**Medicare Outreach Idea of the Month**

February 2019

**Outreach Letters to Local Churches**

**& Other Community Partners**

During these cold winter months when road conditions can affect outreach plans, consider sending letters! Outreach letters can be a very effective way to jump start your outreach for the year. They enable you to provide information and materials to many locations throughout your service area without even starting your car.

Start with your local churches and other places of worship. Inform leaders there about Medicare Savings Programs, Part D Extra Help and SeniorCare and explain how these programs help eligible people with their health care and medication costs. Local pastors generally know their community members well and can share the information with those who need it most. Seek an opportunity to do a presentation or ask if you could set up a table in the vestibule on “doughnut Sunday”. Some people will never venture out to an outreach event, but they will go to church services every week. And consider “shut-ins” who are visited by their pastor or parish nurse—educating local church leaders can help you to reach those beneficiaries you might not otherwise see.

After sending the letters, it is a good idea to follow-up with a phone call. Share some examples of how these programs have helped people in the past, and how they can make a difference in the lives of some of their church members.

Other great locations to send outreach letters include local libraries and senior housing complexes. These letters can pave the way for developing new relationships and community partners. A variety of customizable outreach letters are available on the Medicare Outreach and Assistance page of the GWAAR website. On the following page you will find a sample letter that can be used to contact local churches and other places of worship. Please feel free to revise as needed to work best for your agency and your community.

**To view all the GWAAR Medicare Outreach and Assistance Resources, follow the link to our webpage:**

<https://gwaar.org/medicare-outreach-and-assistance-resources>

By the GWAAR Medicare Outreach Team

Sample Letter to Churches

February 1, 2019

To:

Re: Helping Church Members with Medicare Costs

Dear \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_,

(Determine appropriate greeting, such as; Dear Father Dave, or Dear Pastor Roberts, etc.)

I am writing to share information that may be helpful to the members of your parish/church community. Many seniors struggle to afford basic living expenses, forcing them to choose between food, medication and other necessities. And for people with Medicare who have limited income, it can be additionally difficult to afford the premiums, deductibles and co-pays for Medicare. Benefit programs exist to help people in this situation, but most people are not aware of them. I’m hoping you’ll help to spread the word to those in need in your community.

The enclosed brochure describes the Medicare Savings Program and the Part D Extra Help Program. These state and federal programs help low income Medicare beneficiaries by providing financial assistance with Medicare costs. I am enclosing a short announcement about these programs that could be used in a bulletin or newsletter.

Many seniors who qualify for assistance have not applied simply because they do not know about the programs. If you know of anyone in your community that might benefit from this information, please encourage them to contact <your contact info here> for further assistance.

I would also welcome an opportunity to provide a presentation about these programs. If you have any questions about the benefit programs or if you would like to arrange a presentation, please contact me at the number or email address listed below.

Thank you!

Sincerely,

<YOUR CONTACT INFO HERE>

Notices for bulletin or newsletter –

**Important Information for Medicare Beneficiaries with Limited Income**

DID YOU KNOW there are programs available to help pay for your Medicare costs? **Medicare Savings Programs** assist people with Medicare who have limited income and resources. If eligible, your Medicare Part B premium would be paid for you, saving you well over $100 per month. Another program known as **Part D Extra Help** assists qualified individuals with their prescription drug costs. If you or someone you know is on Medicare and struggling to make ends meet contact **<YOUR CONTACT INFO HERE>** for more information or assistance.