

Under Health Reform, 48,167 Medicare beneficiaries in Maryland Have Received Prescription Drug Cost Relief

WASHINGTON, DC – Today, Congressman Steny H. Hoyer (MD-5) announced that 48,167 Medicare beneficiaries in Maryland have received one-time, tax-free \$250 rebate checks to assist with their drug costs, due to the Affordable Care Act. Three million seniors nationwide have benefited from this relief, which was made available to any beneficiary who fell into the drug coverage gap known as the “donut hole” during 2010.

“Before the Affordable Care Act was signed into law, roughly 63,200 Medicare beneficiaries in Maryland fell into the donut hole and received no extra help to defray the cost of their prescription drugs,” **said Congressman Hoyer**. “Now, the health care law is working to help seniors who once were forced to choose whether to buy prescriptions or put food on the table. These checks are a down payment on reducing prescription drug costs for seniors and eventually closing the donut hole altogether, and are an important example of how the Affordable Care Act will strengthen Medicare and help seniors.”

In 2010, Medicare beneficiaries fell into the “donut hole” once their prescription drug costs exceeded \$2,830 and they began paying 100 percent of their drug costs until they hit the catastrophic coverage threshold. Once any beneficiary hit this point, they became eligible for this relief and were automatically issued a \$250 check once their drug costs exceeded \$2,830.

Starting this year, the donut hole will begin to shrink as it is eliminated over time and patients who fall into the donut hole will see additional help: a 50 percent discount on brand name drugs and a seven percent discount on generic drugs. These discounts will grow over time, until the donut hole is completely closed.

For more information on how the Affordable Care Act benefits seniors, visit www.HealthCare.gov

HHS also announced today that Maryland is the recipient of a new grant that will help the state implement health insurance [exchanges](#). The grant will ensure that the state can form an

insurance market exchange that works for Maryland, and is an example of how implementing the Affordable Care Act is a working partnership with the states.

“I want to congratulate Sec. Sharfstein, Gov. O'Malley, Lt. Gov. Brown and the Maryland Health Care Reform Coordinating Council, for their leadership and hard work on moving toward implementation of a market health insurance exchange that will make health care more affordable and accessible to Maryland individuals and small businesses,” **Hoyer said**

For more information on Maryland's Health Care Reform Coordinating Council and how to participate, [click here](#) .