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**NEARLY 24 MILLION MEDICARE BENEFICIARIES NOW HAVE
PRESCRIPTION DRUG COVERAGE
2.6 Million More Sign Up for Stand-Alone Coverage in last 30 days**

Nearly 24 million Medicare beneficiaries now have prescription drug coverage, including more than 2.6 million people who signed up for the new stand-alone prescription drug coverage in the last 30 days. This number comes on top of the 1 million who enrolled in stand-alone plans in the first 30 days of the program.

“Enrollment in the new Medicare drug benefit is exceeding our expectations and keeping us on track to reach our goal of 28 to 30 million enrollees in the first year,” HHS Secretary Mike Leavitt said. “We are filling a million prescriptions a day, and seniors are saying the benefit is saving them money.”

While the system is working for most seniors, Leavitt said some seniors are experiencing problems getting their prescriptions filled and added, “we are working as quickly as possible to resolve these problems, and no senior should leave the pharmacy without the prescription drugs they need.”

“While most of the 2.6 million new enrollments occurred with the enrollment surge at the end of December, people with Medicare have continued to sign up steadily since then,” said Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services Administrator Mark B. McClellan, M.D., Ph.D. “Since November, 1.6 million have signed up on-line, and the on-line enrollment center at www.medicare.gov has been processing an average of over 20,000 enrollments a day through the end of last week,” he said.

“Many seniors are signing up for coverage on-line, often with the help of thousands of local partner organizations or family members, and many more continue to enroll over the phone and using paper applications as well,” Dr. McClellan said. “Hundreds of thousands of seniors are saving money every day, and we are working around the clock to make sure all seniors who participate can take full advantage of the benefit.”

The overall drug benefit enrollment figures as of Jan. 13 are:

- Stand-alone Prescription Drug Plans: about 3.6 million (2.6 million since Dec. 13)
- Medicare/Medicaid: 6.2 million (including 600,000 in Medicare Advantage plans).
- Medicare Advantage: 4.5 million (plus 600,000 in Medicare/Medicaid)
- Retiree coverage: About 6.4 million retirees are enrolled in the Medicare retiree subsidy. Also, as stated last month, about 1 million retirees are in employer coverage that incorporates or supplements Medicare’s coverage. Another estimated 500,000 retirees are continuing in coverage that is as good as Medicare’s.
- TRICARE/ FEHB retirees: 3.1 million.

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