady and beneficiaries' average out-of-pocket spending remains constant.

The average MA premium in 2013 is projected to increase by only \$1.47 from last year, coming to \$32.59. However, if beneficiaries choose lower cost plans at the same rate in 2013, as they did in 2012, the average premium is expected to increase by only 57 cents. Access to the Medicare Advantage program will remain strong, with 99.6 percent of beneficiaries having access to a plan. Additionally, the number of plan choices will increase by 7 percent in 2013.

Last month, CMS announced that the average estimated basic



Implementation of Part B Manual Medical Review starts October 1

***Are you and your staff ready?
Are systems in place?***

Be Proactive...

The new process is somewhat complicated to initiate and will require your staff to have excellent tracking, planning and management skills for residents with Part B benefits.

Call SunSolutions today to ensure readiness: MMR Implementation Assessment and Tool Kit

Be Sure...

Tracking, management and systems are ready for your start date. SunSolutions will provide the

Medicare prescription drug plan premium was projected to be \$30 in 2013, holding steady from last year. Today's projections show that access to a Medicare prescription drug plan will remain strong in 2013. Everyone with Medicare will have access to a wide range of plan choices.

As a result of the Affordable Care Act, coverage for both brand name and generic drugs in the Part D donut hole coverage gap will continue to increase until 2020, when the donut hole will be closed. This year, people with Medicare received a 50 percent discount on covered brand name drugs and 14 percent coverage of generic drugs in the donut hole. In 2013, Medicare Part D's coverage of brand name drugs will begin to increase, so people with Medicare will receive approximately 53 percent off the cost of brand name drugs, and coverage for 21 percent of the cost of generic drugs, in the donut hole.

Since the law was enacted, 5.4 million people with Medicare have saved over \$4.1 billion on prescription drugs in the donut hole. An estimated 37 million people with Medicare received a preventive benefit free of charge in 2011.

For last month's announcement about Part D premiums, please visit: <http://www.cms.gov/apps/media/press/release.asp?>

The Annual Open Enrollment Period for health and drug plans begins on October 15 and ends December 7. Each year plans change what they cost and what they cover. To find helpful Medicare tools and information, and compare the cost or benefits of 2013 Medicare health plans in your area, please visit: <http://www.cms.gov/center/openenrollment.asp>

tool kit, assessment and training. Tool kit includes: Part B meeting form and Triple Check form.

Be Ready...

For you Medical Manual Review Process and when to submit Requests for Exceptions? Know your Phase by your assigned NPI--National Provider ID

*Centers or Agencies in Phase 1 begin
October 1, 2012*

*Centers or Agencies in Phase 2 begin
November 1, 2012*

*Centers or Agencies in Phase 3 begin
December 1, 2012*

SunSolutions' Mock Survey

SunSolutions' mock survey can prime your team to help avoid any citations!

From procedures to interview questions, our mock survey prepares your staff, teaching effective communication and appropriate responses to surveyor questions. Prepare your team for a WIN!

**For unparalleled results, call
SunSolutions Consulting today
at 888.867.2220**



Contact Info

Contact SunSolutions Consulting at sunsolutionsconsulting@sunh.com or tollfree - (888) 867 2220 for a listing of products, services or to schedule an educational seminar/ teleconference.

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