

News Release

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California's Physician Groups Launch Campaign to Protect Seniors from Increased Costs and Drastic Reductions in Medicare Services

LOS ANGELES, CA – The California Association of Physician Groups (CAPG) initiated a national internet-based advocacy campaign today with the launch of www.AmericansForCoordinatedHealthcare.org.

“Congress is considering drastic changes to America’s Medicare system, which could severely disrupt healthcare benefits for millions of seniors – many of whom are low-income and have significant medical needs. What’s at risk is the availability of affordable, coordinated and comprehensive healthcare currently provided through Medicare Advantage that traditional Medicare is not equipped to provide,” said Dr. Jay Cohen, chair of CAPG.

“Americans For Coordinated Healthcare was established to give a voice to citizens who are concerned with the future of Medicare and want to preserve the highly cost-effective coordinated care services that millions of seniors are currently receiving,” said Donald Crane, President and CEO of CAPG.

Crane said the website and information campaign has been launched in California and plans may lead to expansion in other states over the next several months.

“Seniors have been hit the hardest in these tough economic times, and the last thing they need is for their health benefits to be taken away as well. www.AmericansForCoordinatedHealthcare.org allows Medicare Advantage enrollees, their physicians, and loved ones to quickly and conveniently express their concerns about reform proposals, and ask members of Congress to protect their coordinated care services,” said Crane.

More than 10 million seniors nationwide have chosen coordinated care plans through Medicare Advantage. Crane pointed to the experience of 150 physician groups in California that have been successfully providing coordinated care services to 1.5 million Medicare Advantage patients for the past several years and found that unlike traditional Medicare, Medicare Advantage:

- Offers lower out-of-pocket costs for seniors on limited incomes. In 2007, Medicare Advantage saved seniors an average of \$86 per month or \$1,000 per year in out-of-pocket costs, a total estimated savings of about \$7 billion annually.
- Ensures more senior patients have access to healthcare with low or no co-pays for chronic disease management, preventative services, and wellness programs.
- Provides a much broader range of services vital to an aging population including prescriptions, vision, hearing, dental, fitness, mental health, and alternative health benefits such as podiatry and chiropractic services.
- Delivers cost-efficiencies for investments in electronic medical records and other health technology innovations.

“If it’s not done right, Medicare reform will significantly increase out-of-pocket costs and decrease the quality of healthcare for senior patients. We currently have an efficient, modernized coordinated care model in California that provides accessible, affordable and comprehensive care to our senior patients. Coordinated care through Medicare Advantage is keeping comprehensive healthcare affordable and available for seniors who need it most,” said Crane.

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www.AmericansForCoordinatedHealthcare.org

“We believe our medical groups offer a delivery model that the Obama Administration and Congressional leaders are looking for, and through www.AmericansForCoordinatedHealthcare.org, our Medicare enrollees, physicians and concerned citizens will be able to let our leaders know just how effective and important coordinated care services are to them.

“Reform may be needed but we mustn’t throw the baby out with the bath water as they look to overhaul our nation’s antiquated Medicare system,” Crane concluded.

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