

MEDICARE RIGHTS

CENTER

Getting Medicare right

2010 Annual Report



47 million Americans have the right to expect a system that gets it right.

The Medicare Rights Center is a national, nonprofit consumer service organization that works to ensure access to affordable health care for older adults and people with disabilities through counseling and advocacy, educational programs and public policy initiatives.

2010 Annual Report

Getting Medicare Right

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A Message From:

Joe Baker, President, and Bruce Vladeck, Chairman of the Board



Joe Baker and Bruce Vladeck

Dear Friend,

The start of the second decade of the 21st century marked an important watershed: the first of the baby boomers became eligible for Medicare and needed Medicare information. The number of Medicare beneficiaries will grow dramatically for a number of years to come, and the need for assistance will grow in tandem. Medicare Rights Center's expertise will become ever more valuable to the growing millions of older adults, their families and the professionals who serve them.

Medicare Rights empowers people with Medicare—and those who support them—by giving them the information and assistance they need to access high-quality, affordable health care. From our helpline to our online educational tools, from peer-to-peer counseling to live professional training, Medicare Rights enables consumers across the country to better navigate their health care options. Last year, volunteers and staff on our helpline counseled over 14,000 callers with Medicare questions. By processing more than 2,000 public benefits for these individuals, we secured \$6.2 million in benefits for them and their families.

In order to provide information to more Medicare consumers, Medicare Rights has also increased the capacity of community-based organizations to serve their own clients. We counseled nearly 5,000 professionals last year, each of whom we estimate helped four people with Medicare. We've also helped other organizations launch new service models, such as our Seniors Out Speaking program, which engages older adults as peer educators in communities across the country. Last year, we supported local organizations as they launched Seniors Out Speaking in Kansas and Maryland. We also began work to help states develop Medicare-related policy agendas through the creation of state-based coalitions, such as the new Medicare Advocacy Coalition in Florida.

We could not accomplish any of this work without our incredible staff, volunteers, board members and donors, and we thank each and every one of them for their time and their passion. Please have a look inside and learn more about Medicare Rights and those we serve.



Joe Baker



Bruce Vladeck

Who We Are



The Medicare Rights Center is a national, nonprofit consumer service organization that works to ensure access to affordable health care for older adults and people with disabilities through counseling and advocacy, educational programs and public policy initiatives. Medicare Rights' key strength is its ability to connect real consumer experiences to education and policy advocacy, making sure that new educational topics and policies are easy for consumers to understand while pursuing reforms to systemically improve Medicare.

Fiscal year 2010 (July 1, 2009 – June 30, 2010) represented a period of growth for Medicare Rights, as the organization developed, expanded and honed a variety of staff- and volunteer-led programs rooted in counseling and assistance, education and communications, and public policy. The aim: to help the nearly 47 million Americans with Medicare, their families and the professionals serving them understand their health care rights and navigate their coverage options.



Medicare Rights Center Staff

Counseling & Assistance



Consumer Helpline

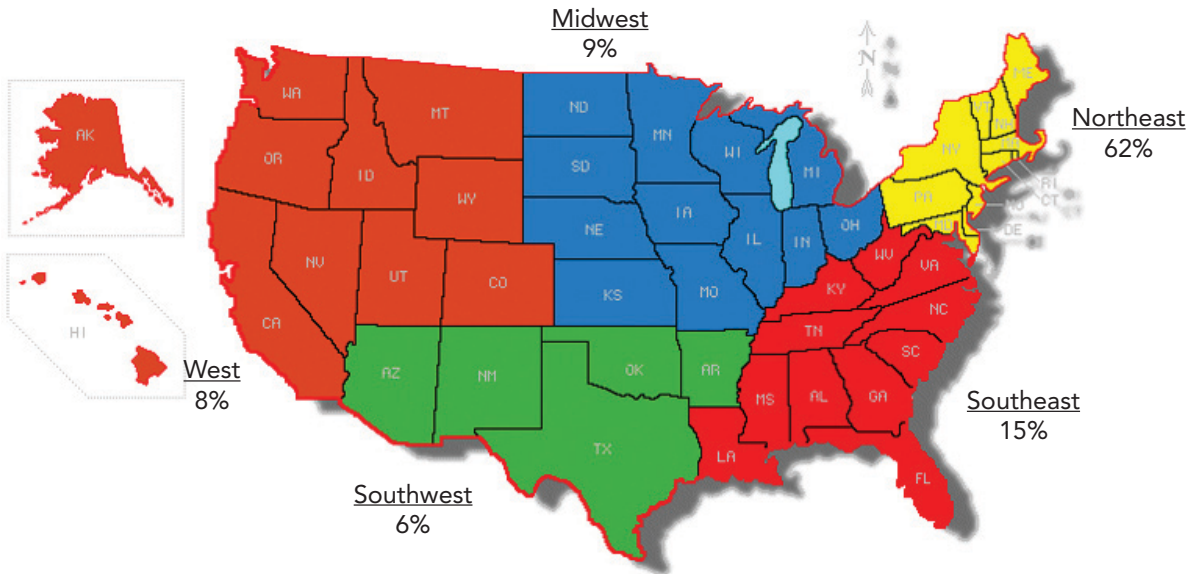
The heart of the Medicare Rights Center's work is its Consumer Helpline. In fiscal year 2010, the helpline provided more than 14,000 counseling sessions to people with Medicare and their families. Each caller to the Consumer Helpline receives one-on-one assistance from a trained Medicare Rights expert, and each client's information is now entered into Medicare Rights' new database, powered by Salesforce.

