

Medicare Outreach Idea of the Month

October 2024

National Council on Aging (NCOA) Outreach Resources

The National Council on Aging (NCOA) continues to lead the way in providing resources and tools to better serve Medicare beneficiaries, especially those in need of financial assistance. With the introduction of the Benefits Participation Map and the Medicare Extra Help Toolkit, NCOA is offering new opportunities to enhance outreach efforts and ensure more older adults receive the benefits they are eligible for.

Benefits Participation Map Resource

One of the newest innovations from NCOA is the [Benefits Participation Map](#), an interactive tool designed to help identify benefit recipients across the U.S. The map focuses on three key programs: the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Supplemental Security Income (SSI), and Medicare Savings Programs (MSPs). By displaying program participation rates for adults aged 65 and older at national, state, and county levels, this tool offers a wealth of insights that can help organizations and policymakers target their outreach efforts where they are most needed.

Users can utilize the map to analyze participation rates, make jurisdictional comparisons, and craft strategies to improve access and support for older adults. For example, if you work with the Medicare Improvement for Patients and Providers Act (MIPPA) grant, the map is an ideal tool for developing outreach plans tailored to your service area. You can search for participation rates in two ways: by selecting a state and then choosing a county within that state or by entering a state, county, or ZIP code directly into the search bar. This data can drive more effective outreach, ensuring those who need help are made aware of the resources available to them.

Medicare Extra Help Toolkit

Another powerful resource from NCOA is the [Medicare Extra Help Toolkit](#), which provides essential guidance for promoting Medicare Extra Help (also known as the Medicare Part D Low-Income Subsidy). This program is vital for helping Medicare beneficiaries reduce their prescription drug costs, yet many who are eligible remain

unenrolled. With the right outreach, you can help more older adults access this crucial benefit, potentially saving them an average of \$500 per month.

The toolkit features a variety of resources, including ready-to-use social media posts with accompanying graphics, customizable posters, fact sheets, a public service announcement, and sample newsletter text. Additionally, it offers YouTube videos like "[What is Medicare Extra Help?](#)" and "[Medicare Extra Help and Medicare Savings Programs](#)," all designed to help you effectively communicate the benefits of these programs.

For organizations looking to promote Extra Help through social media, the toolkit shares these best practices to increase engagement and improve outcomes:

1. **Time your posts for maximum visibility.** Posts that align with the schedules of older adults and caregivers will generate more engagement. Typically, aim to post around 9 a.m. or between 5-7 p.m. when these audiences are most likely online.
2. **Include images or videos.** Visual content significantly boosts engagement. Whenever possible, add images or short videos to your posts. This can make your content stand out in a crowded social media feed while still allowing you to include a URL for more information.
3. **Make your call-to-action immediate and clear.** Social media users are more likely to respond to posts when the call-to-action is straightforward and actionable. Avoid promoting events or actions that require waiting; instead, encourage immediate steps, such as visiting a website or calling for assistance.

Helping Older Adults Access the Benefits They Deserve

By using NCOA's Benefits Participation Map and Medicare Extra Help Toolkit, you can tailor outreach efforts to meet your community's needs. These tools empower you to raise awareness and streamline enrollment, helping more older adults access essential programs like Extra Help, SNAP, and MSPs. With millions of eligible beneficiaries, effective outreach can make a significant difference in ensuring older adults receive the support they deserve.

This project was supported by the Wisconsin Department of Health Services with financial assistance, in whole or in part, by grant number 90SAPG0091, from the U.S. Administration for Community Living, Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, D.C. 20201. Grantees undertaking projects with government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their findings and conclusions. Points of view or opinions do not, therefore, necessarily represent official ACL policy.



Updates on the [Medicare Outreach and Assistance Resources webpage](#):

Find What You Need:

- [Open Enrollment Toolkit](#)
 - Fall Training Materials-OEP
 - [09/30/24 D-SNP Deep Dive and Updates PPT](#) added.
 - Tools for Professionals-OEP
 - [2024-2025 CMS Guide to Consumer Mailings](#) updated.
 - [CMS: Prescription Payment Plan: Partner Policy Q&A](#) added.
 - [CMS: What's the Medicare Prescription Payment Plan? – Fact Sheet](#) added.
 - [2024 Wisconsin Landscape of Medicare Plans \(Excel\)](#) updated.
 - [Plan Finder Feedback Instructions – Oct 2024](#) added.
 - [SHIP TA Center: CMS Unique IDs](#) added.
 - [SHIP/CMS: Unique ID Job Aid – Sept 2024](#) added.
 - [SHIP/CMS: Unique ID Troubleshooting Instructions \(P-03153A\)](#) added.
 - [SHIP/CMS: 1-800-Medicare CSR Responsibilities – Sept 2024](#) added.

Resources:

- Additional Links
 - [SHIP TA Center: CMS Unique IDs](#) added.
- Basic SHIP Counselor Training & [SHIP Volunteer Resources](#) under “Training”
 - [9/09/24 – SHIP and MIPPA New Counselor Orientation slides](#) updated.
 - [9/10/24 – Original Medicare slides](#) updated.
 - [9/11/24 – Medicare Supplement Policies \(Medigap\) slides](#) updated.
 - [9/17/24 – Medicare Advantage \(Part C\) slides](#) updated.
 - [9/18/24 – Medicare Part D slides](#) updated.
 - [9/19/24 – Medicare.gov Plan Finder slides](#) updated.
- Other Printable Outreach Materials
 - [Medicare Placemat 2024](#) updated.
 - [Medicare Placemat – OEP](#) updated.
- Tools for Professionals
 - [CMS: Medicare Extra Help Program – Fact Sheet](#) added.
 - [CMS: Medicare & Your Mental Health Benefits](#) added.
 - [CMS – IRA: Inflation Reduction Act Timeline](#) updated.
 - [CMS – IRA: Medicare Drug Price Negotiation Timeline for 2026](#) updated.
 - [CMS: Extra Help/LIS IRA Article – Feb 2024](#) updated.

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