

## HEALTH CARE BENEFITS FOR SENIORS IN 2013

On March 23, 2010, President Obama signed the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA). The Act provides numerous benefits for seniors under Medicare and Medicaid. Here are the major changes for 2013.

### ***Free Medical Check Ups under Medicare Continue***

Prior to passage of the ACA, Medicare allowed for a one-time free check up when seniors joined the Medicare program. In 2011, seniors began receiving a free check up; this benefit is now available on a yearly basis.

### ***Free Preventive Screenings Continue***

Beneficiaries no longer have to pay any cost sharing for Medicare covered preventive services that are recommended by the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force and rated A or B. The law also waives the Medicare deductible for colorectal cancer screening tests.

### ***Prescription Drug Discounts Continue and Subsidies Increase***

In 2013, the Medicare Part D drug benefit doughnut hole is from \$2970 to \$7720. Prior to the passage of PPACA, when beneficiaries fell into doughnut hole, they had to pay 100% of the costs of their prescription medications. The new health care law provides drug discounts and subsidies to help fill in the doughnut hole. In 2013, Medicare beneficiaries who fall in the Part D drug benefit doughnut hole will receive a 50% discount on the price of their **brand name** drugs. Beneficiaries who fall in the doughnut hole will also receive a 21 % government subsidy toward the cost of **generic** drugs and 2.5% subsidy for brand name drugs. Thus, the total out-of-pocket costs (this includes what beneficiaries pay -- deductible and co-payments -- plus drug discounts) is \$4750. The doughnut hole will be closed by 2020.

### ***Expands “Bundling” Pilot Program to Coordinate and Improve Care***

Establishes a national pilot program to encourage hospitals, doctors and other providers to work together and coordinate care. Under “bundling,” hospitals, doctors and providers are paid a flat fee for each episode of care, instead of the current system that pays for each service or test separately. This provides an incentives for providers to work together, become more efficient and provide better quality care.

## ***Increase Payments to Primary Care Providers***

Primary care providers under Medicaid will be paid at 100% of Medicare payment rate. This provision is fully paid for by the federal government.

## ***Preventive Care Funding***

The law provides funding to state Medicaid programs to cover preventive services for patients at little or no cost.

For more information about the Medicare benefits that go into effect in 2012, go to:

<http://healthreform.kff.org/timeline.aspx>  
or visit: <http://www.healthcare.gov/foryou/seniors/index.html>

To view the Medicare 2013 handbook visit:  
<http://www.medicare.gov/publications/pubs/pdf/10050.pdf>

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