Made possible by a grant from the Fan Fox & Leslie R. Samuels Foundation, the new database is enabling Medicare Rights to more effectively track clients, identify trends and generate data reports for a variety of service, education and policy purposes. For instance, in June 2010, Medicare Rights released the policy report "Why Consumers Disenroll from Medicare Private Health Plans," which leveraged helpline data captured in the Salesforce database to make recommendations about how to better protect consumers enrolled in Medicare Advantage plans.

"People call us when they are feeling most vulnerable and need answers, for themselves or for a family member. Sometimes, they are confused, angry and disenchanted because they have made a variety of calls and received conflicting answers before reaching us, and they just don't know where to begin. It is our responsibility to take the time to hear their story, assess the facts, discern the problem and determine next steps."

– Heather Bates,
Vice President of Client Services
and Program Management

Consumer Helpline Calls Per Region



Spanish-Language Helpline

The Medicare Rights Center knows firsthand that a language barrier can make the already confusing health care system even more daunting. As the population of Spanish speakers in the United States grows and ages, the need for reliable and linguistically sensitive information on Medicare becomes more pressing. The Spanish-Language Helpline helps meet this need. In fiscal year 2010, Medicare Rights began an assessment of its Spanish-language services, including the helpline, which will inform programmatic growth in 2011. Medicare Rights also continued to develop Spanish-language educational materials that helpline counselors can send to callers as a follow-up to counseling sessions.



Ms. R contacted Medicare Rights' Spanish-Language Helpline last year after she received a bill for over \$400 from a collection agency. Ms. R speaks little English and had unknowingly exceeded the amount that Medicare would cover for her physical therapy. Because she lives on a modest monthly income, she could not afford to pay hundreds of dollars out of pocket. A Medicare Rights caseworker helped Ms. R apply for a one-time grant to pay her bill.

Helping Consumers Appeal Denials of Coverage

A recent report by the Office of the Inspector General found that only 8 percent of consumers appeal denials of coverage by Medicare private health plans. However, when consumers do appeal, they win more than 50 percent of the time. The Medicare Rights Center works tirelessly to educate consumers about the importance of appealing denials, and to help them through the appeals process.

In fiscal year 2010, nearly 2,500 callers to the Medicare Rights Center's helplines needed assistance appealing the denial of a needed medicine or health care service. Helpline staff and volunteers drew from a variety of updated legal resources to help callers navigate their appeals, providing information and support throughout the different appeal stages. Medicare Rights' assistance saved clients thousands of dollars.

Helping Low-Income Consumers Enroll in Benefits

A primary focus of the Medicare Rights Center's work in fiscal year 2010 involved helping clients understand and enroll in public benefits that cover some of the costs associated with Medicare. Nationally, it is estimated that up to one-half of eligible consumers are not enrolled in needed assistance programs, because they do not know about them, because they face social stigma or because they simply cannot get the assistance they need to enroll successfully. Medicare Rights pursued service and policy solutions to this underenrollment trend throughout the year.

In the course of 2010, all Medicare Rights helpline staff and volunteers were trained to screen callers for Medicare-related public benefits, such as Medicare Savings Programs, the Part D prescription drug benefit's Extra Help subsidy and the New York State Elderly Pharmaceutical Insurance Coverage (EPIC) program. Thanks to this streamlining effort, the organization increased the number of clients it screened for benefits by 28 percent over fiscal year 2009, resulting in more than 2,000 benefits valuing \$6.2 million being secured.

