

**Office of External Affairs**

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## **MEDICARE FACT SHEET**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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CONTACT: CMS Media Affairs  
(202) 690-6145

### **ENROLLMENT ACTIVITY ON MAY 15th**

Hundreds of thousands of people with Medicare took action on May 15 to enroll in Medicare prescription drug plans before the close of the initial enrollment deadline, which ended at midnight yesterday. There was also an unprecedented level of interest and enrollment leading up to the 15<sup>th</sup> as evidenced by the thousands of local enrollment events, more than 2.2 million calls to 1-800-MEDICARE, historic level of online enrollments and more than 15 million page views on [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov).

Based on 872,000 enrollments from last week that have already been processed, as well as clear indications of strong enrollment activity in the final days before the deadline, significantly more than a million additional beneficiaries have Medicare drug coverage since our last announcement of more than 37 million beneficiaries with coverage on May 9.

As a result, while we are still tabulating final enrollment numbers, more than 38 million people with Medicare -- representing more than 90 percent of all beneficiaries -- now have coverage for prescription drugs.

#### **Enrollment Update**

- Overall: Since the last announcement on May 7<sup>th</sup>, 872,000 new applications have already been processed. This number does not reflect the last-minute enrollment surge that occurred over the last few days. Consequently, with hundreds of thousands of additional enrollments since that time, well over a million more beneficiaries will have coverage once all applications have been fully processed.
- We do not yet have numbers tabulated to reflect increased activity over the final weekend or online enrollments.
- Plans are submitting enrollment records ahead of a “payment cutoff” date today, and a second cutoff date next week. In addition, some beneficiaries who called at peak times are receiving return calls over the next several days to complete their enrollment.

- **Online Enrollment:** Since November 15, 2005, more than 3.7 million people with Medicare have enrolled online. This includes over 500,000 online enrollments since May 7, 2006 that are not yet reflected in overall enrollment counts.
  - Online enrollment activity for Monday, May 15<sup>th</sup> was extraordinary, reaching 143,875 individual enrollments. This is the largest single day online enrollment total since November 15, 2005.
  - Over the weekend leading up to May 15<sup>th</sup>, online enrollment activity reached 57,494 individual enrollments – four to five times greater than any other weekend in 2006.
  - The [www.Medicare.gov](http://www.Medicare.gov) server, which was enhanced to quadruple capacity in anticipation of the May 15<sup>th</sup> deadline, met the unprecedented level of demand readily.

### **Call Centers**

- Volume of calls to 1-800-MEDICARE and use of the online enrollment center reached record levels on May 15<sup>th</sup>. More than 640,000 calls were handled on May 15<sup>th</sup> with an average wait time of 12 ½ minutes. Moreover, the average call times for the week ahead of the May 15<sup>th</sup> deadline was less than 4 minutes. This level was 58 percent higher than any other period of operation.
- To handle this unprecedented volume, 1-800-MEDICARE was staffed with over 6,000 customer service representatives and supplemented with hundreds of our own expert staff.
- In anticipation of unprecedented call volume, we staffed 1-800-MEDICARE with over 6,000 customer service representatives and supplemented with hundreds of our own expert staff. In addition, we put in place a back-up program that allowed beneficiaries to leave their name and phone number and receive a call back to enroll without a penalty.

### **Online Support**

- Use of the online enrollment center also reached an all-time high on May 15<sup>th</sup>, with an average of over 40,000 users accessing the website at any given time. At peak times during the day, over 50,000 active users were accessing the web site without difficulty.
- Due to a quadrupling of server capacity at [www.Medicare.gov](http://www.Medicare.gov) in anticipation of the initial enrollment deadline, the online enrollment center was able to handle this unprecedented level of traffic smoothly, with service maintained throughout the day.

### **Partner Activities**

- Thousands of enrollment events were sponsored by local grassroots partners over the last weeks of the enrollment period. Since November 15<sup>th</sup>, our grassroots partners – the network of caring – sponsored over 50,000 Medicare events and opportunities for people to get personalized assistance.

- More than 40,000 volunteers in communities across the country worked over this enrollment period counseling beneficiaries and sponsoring events to help people with Medicare.
- Thousands of our partners conducted events and stayed open over the weekend, and operated until midnight last night to assist people in making their last minute decision.
- Thanks to the national and local partners Medicare is now a permanent grassroots program, which will now turn its efforts to ensuring full use of the new prescription drug benefit and of the new and important preventive benefits, which are now a part of Medicare.
- CMS is confident that for the first time ever, 90 percent of people with Medicare have some kind of prescription drug coverage.

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