Grand Challenge: Health
Title: Extension Helps Medicare Beneficiaries Save Money

Why is this issue important?

Medicare prescription drug plans can change every year. Premiums and deductibles can increase, drugs that were once covered may be no longer, preferred pharmacies may change, and different medication restrictions may be required. These changes can cost beneficiaries a lot of extra money. By evaluating prescription drug plans annually, beneficiaries can find the best coverage of medications at a competitive price saving them money.

How did Extension address this issue?

Susan Fangman, Family and Consumer Sciences Agent, and Cindy Evans, Director, provided one-on-one and group counseling sessions to Medicare beneficiaries during the 2016 Medicare Annual Election Period. They helped clients compare plans, consider convenience of pharmacies and the possibility of mail-order, screened for eligibility of extra-help, and assisted in enrolling beneficiaries in plans if changing.

What was the impact?

During the 2016 Medicare Part D open enrollment period:

- 205 individuals compared prescription drug plans
- 90 (44%) changed plans saving an estimated $73,482
- 21 individuals saved over $1000 each, 4 saved over $4000
- 1 individual enrolled in a prescription drug plan for the first time after not having creditable coverage for 5 years

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