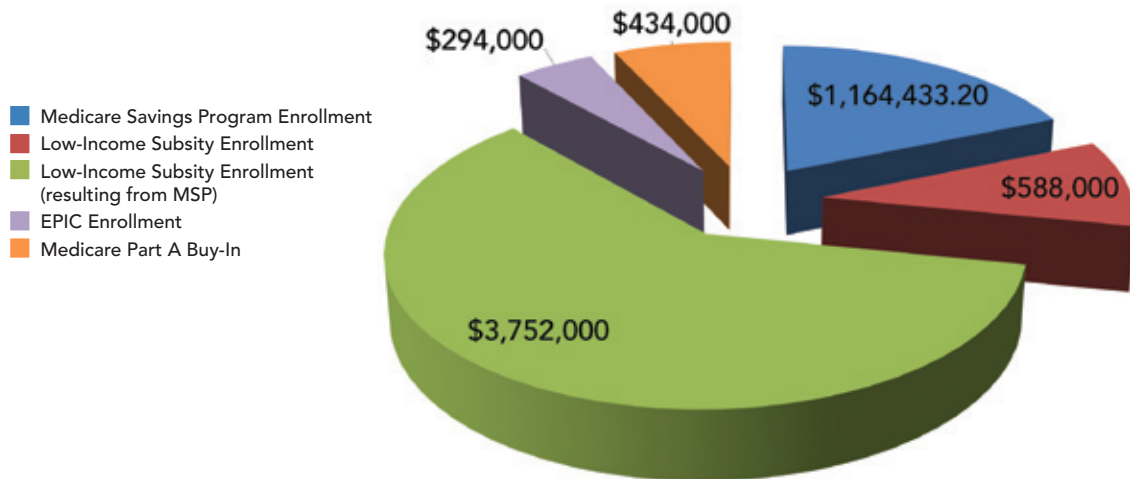
Mr. L is among the thousands of clients—and their caregivers—whom Medicare Rights serves every year. Mr. L had received prior authorization from his private health plan for a surgical procedure. However, when his doctor filed the claim, it was denied. Mr. L's wife called a Medicare Rights caseworker, who told her about the appeals process and sent her educational materials explaining the steps in the process. Mrs. L was able to help her husband successfully appeal the health plan's denial of coverage.

Mrs. L had this to say about Medicare Rights' assistance: "Thank you so much for all your help with my husband's appeal. I am writing this letter to give you the good news that today I received a call from my husband's doctor saying that we won the appeal and the insurance company has paid the bill. Thank you again for all your help in this case."

Estimated Benefits Generated Through Casework Interventions by Medicare Rights Caseworkers

Total: \$6,232,433.20

July 1, 2009 – June 30, 2010



“The Success of the Medicare Rights Center”

(from the New York State Health Foundation’s Annual Report)

“Many New York seniors who are eligible for programs that can save them money on their Medicare benefits are not enrolled in these programs. With NYSHealth support, the Medicare Rights Center conducted an aggressive, targeted outreach campaign to identify and enroll qualifying seniors in Medicare Savings Programs and the Medicare Part D Extra Help subsidy program. These efforts led to approximately 3,500 seniors enrolling in Medicare programs over the course of two years, saving them more than \$17 million. This work also generated nearly \$5 million in savings for New York State.”

Helping Low-Income Consumers Enroll in Benefits

Medicare Rights also worked with a variety of city, state and federal agencies, and with other advocates, to promote policy reforms that would make it easier for older adults and people with disabilities to enroll in needed public benefits. This work was facilitated by the Medicare Rights-led New York State Medicare Savings Coalition and, more locally, by the New York City Benefits Workgroup, both described in greater detail in the Public Policy section of this report.

Two major enrollment initiatives led by Medicare Rights in fiscal year 2010 were its work with the Benefits Data Trust (BDT) and the Food Bank For New York City. The former project's success led it to be featured as one of the "Top 10" accomplishments of the New York State Health Foundation, which funded the initiative.

With support from the Fan Fox & Leslie R. Samuels Foundation, Medicare Rights worked with the Food Bank For New York City to develop a variety of outreach, screening and referral protocols and tools to ensure that as many older New York City residents as possible are enrolled in multiple public benefits. To date, the two organizations have enrolled and attempted to cross-refer more than 5,000 older adults in Medicare Savings Programs, the Part D Extra Help subsidy, EPIC and Food Stamps. The two organizations are also active leaders of the New York City Benefits Workgroup mentioned above.

