

## State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations



### Department of Human Services Division of Elderly Affairs

#### RHODE ISLAND SENIOR BEAT

**BY:** Larry Grimaldi, Chief of Information & Public Relations  
462-0509 lgrimaldi@dea.ri.gov  
**RELEASE:** Friday, February 22, 2013

#### **CENTERS FOR MEDICARE AND MEDICAID SERVICES ISSUES** **REPORT ON THE IMPACT OF THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT** **ON MEDICARE HEALTH CARE COSTS**

**CRANSTON** ---When the Affordable Care Act (ACA) was passed in 2010, the projected savings in Medicare, the nation's healthcare program for 46 million Americans and 193,000 Rhode Islanders age 65 and older and adults who have been disabled for more than two years, were just that-projections. When the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) issued its second annual report earlier this month on the impact of the ACA on Medicare costs, the numbers showed tangible savings to beneficiaries in 2012, particularly in the area of prescription drug costs.

Since the ACA was enacted, 6.1 million beneficiaries with Medicare Prescription Drug plans (Medicare Part D) reached the coverage gap, also known as the "donut hole," in their Part D plans. Under the provisions of the ACA, which gradually reduce medications co-payments for beneficiaries until a 25 percent copayment for both generic and brand-name drugs is reached in 2020. In 2012, beneficiaries in the "donut hole" received a 50 percent discount on brand-name drugs and 14 percent on generics. In 2013, Medicare beneficiaries who reach the "donut hole" will get a 52.5 percent discount on brand-name drugs and a 21 percent discount on generics.

The CMS report notes since the implementation of the ACA, Medicare beneficiaries have saved more than \$5.7 billion in prescription drug costs when they entered the "donut hole" in the Part D plans. In 2012, drug savings of \$2.5 billion were realized, slightly more than the \$2.3 billion in savings for beneficiaries in 2011.

**-more-**

**John O. Pastore Center, Hazard Building / 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor**  
**74 West Road, Cranston, RI 02920**  
**Telephone 401-462-3000, Fax 401-462-0503, TTY 401-462-0740**  
**Web Site: [www.dea.ri.gov](http://www.dea.ri.gov)**

## **RI Senior Beat-February 22, 2013-affordable care act-page 2**

In 2012, beneficiaries enrolled in Medicare Advantage plans paid lower average monthly premiums for their healthcare plans than in 2010. Last week, CMS announced that the standard yearly deductible for a Part D plan will be reduced to \$310 in 2014 from

**-more-**

cause heart disease, some life choices we make can increase our risk of heart disease. Smoking, excessive drinking, and a sedentary life style that includes little or no exercise, and stress are contributing factors. Chronic diseases such as diabetes and uncontrolled high blood pressure can also increase your probability of getting heart disease.

Prevention plays a key role in reducing your risk for heart disease. Regular healthcare check-ups with your doctor or healthcare professional should include a blood pressure check, weight check, tests for blood sugar levels and cholesterol levels, and perhaps a test to determine your body mass index (BMI). Your doctor may also prescribe an electrocardiogram (EKG) that measures the level of electrical activity in your heart. If he suspects any problems, your doctor may suggest that you see a cardiologist, a physician that specializes in heart disease.

Everyone should be aware of the warning signs of a heart attack. Chest pain is to be taken very seriously. You may also experience shoulder, arm, neck, back, or jaw pain. You may feel chest pain during exercise or other physical exertion. Other symptoms may include dizziness, weakness or numbness on one side of your face or body, shortness of breath, fatigue, swelling in the ankles, feet, legs, or stomach, a fluttering in the chest, or a feeling that your heart is skipping a beat or beating too fast. Don't ignore these symptoms. Call 9-1-1 immediately and get to the

hospital as soon as possible. Minutes can be the difference between life and recovery, or disability or death.

In addition to regular healthcare check-ups, there are many things that you can do on your own to prevent heart disease. If you are still smoking, stop. Medicare will pay for smoking cessation counseling and stop-smoking programs under its preventive benefits provisions. Call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227) for more information, or go to [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov). The TTY number is 1-877-486-2048.

Talk with your doctor about developing a sensible and effective exercise routine. While walking is probably the most popular and beneficial exercise for seniors, don't forget activities such as bowling, riding a bike, or gardening.

Get into the habit of eating a healthy diet. Include low-fat foods, plenty of fruits and vegetables, and fiber-rich whole grain cereals and breads. If you help planning a healthy diet, your doctor can refer you to a dietician. Watch your weight. Nutrition counseling is also a preventive benefit included in your Medicare coverage.

Drink alcohol only in moderation. The National Institute on Aging warns that men should not have more than two drinks a day and woman only one.

**-more-**

### **RI Senior Beat-February 22, 2013-affordablecarw act-page 3**

For more information on heart health, call the American Heart Association (AHA) at 1-800-242-8721, or go to [www.heart.org](http://www.heart.org). You can reach the Rhode Island Chapter of the AHA at 330-1700.

A healthy heart is essential to preserving your health, well-being and independence, and to put you on a path to living a fuller, more active life.

**-30-**

The Rhode Island Department of Human Services, Division of Elderly Affairs (DEA) is responsible for the development and implementation of a comprehensive system of programs and services for Rhode Islanders ages 60 and older and for adults with disabilities. Questions or requests for additional information on the issues of growing older, or for issues concerning adults with disabilities in Rhode Island should be directed to: Larry Grimaldi, Rhode Island Senior Beat, Rhode Island Department of Human Services, Division of Elderly Affairs, 74 West Road, Cranston, RI 02920 or faxed to 462-0545. The e-mail address is [lgrimaldi@dea.ri.gov](mailto:lgrimaldi@dea.ri.gov).

**John O. Pastore Center, Hazard Building / 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor**  
**74 West Road, Cranston, RI 02920**  
**Telephone 401-462-3000, Fax 401-462-0503, TTY 401-462-0740**  
**Web Site: [www.dea.ri.gov](http://www.dea.ri.gov)**

