



## Medicare Minute Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. Why should I offer the Medicare Minute in my community?

The Medicare Minute is an ideal model for your organization to use to meet your outreach goals, educate Medicare beneficiaries, and encourage participants to become advocates for their own health care. Medicare Minutes are short, engaging presentations on timely Medicare topics that are presented by volunteer or staff presenters at local sites on a monthly basis. Medicare Minutes provide the perfect vehicle to familiarize beneficiaries with your organization because they are designed to reach many beneficiaries at once. Further, since Medicare Minutes are exceedingly replicable and adaptable to new content, they can be easily incorporated into existing programming. For example, presentations can be kept short to fill in time between other events, or expanded using the Teaching Materials to fill up an entire hour. Some partners have even combined multiple Medicare Minute topics to make an extended presentation. Most importantly, the Medicare Minute materials provide presenters and audiences with the tools they need to understand pertinent Medicare information. These materials are created by the Medicare Rights Center and reviewed and edited by SHIP TA Center consultant and national Medicare expert, Mike Klug. Each month's package includes the following three items:

- Script: Provides talking points for the presentation, including three key points and a Take Action step that encourages audience members to apply what they've learned to their own lives.
- Teaching Materials: Supplement the script by providing additional information for presenters, and are often used to augment a presentation or answer audience questions.
- Handout: Provides audience members with information they can take home and refer to at a later date.

### 2. How can I integrate the Medicare Minute into my current outreach activities?

Medicare Minutes are very adaptable and can be easily incorporated into your existing programming. For instance, the short, 10-15 minute presentations can be included before or after your usual meal times, group activities, and outreach or community-building events. If you are looking to boost the number of clients you serve, Medicare Minutes are an effective way to attract regular audiences each month. Since audiences learn more about Medicare at each of these presentations, they gradually become more comfortable addressing their own Medicare issues when they arise and emerge as advocates for their own health care. Further, attendees often develop friendships among themselves which help drive regular attendance. Finally, because the same presenter visits the same site each month, audience members become more comfortable asking questions and knowing where to turn for help.

### 3. How can the Medicare Minute help me connect with new sites and audiences in my community?

The flexibility of the Medicare Minute program makes it a perfect model to use to conduct new outreach. Medicare Minutes can easily be added to existing programming at new sites. Since they are typically only 10-15 minutes long, it is usually not difficult for sites to find time in their programming to add a Medicare Minute once per month. However, if the site is looking for a



longer presentation, the Medicare Minute can easily be lengthened and enhanced using the information in the Teaching Materials. Most sites are eager to have Medicare Minute presentations since their attendees need easy-to-understand Medicare information. Overall, this flexibility enables you to easily integrate Medicare Minutes into programming at any site. Further, many sites lack a source of consistent, accurate Medicare information. Most sites appreciate the opportunity to receive this information in a way that is easy to understand. If a site is unsure whether it wants ongoing Medicare Minute presentations, you can request to present once or twice and see how it goes. In our experience, once sites see how much audiences like the Medicare Minute, they will usually request regular presentations. The SHIP TA Center can help you brainstorm potential new sites during the quarterly Medicare Minute Support webinars.

#### **4. Fall Open Enrollment is such a busy time of year. How can I find time for Medicare Minutes given all the other work during this time?**

The Medicare Minute is a great outreach tool to use during the Fall Open Enrollment Period. Every year, a Medicare Minute topic is dedicated to educating beneficiaries on their rights and coverage options during this period. Although Fall Open Enrollment is always a hectic time, the Medicare Minute provides your organization with the opportunity to reach many people at once through a short presentation. Presenters are provided with an easy-to-understand Script to educate the audience on the importance of Fall Open Enrollment. Additionally, the audience is provided with the Handout, which highlights key information from that month's topic and provides phone numbers for additional assistance. Audience members who need additional assistance can be directed to the appropriate SHIP personnel in their area. If the SHIP personnel have questions, technical assistance is available from the SHIP TA Center (**877-839-2675** or **medicarehelp@shiptacenter.org**). Referring difficult questions to a SHIP representative with more extensive knowledge maximizes the use of your presenter's time and allows them to focus on educating a greater number of people at once.