Professional Services

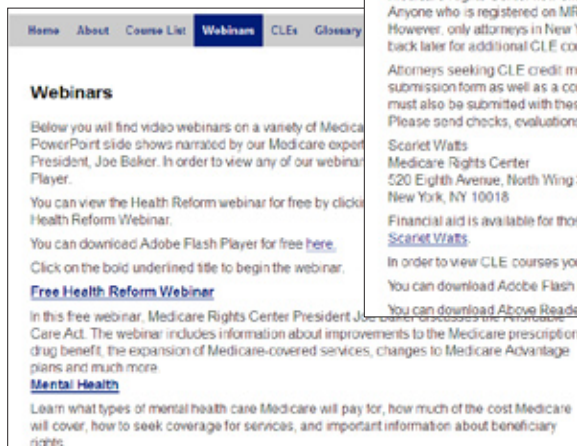
Social workers, doctors, nurses, attorneys and other professionals are frequently asked questions about Medicare that they cannot answer. By educating these individuals on Medicare benefits and options, the Medicare Rights Center improves consumers' access to reliable coverage information. At the same time, Medicare Rights increases local organizations' capacity to serve their own clients. Fiscal year 2010 saw exciting developments in Medicare Rights' services for professionals, particularly related to new counseling methods, trainings and online educational resources.

Here is what some of our attendees had to say about our courses for professionals:

“Unbiased, intelligent presentations with explanations you cannot get anywhere else—thank you.”

A wealth of information for a great value.

Would recommend this course to both entry-level colleagues and experienced attorneys.”



Webinars, Continuing Legal Education and Medicare Rights University

In fiscal year 2010, Medicare Rights revamped and launched a series of semi-monthly webinars for professionals across the country. Topics included Medicare for Caregivers, the Medicare Part D Drug Benefit and How to Use Plan Finder.

Last year, too, Medicare Rights became accredited and launched its fee-based Continuing Legal Education (CLE) program for New York State attorneys who wish to learn about Medicare and other elder law topics while meeting state bar requirements. At the same time, Medicare Rights continued developing Medicare Rights University (MRU, formerly Medicare Interactive University), which will enable professionals nationwide to participate in interactive Medicare-related lessons from the comfort of their home or office.

Ms. S, a social worker, is just one of the thousands of professionals whom Medicare Rights supports each year. Ms. S's client needed help enrolling in Medicare Part B and a Medicare Savings Program. Ms. S contacted Medicare Rights with a question about these enrollment processes and was pleased with the service she received from the helpline counselor: "Thank you so much for your help today. It's amazing how much I still have to learn about Medicare. I am grateful that you were able to talk us through it step by step. What great work you do at the Medicare Rights Center."

Professional Helpline and E-Mail Assistance

Through its professional e-mail assistance, Medicare Rights counsels professionals on a range of Medicare topics, enabling them to better serve their own clients. In fiscal year 2010, Medicare Rights' professional services staff assisted nearly 5,000 professionals with Medicare questions.

Community Partners Program

In fiscal year 2010, with support from the Altman Foundation, Medicare Rights piloted its Community Partners program with the Isabella Geriatric Resource Center and Hamilton Madison House, two social service sites that meet the needs of diverse Manhattan residents (particularly those who speak Spanish and Mandarin/Cantonese). Through the Community Partners model, which evolved from the former Medicare/Medicaid Assistance Project (MMAP), Medicare Rights provides trainings, application support and technical assistance to self-selected organizations that wish to help their own older clients enroll in needed benefits and navigate other health insurance problems. By partnering with organizations that serve diverse clients, Medicare Rights can reach a greater number of older adults with culturally sensitive assistance. In the course of the year, Medicare Rights planned the expansion of the program to new sites.

"Medicare Rights Center has been the go-to resource for VOICES 60+ staff, volunteers and patients when we have questions about Medicare and insurance issues. We rely on them for the most updated information and their team is always ready to help with any of our insurance challenges. It's been an ongoing pleasure working with the Medicare Rights Center, and we hope our partnership continues."

*—Juliette Kleinman, Manager,
VOICES 60+ program at the
Hospital for Special Surgery*

Volunteers



"Medicare Rights takes advantage of what I know, they train me on what I don't know and they consider volunteers to be essential to their success. I felt like I belonged and was important from the start. Best of all, the simple act of answering the helpline and saying 'How can I help you?' will make that caller's life better. That payback is invaluable."

—Nicki Morelli, Helpline Volunteer

"Being a VISTA at the Medicare Rights Center was an incredibly fulfilling and enlightening experience. During my year of service, I worked to strengthen and support a dedicated group of volunteers in the Seniors Out Speaking program, who teach thousands of people each year about Medicare benefits and options. I also had the privilege of learning from Medicare Rights' extremely intelligent and compassionate staff and volunteers. All this while gaining a new understanding of the complex health insurance system and using that knowledge to help Medicare consumers get the health care they need."

