

Medicare Part D: ("D" is for Disaster)

Bi-Partisanship at its Best!

- Bush, Sec. of HHS Tommy Thompson, and CMS admin. Scully said cost would be < \$400 Billion over 10 years.
- Richard Foster, Medicare actuary, predicted \$600 Billion. He was fired!
- Democrats couldn't add amendments.
- Vote was held open for three hours in the dead of night until admin. could find 4 supporters. Thompson, DeLay, Bush were allowed on the floor to twist arms.
- Demos. found a room and were threatened with eviction. They refused to leave till they got the Bill, and slept on the floor.
- HR 1 was brought before the House for final passage at 3 a.m. Sat., Nov. 22, 2003.

Democracy on Drugs...

- Bribery and Intimidation: *"I was targeted by lobbyists and the congressional leadership to change my vote.."*
- Censoring C-SPAN
- HHS Secretary on the House Floor
- Misleading Congress and Withholding Pivotal Information
- Conference Committee Lockout
- Tauzin Negotiates PhRMA Job While Negotiating Prescription Drug Bill
- Drug Industry Money Undermined the Process
- HHS Propaganda Campaign

Common Cause: *Democracy on Drugs*

Drug Companies in Action!

- In 2003, the Drug Companies...
 - hired 952 lobbyists
 - spent \$141 million on lobbying
 - contributed more than \$30 million to campaigns.
- There were 12 lobbyists for every Congressperson
- Drug profits rose \$182 billion.

Advice in a Nutshell

- If you have good coverage in a private plan now, **STAY PUT!**
- **Save every piece of paper** you get from your current plan, Medicare, Social Security, Medi-Cal etc. Store in a safe place and make backup copies. Check with HICAP.

List of the Most Egregious Issues...

- Enrollment = Chaos + Confusion.
- Medi-Cal Beneficiaries are Treated Badly.
- Late Enrollment Penalty for Life
- Retirees with Current Drug Coverage – Beware!
- The Donut Hole.
- No negotiating for best prices!
- People are supposed to have choices... but they can't be informed consumers
- The plans get to change prices, formularies and deductibles at any time, but you don't have the same options.

Don't Blame the Pharmacist!

- ☺ Pharmacists are on the frontlines: paying co-pays and other costs.
- ☺ Many of them are working hand-in-hand with the rest of us advocates.

What did the Governor just do?

- 🌟 Authorized the State to pay for medications for some people who are on both Medicaid and Medicare
- 🌟 Was recently extended till May, and we're hopeful for more extensions.
- 🌟 Great, but this problem isn't going away!

Federal and State Congress people

Senators

<http://www.senate.gov/>

Boxer, Barbara- (D - CA) 112 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, 20510 (202) 224-3553

Web form: www.boxer.senate.gov/email.html

Feinstein, Dianne- (D - CA) 331 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington DC 20510; (202) 224-3841

Web Form:

www.feinstein.senate.gov/email.html

Representatives

<http://www.house.gov/>

John T. Doolittle

Doris Matsui

Dan Lundgren

Who's your State Legislator?

Assembly

http://www.assembly.ca.gov/committee_hearings/

Senate

<http://www.sen.ca.gov/ftp/SEN/senplan/senate.htm>

Where You Can Go For Help

📞 Health Insurance Counseling and Advocacy Program (HICAP): Call 1-800-434-0222 to reach your local HICAP or go to www.calmedicare.org.

📞 Social Security: 1-800-772-1213 or go to www.ssa.gov.

📞 Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS): Call 1-800-MEDICARE or go to www.medicare.gov.

📞 CARA Part D Toolkit at www.retiredamericans.org

Remember, most other sources of information are trying to sell you something

Enrollment = Chaos + Confusion

- ❖ Enrollment is being pushed too quickly
- ❖ Enrollment decisions are too complex
- ❖ Too few resources are available to help consumers
- ❖ Too little information is available in multiple languages and in formats easy for consumers to understand.

We Get By with a Little Help from Our Friends...

🌟 **CARA (Alliance for Retired Americans)** <http://www.californiaalliance.org/default.asp>

🌟 **OWL (Older Women's League), California**

<http://www.owl-national.org/>

🌟 **Health Access California** <http://www.health-access.org/>

🌟 **Congress of California Seniors** <http://www.seniors.org/>

🌟 **Pharmacists Planning Services, Inc.** <http://www.ppsinc.org/>

🌟 **California Pharmacists Association**

🌐 http://www.cpha.com/AM/Template.cfm?Section=CPhA_Home

- *This presentation made possible by a grant from The California Wellness Foundation.*

Together We Can Get A Real Prescription Drug Benefit

Here are at least 4 Ways you can help.

- 📣 Circulate & advocate
- 📣 Educate
- 📣 Tell your stories
- 📣 Organize & mobilize

At the national level...

CIRCULATE & ADVOCATE

- ☑️ Tell people about the problems with Part D and urge them to join the fight for a Real Drug Plan.
- ☑️ Join Gray Panthers and participate in meetings in your area. Call 916 332-5980 for the network in your area **or to start a new one.**
- ☑️ Organize to hold your representative accountable for real relief from high drug costs
 - ☑️ **Support HR 3861**, the Medicare Informed Choice Act (Stark, Schakowsky) to extend the deadline
 - ☑️ **Support HR 752** (Stark, Berry) the Medicare Prescription Drug Savings and Choice Act, to create a uniform drug benefit in Medicare and require that Medicare negotiate for the best possible prices.

Call Your Congressional Representatives

☎️ Dial the House & Senate switchboard

☎️ **1-202-224-3121**

☎️ Ask the operator for the first representative you want to reach

☎️ When connected: "Hello, I live in your district and I'm calling to ask you to:

☎️ **Support HR 3861**, the Medicare Informed Choice Act to extend the enrollment period and protect against bad choices.

☎️ **Support HR 752**, the Medicare Prescription Drug Savings and Choice Act, to create a uniform drug benefit in Medicare and require Medicare negotiate for the best prices

☎️ **Reconsider & replace Medicare Part D** with real reform that saves Medicare and provides relief from high drug prices."

Let's Change our Language (Lakoff-ian Stuff)

- 🔔 Don't blame Medicare, blame **privatization!**
- 🔔 Don't talk of "enrolling" in a program, talk about **buying insurance.**
- 🔔 HSA's: they're not savings accounts; they're **High Deductible private insurance plans**
- 🔔 Remember, health care is a **value.** Talk it up!

Contact us!

Gray Panthers, California/Sacramento
P.O. Box 19438 Sacramento CA 95819
Joan B. Lee, Chairperson
(916) 332-5980 or joanblee78@lanset.com
Website: <http://www.gpcal.org/>

Medicare Part D Project
Margie Metzler
1121 Wayland Avenue
Sacramento, CA
916-921-5008 or margiemetz@hotmail.com
Website: www.gpcal.org