#### **5. What are some tips for reaching rural and other hard-to-reach Medicare beneficiaries?**

It is often difficult to reach rural Medicare beneficiaries, especially during the winter months. One great way to reach this population with Medicare Minutes is to lead presentations in places where they already congregate, such as senior centers or libraries. In addition, there are a number of ways to reach rural and other hard-to-reach populations that do not require in-person contact:

- Contact your local radio station: Local radio stations are sometimes willing to broadcast a monthly (or more frequent) Medicare Minute. People can either call into the station with questions or be provided with the number for your organization during the broadcast.
- Consider reaching out to your local cable channel: Some of our partners have presented the Medicare Minute on a local cable channel. As with radio, the number for your organization can be provided during the broadcast.
- Set up a teleconference: This is an especially good option for reaching Medicare beneficiaries who are homebound. Some partners use a centralized number that people call into, while others make an outbound call to interested parties. Monthly content is



typically mailed to the audience in advance. By leading a teleconference at a set time each month, you can help participants grow more comfortable asking questions, and increase their sense of community.

- Host a Skype session: If there is a group of Medicare beneficiaries in a location that is difficult for a presenter to get to, you may consider using Skype. Skype is a free video conferencing program that allows the audience and the presenter to see and hear each other.

## 6. What are some examples of types of sites at which we can present Medicare Minutes?

In addition to the sites mentioned in question 5, some common sites for Medicare Minute presentations are:

- Libraries
- Senior centers
- Congregate meal sites
- Senior residences
- Retiree groups
- Office of Area Agency on Aging (AAA) or Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC)
- Faith-based institutions

## 7. What are some ways to recruit volunteer presenters to lead Medicare Minute presentations?

There are a variety of ways to reach potential volunteer presenters in your community:

- Ask current volunteer presenters to bring friends along to Medicare Minute Update meetings. Your current presenters will be able to speak knowledgeably about the Medicare Minute experience.
- Increasingly, recruitment takes place online. Consider exploring local and state volunteer websites as well as making use of sites such as [www.idealists.org](http://www.idealists.org) and [www.volunteermatch.org](http://www.volunteermatch.org).
- Bring fliers explaining the opportunity to current Medicare Minute presentations. In many cases, audience members may be interested in becoming presenters themselves. A recruitment flier template is part of the Medicare Minute toolkit.
- Ask your current presenters if they know of anyone who may be interested. They often know of friends or presentation attendees who would make good presenters.
- Promote the Medicare Minute at local events and gatherings, such as health fairs.
- Collaborate with local universities to draw in students (e.g., social work students, sociology students) who are interested in serving people with disabilities and older adults by presenting the Medicare Minute in their community or helping coordinate the program.

## 8. How do I keep Medicare Minute presenters updated with new information?



Many partners have found that monthly update meetings for presenters are extremely helpful. The meetings provide an opportunity for the group to discuss the previous month's presentation experience and to review the Medicare Minute materials for the following month, and immediately address any questions. They also provide the presenters with ongoing Medicare training and give them a space to bring any Medicare questions they may have. Further, the monthly meetings build camaraderie among the presenters, and provide them with a peer support network.

**9. What are some strategies for presenters to manage difficult audience questions and keep the audience focused on the topic at hand?**

Medicare Minute audiences may have questions that are personal in nature, not connected to the presentation, or otherwise difficult to answer. There are a few strategies to keep the audience focused on the subject at hand. First, if an audience member asks a question that is off-topic, the presenter should advise the audience member to write down the question and ask afterwards. In some cases, the presenter may even want to state at the beginning of the presentation that questions should be held until the end. If the presenter doesn't know the answer or is unable to get to it afterwards, he or she should refer the member to the appropriate local or state SHIP personnel. Additionally, if the Medicare Minute is regularly presented at the site and the question isn't pressing, the presenter can bring the answer to the next presentation. If you hold a monthly update meeting, as discussed in question 8, presenters can bring their difficult questions to the meeting. Combined, these strategies give the presenter the confidence to present on that month's topic without having to know everything about Medicare.