—Jessica Foster,
2009-2010 AmeriCorps VISTA and current Education Associate

Community Volunteers

The Medicare Rights Center deeply appreciates the expertise and passion of its volunteers, some of whom have been with the organization for over a decade. This growing cohort of 150 men and women plays a crucial role in Medicare Rights' telephone and face-to-face counseling, and helps lead an array of education and outreach programs. In fiscal year 2010, Medicare Rights built on this strong foundation, launching new efforts to recruit and train community members on a range of skills, including helpline counseling, public speaking and data management.

AmeriCorps, AVODAH and Interns

In the last few years, Medicare Rights has enlisted a corps of young people (including AmeriCorps VISTAs, AVODAH Jewish Service Corps members, and social work and legal interns) to increase the organization's capacity to serve clients and connect helpline trends to broader policy efforts. These young people learn about the Medicare program's history and current policies, and many go on to pursue careers in medicine, health policy and law.

Volunteers make up the majority of the Medicare Rights Center's workforce.



AmeriCorps VISTAs and AVODAH 2010-2011
From left to right: Christina Herrera, Sarah Pearce, Sidharth Bhandari, Julie Finkel, Aly Bancroft

Education



Community-Based Trainings and Presentations

The Medicare Rights Center offers a variety of in-person, online and recorded trainings and presentations to professionals and consumers throughout the country. These sessions cover topics such as Medicare Basics, Enrollment in Low-Income Programs and the Medicare Appeals Process. In fiscal year 2010, Medicare Rights developed new trainings on the Affordable Care Act (ACA) to educate consumers and professionals about health reform and what it means for people with Medicare. In the course of the year, Medicare Rights reached more than 20,000 people through live presentations, doubling the number of events over fiscal year 2009.

SOS: Medicare Minutes and Health Advocacy Workshops

In fiscal year 2010, the Medicare Rights Center streamlined and expanded a series of community-based programs for educating and empowering older adults to navigate the health care system themselves. These Seniors Out Speaking (SOS) programs include Medicare Minutes and Health Advocacy Workshops.

SOS Medicare Minutes

Through SOS Medicare Minutes, Medicare Rights works with host organizations nationally to enlist, train and track the outcomes of SOS volunteers as they help their friends and neighbors understand

Medicare and related health insurance coverage. SOS Medicare Minutes build camaraderie among older adults, strengthen community-based organizations and encourage participants to become advocates for their own health care and that of their peers.

Medicare Rights provides host organizations with monthly SOS content and an array of technical assistance services, including volunteer recruitment and training guidance, data tracking support, helpline back-up, and access to education and policy resources.

The SOS Medicare Minute program was launched in 2001 in Westchester County, New York, with support from the Helen Andrus Benedict Foundation. Last year, Medicare Rights strengthened a replication of the program in New York City. With support from the Public Welfare Foundation, Medicare Rights also partnered with the North Central-Flint Hills Area Agency on Aging in Kansas and with the Baltimore County State Health Insurance Information and Assistance

Provider (SHIP) to launch the SOS Medicare Minute program there. Further, Medicare Rights developed new SOS Medicare Minutes to address topics including health reform's impact on people with Medicare. All told, SOS Medicare Minute volunteers nationwide led presentations to more than 20,000 individuals.

SOS Health Advocacy Workshops

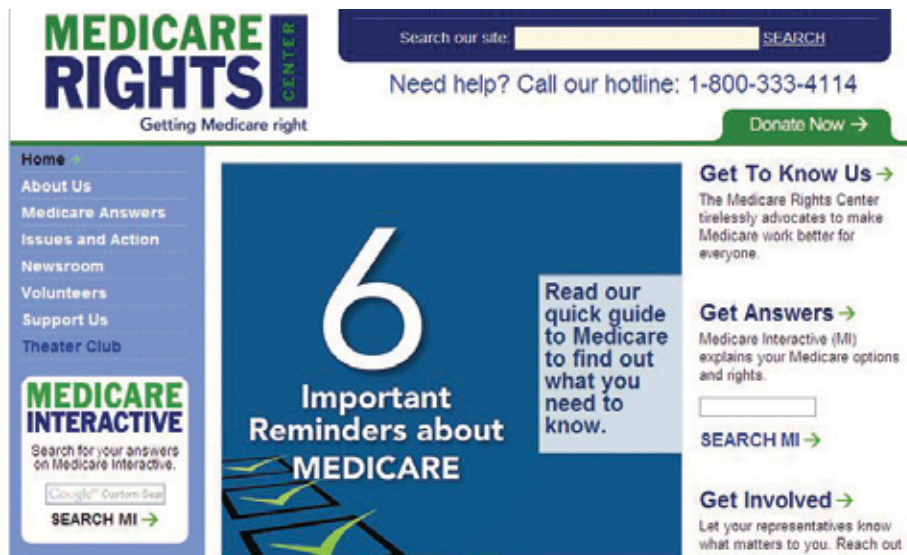
Medicare Rights has found over the years that some SOS volunteers wish to engage more directly with audiences and practice health advocacy skills. SOS Health Advocacy Workshops emerged from this need and are now one of the flagship programs in Westchester County, New York. The interactive workshops, on topics including Speak Up For Yourself and Building a Health Care Team, enable attendees to practice advocating for themselves in a supportive setting. In fiscal year 2010, Medicare Rights' volunteers led over 60 SOS Health Advocacy Workshops in Westchester and empowered nearly 1,400 older adults with good health care information.

