

On August 4, 2011, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) announced that Medicare average prescription drug premiums will not increase in 2012. In addition, more Medicare beneficiaries are receiving discounts on prescription drug costs and no-cost preventive services.

Under the Affordable Care Act, people with Original Medicare can receive recommended preventive benefits and a new Annual Wellness Visit without cost-sharing. The Affordable Care Act is also closing the prescription drug "donut hole" by providing increasing discounts on covered drugs in the coverage gap. New data show beneficiaries benefiting from these provisions in the following ways:

- From January 1, 2011 through mid-July, over 17 million people with Original Medicare (51.5 percent) received one or more free preventive services. During the same time period, over 1 million people with Original Medicare obtained an Annual Wellness Visit – a new benefit created by the Affordable Care Act – up from 780,000 who had received this service by mid-June.
  
- From January 1, 2011 through the end of June, 899,000 Medicare beneficiaries received a 50 percent discount on covered brand name drugs in the Medicare Part D donut hole -- an increase of over 420,000 people in the month of June alone. This represents \$461 million saved by beneficiaries through June – including over \$200 million in the month of June alone.

HHS also announced that the average Medicare prescription drug plan premium will be about \$30 in 2012. The average premium in 2011 is \$30.76. This announcement is based on bids submitted by Part D plans for the 2012 plan year.

More information related to today's announcements is available at the following websites:

- National and regional Part D premium data:

<http://www.cms.gov/MedicareAdvtgSpecRateStats/RSD/list.asp>.

- State-by-state information on the number of beneficiaries with lower out-of-pocket costs in the donut hole: [http://www.cms.gov/newmedia/03\\_partd.asp](http://www.cms.gov/newmedia/03_partd.asp).

- State-by-state information on utilization of free preventive services and the Annual Wellness Visit: [http://www.cms.gov/newmedia/02\\_preventive.asp](http://www.cms.gov/newmedia/02_preventive.asp).

- Information on Medicare's Share the News. Share the Health prevention campaign:

<http://www.medicare.gov/share-the-health/>. CMS launched this campaign in June to raise awareness about the importance of prevention for people with Medicare and their health care providers.

Read the entire release [here](#) .