**10. How do I get presenters excited about the Medicare Minute program?**

In our experience, the majority of Medicare Minute presenters enjoy having access to the monthly presentation materials and using them to educate their peers. However, some presenters (or soon-to-be presenters) may need a little more encouragement and time to adjust to the new routine. There are many ways to build enthusiasm for the Medicare Minute program. Make sure that presenters know that the Medicare Minute materials are easy to use and understand. They provide small amounts of Medicare information in ready-to-deliver presentations so that presenters are not responsible for doing their own research. Encourage presenters to practice leading Medicare Minutes during monthly meetings (see question 8), and new presenters can also shadow more experienced presenters to become more familiar with the program.

If walking through the resources does not help, sometimes it's best to have one or two "early adopter" presenters. These experienced presenters can explain to their peers all the benefits of the Medicare Minute, including improved Medicare knowledge and strengthened audience connections. Additionally, more seasoned presenters can remind their peers that they don't have to be Medicare experts, as difficult questions can easily be referred to the designated SHIP representative/s in their community or state. The presenters who need more encouragement can then try presenting one or two Medicare Minutes and will soon see that they are manageable, easy, and fun!

### **11. How can I help reluctant presenters to embrace the Medicare Minute program?**

While some presenters will immediately take to the Medicare Minute, others may be reluctant to try it or are unsure of how the program might change their current responsibilities. There are several ways to help these presenters feel more comfortable, in addition to tactics discussed in question 10:

- Listen to your presenters' concerns, and let them know that Medicare Minutes are a way to enhance current activities and build excitement among audiences about services offered by your organization.
- Hold a monthly update meeting for presenters, as explained in question 8. This is a way to build camaraderie among presenters, and for more enthusiastic presenters to share their experiences with their peers. If you hold monthly meetings, you may want to have presenters practice delivering the Medicare Minute in front of the group during the meeting. This will help them build confidence and provide an opportunity to receive presentation tips from other presenters.
- Let your presenters know that their ideas are welcome. While the Medicare Minute program is a new way of delivering information to audiences, it is intended to augment your current programming, and your presenters may have ideas about how to incorporate Medicare Minutes into your current outreach and education activities in a way that is effective for both audiences and presenters.
- Offer presenters all the resources encompassed by the Medicare Minute program. This will help demonstrate to presenters that the program is established, and that organizations across the country are using it to reach new audiences with important Medicare information. Medicare Minute resources include each month's Script, Teaching Materials, and Handout.

### **12. If an audience already has an in-depth understanding of Medicare, how does the presenter adjust the Medicare Minute so it remains interesting for them?**

This situation often occurs at sites that have been hosting the Medicare Minute for several years, as many of the same audience members return to the same presentation site each month. If your audience already has an in-depth understanding of Medicare, the presenter may want to begin with the Script and then supplement the presentation with information from the Teaching Materials. If the presenter is comfortable, they can also open up the session to questions from the audience.

### **13. What are some ways to increase audience attendance at my existing Medicare Minute presentations?**

The best way to increase attendance is by actively promoting the Medicare Minute program:

- Post fliers at the presentation site, promoting the program well in advance. Contact Medicare Rights to receive a draft flier.



- Make sure that the Medicare Minute program is included on the site’s monthly calendar, if possible. It may help to include the month’s presentation topic along with the time and date of the presentation.
- Announce Medicare Minute presentations in your organization’s newsletter, or on your organization’s website. Be sure to include the date and time of all Medicare Minute presentations.
- Reach out to local newspapers or radio stations. Often, you will be able to promote the Medicare Minute program through these local channels at little or no cost to your organization.

**14. If the audience has a limited understanding of Medicare, how can my presenter adjust the Medicare Minute to meet their level of Medicare proficiency?**

If an audience has a limited understanding of Medicare, and you feel that the Script will provide them with too much information, the presenter should stick to the basics. Specifically, the presenter can just focus on the three key points and Take Action step outlined in the Script and avoid delving into the details provided under each point. During the presentation, if an audience member has a complex question, the presenter can request that they hold the question until the conclusion of the presentation to avoid any confusion with the general audience.

**15. Where can I get more information about or assistance with the Medicare Minute program?**

For more information on how you can begin offering Medicare Minutes in your community, please contact The SHIP TA Center at **877-839-2675** or **medicarehelp@shiptacenter.org** or Ariel Seiersen at [aseiersen@shiptacenter.org](mailto:aseiersen@shiptacenter.org) or 212-204-6216.