"We're all told at some point in our lives to give back, and working with the Medicare Rights Center has allowed me to do that. It has been a learning experience for me as well as for the members of the senior community which I serve. I am not only presenting information, but making friends."

– New York SOS Volunteer

"[SOS] volunteers are particularly happy to be sharing information about [new health reforms], since it's so timely."

– Kansas SOS Coordinator



MedicareRights.org

During fiscal year 2010, the Medicare Rights Center launched its redesigned website—www.medicarerights.org—visits to which increased by nearly 40 percent over 2009. This dynamic new site showcases Medicare Rights' programs, activities and resources—such as the *Dear Marci* newsletter, whose readership increased by nearly 70 percent in the course of the year. Medicare Rights' staff sifts through complicated Medicare

policies and news stories to present clear, timely updates on MedicareRights.org. For instance, in the months leading up to passage of the ACA, the website featured a Health Reform and Medicare page to explain how the legislation would affect the Medicare program and people with Medicare. Today, the site serves as an effective information portal for consumers, caregivers, professionals and journalists in need of Medicare news and answers.

MEDICARE INTERACTIVE .ORG
Medicare answers at your fingertips

New look, same great content!

Text size A A A
Google™ Custom Search **FIND**

Home Table of Contents Glossary

Medicare Interactive can help you find answers about Medicare benefits. It was created and is maintained by the [Medicare Rights Center](#).

You can use Medicare Interactive any one of the following ways:

- Enter a word or phrase into the "Find" bar
- Click on one of the general topics in the Table of Contents
- Click on a specific topic in the keyword list

Enter a word or phrase into the FIND bar

Start typing here **FIND**

The Medicare Rights Center works to ensure access to affordable health care for older adults and people with disabilities through counseling, educational programs and public policy initiatives.

Click on a specific topic in the keyword list

[Original Medicare](#)
[Private Health Plans](#)
[Hospital Insurance \(Part A\)](#)

MedicareInteractive.org

Medicare Interactive (www.medicareinteractive.org) is an online compendium of Medicare answers, presented in a searchable, consumer-friendly format. In fiscal year 2010, the Medicare Rights Center's education and IT departments unveiled a new home page for the resource, in order to more effectively introduce visitors to the site's hundreds of pages on topics including What Medicare Covers, Private Health Plans and Advice for Caregivers. Partners across the country, including Area Agencies on Aging, State Health Insurance Information and Assistance Providers, and other advocates, turn to Medicare Interactive for answers and refer diverse clients to the site. Last year, the site received 420,000 visits, a 5 percent increase over 2009. Further, thanks to the redesign, visitors

now stay on the site for longer periods than ever before. Last year, Medicare Rights also developed several new pages for Medicare Interactive, covering such topics as Changes to Medigap Programs, Medicare's Expanded Coverage of Mental Health Services, Updates on Medicare Therapy Caps and Reforms Related to the Affordable Care Act.

Ms. D is a community education coordinator at an organization that serves people with epilepsy living in New England. She often uses Medicare Interactive when answering clients' health care questions: "This is an excellent source of material for us to use when people call with Medicare questions. Thanks so much for this information."

Newsletters



During fiscal year 2010, the Medicare Rights Center published three electronic newsletters and one syndicated column to deliver timely Medicare information to different audiences nationwide.

» *Dear Marci* helps counselors and consumers—people with Medicare, their families and caregivers—understand their Medicare benefits and options. Each issue of the biweekly e-newsletter features Medicare coverage advice, basic health tips and links to health care resources. The number of subscribers to *Dear Marci* increased by nearly 70 percent in fiscal year 2010.

» *Marci's Medicare Answers* is a consumer-oriented column designed for syndication in newspapers and senior newsletters across the country. Each monthly column includes questions tied to national health observances, such as Glaucoma Awareness Month.

» *The Medicare Counselor* is a bimonthly publication that addresses timely Medicare coverage-related topics to help social workers, health care providers and other professionals stay up-to-date on Medicare issues that affect their clients.

» *Medicare Watch*, a weekly e-newsletter, helps readers stay current on Medicare policy and advocacy developments, and learn about changes in Medicare benefits and rules. It also provides recommendations for what individuals can do to make Medicare better for all older adults and people with disabilities.

Media

The New York Times

The unpopular “doughnut hole” in Medicare’s Part D Prescription plan—the big expensive gap in coverage that affects many participants—would go away by 2020. Participants would gradually pay less until they are responsible for 25 percent of their drug costs (or costs above their deductible and below the catastrophic limit), said **Joe Baker**, president of the **Medicare Rights Center**.



“...the untold story (with health reform) is a lot of good news for people with Medicare...”

—**Joe Baker**, on a “NewsHour” episode that aired August 10, 2009



For the most authoritative, up-to-date advice on how to navigate your Medicare options, we strongly recommend the **Medicare Rights Center**, a nonprofit, noncommercial organization whose only purpose is to help consumers get the most out of Medicare.

...an impartial and comprehensive source of information on all things Medicare...

The Washington Post

Tune out the superlatives and compare the information with the facts from advocacy groups such as **Medicare Rights Center**.

In the course of fiscal year 2010, few topics proved as newsworthy as health care reform. For journalists seeking up-to-date information on Medicare and health reform, the Medicare Rights Center served as an invaluable resource. The organization communicated with national and local media outlets to draw attention to important policy issues, and to the daily challenges that Medicare consumers face. Major newspapers, such as *The Washington Post*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *The Chicago Tribune* and *The New York Times* regularly feature Medicare Rights. Local newspapers, such as *The Wichita Eagle*, *The Kansas City Star*, *The Florida Times-Union* and the San Diego-based *East County Magazine* frequently report Medicare Rights’ positions when covering Medicare issues. Medicare Rights also maintains strong ties to

national and local television, cable and radio news outlets, including ABC’s “World News Tonight,” C-SPAN’s “Washington Journal,” National Public Radio’s “All Things Considered” and Fox News. Additionally, respected health policy analysts such as the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation and the United Hospital Fund seek Medicare Rights’ input on Medicare-related reports.

In fiscal year 2010, Medicare Rights placed 1,051 articles in media outlets across the country, a 100 percent increase from the previous year. During the same period, Medicare Rights responded to 270 press inquiries. Additionally, Medicare Rights expanded its media presence last year through Facebook (www.facebook.com/medicarerights) and Twitter (www.twitter.com/medicarerights).

Public Policy



In fiscal year 2010, the Medicare Rights Center worked with numerous state and federal advocates during the passage of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) in March. The legislation will benefit people with Medicare by, among other things,

- » eliminating the prescription drug “doughnut hole”;
- » expanding Medicare coverage of preventive care services;
- » providing better oversight of the Medicare Advantage market;
- » strengthening Medicare’s finances;
- » reducing Medicare fraud;
- » improving coverage and care coordination for individuals who are dually eligible for Medicare and Medicaid.

Federal Highlights

Throughout the year, the Medicare Rights Center developed letters to Congress, fact sheets and testimony related to the ACA. Working with other advocates, including AARP, the National Council on Aging, the National Partnership for Women and Families, Community Catalyst, the National Senior Citizens Law Center, the Center for Medicare Advocacy, and others, Medicare Rights represented older adults and people with disabilities in deliberations over the bill’s final form.

Following passage of the ACA, Medicare Rights began developing materials and trainings to educate consumers, professionals and policymakers on the legislation’s implications for people with Medicare. The publication “Health Reform and Medicare: A Timeline of Implementation” proved especially popular.

“As you work to reconcile the House and Senate bills, we urge you to make it a priority to include...important Medicare reforms.

The underlying legislation passed by both chambers improves Medicare’s financial outlook; it is vital that the final bill also make medical care and prescription drugs more affordable to older adults and people with disabilities. The Medicare Rights Center is ready to work with you to help secure passage of legislation that improves health coverage for all Americans, including people with Medicare.”



– from a letter to Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid
and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi
December 24, 2010

In addition to these health reform efforts, Medicare Rights worked to improve aspects of the current Medicare program in 2010, paying particular attention to helping low-income consumers enroll in and recertify for needed benefits. An important moment for these efforts was the summer publication of the policy report “Local Promise: Maximizing Enrollment into Low-Income Medicare Programs through State-Based Consumer Advocacy,” made possible by support from the Public Welfare Foundation. Medicare Rights also continued working with states to ensure that data-sharing elements of the Medicare Improvements for Patients & Providers Act (MIPPA) of 2008 are implemented so that consumers can be more easily enrolled in a range of public benefits. The publication of the policy report, “Warning Signs: Preliminary Report Highlights Problems with State Implementation of MIPPA Low-Income Reforms,” helped state and federal entities understand how data-sharing could be better leveraged to help consumers.

State Highlights

In the course of the year, the Medicare Rights Center continued to collaborate with agencies and advocates in several states to achieve common policy goals. For instance:

- » Members of the Medicare Rights-led New York Medicare Savings Coalition (comprising more than 200 members) identified ways to help low-income consumers more easily enroll in needed benefits—for instance, by making MIPPA data-sharing work in New York State, and by moving closer to adopting automatic benefits recertification as a model for the state’s Medicare population.
- » In Florida, Medicare Rights worked with the University of Northern Florida to launch a Medicare Advocacy Coalition that is presently developing strategies for increasing health literacy among the state’s older residents.

Public Policy

» In Kansas, Medicare Rights launched work with Area Agencies on Aging to forge a Kansas Medicare Advocacy Coalition, which will work to increase awareness of, and enrollment in, the state's low-income assistance programs.

» Representatives from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, the Social Security Administration, the New York State Department of Health and others gathered for a roundtable on the Medicare Part A Buy-In program (which helps low-income immigrants and others pay for Medicare costs), hosted by Medicare Rights at the United Hospital Fund.

» The New York City Benefits Workgroup, led by Medicare Rights and the Food Bank For New York City, convened state leaders of the Department of Health and the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance to discuss how to better cross-enroll older New Yorkers with low incomes in Medicare-related public benefits and Food Stamps.

» With the Campaign for Better Care, Medicare Rights helped collect consumer stories from across the country to spotlight the ongoing need for improved coverage and care coordination for older consumers and those with disabilities.

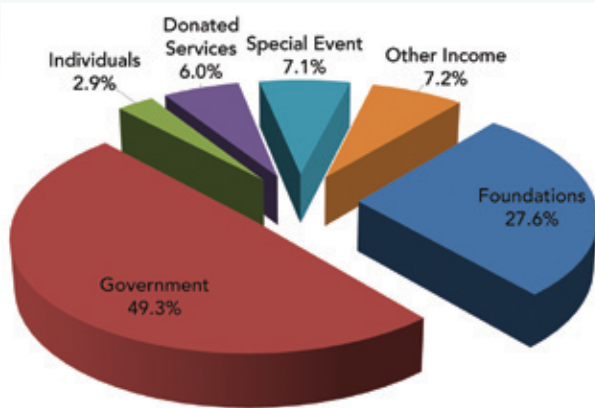


On January 8, 2010, Medicare Rights was awarded a Public Service Award from the Social Security Administration (SSA) for its outreach efforts to inform the public about a “twist” in the law related to the Medicare Part D drug benefit’s Extra Help subsidy, which helps people with Medicare afford their medicines. SSA Commissioner Michael J. Astrue presented the award to Medicare Rights President Joe Baker.

Fiscal Year 2010 Finances

July 1, 2009 – June 30, 2010

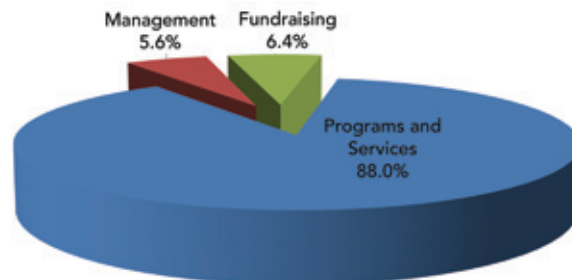
Support



Foundations	\$774,341
Government	\$1,383,056
Individuals	\$81,667
Donated Services	\$167,439
Special Event	\$198,139
Other Income	\$203,269
<hr/>	
TOTAL	\$2,807,911

Expenses

Programs and Services	\$2,803,857
Management	\$179,246
Fundraising	\$203,681
<hr/>	
TOTAL	\$3,186,784



We Thank Our Supporters

The Medicare Rights Center gratefully acknowledges our individual donors and those who have donated goods and services to the organization. Their names appear in the online version of the Annual Report at www.medicarerights.org.

“The Medicare Rights Center could not develop, sustain and replicate its array of successful programs without the support of foundations in New York State and nationally. We are grateful to these foundations and their staff members for believing in our work and supporting us as we grow.”

—Rachel Bennett, Program Development Director

Foundation Support

Alpern Family Foundation
Altman Foundation
Atlantic Philanthropies
Helen Andrus Benedict Foundation
Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS
Commonwealth Fund
Community Foundation for the National Capital Region
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