

2011 IMPACTS: Medicare Education Program (MEP)

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) MEP team is focused on improving the health and financial well-being of Nebraska's Medicare beneficiaries and their families. In 2011, the MEP team reached over 2,500 adults.

Defining the Situation

Over 280,000 people in Nebraska are Medicare beneficiaries. From 1991-2009, Medicare spending on personal health care services and products (hospital care, physician services, nursing home care, prescription drugs, etc.) increased by 7.4%. By 2030 Nebraska's population over age 65 will have increased more than 60% from the year 2000. This age group is actively involved in planning their future retirement and will need assistance with Medicare.

Working toward Solutions

UNL Extension continues to be a leader in educating Nebraskans about Medicare. Since the introduction of the prescription drug benefit in 2005, Medicare beneficiaries report saving nearly \$4 million on prescription costs as a result of educational and enrollment assistance. In addition to involvement in the Nebraska Medicare Coalition and local coalitions, 13 Extension professionals are trained Senior Health Insurance Information Program (SHIIP) volunteers committed to educating Medicare beneficiaries, families, and caregivers.

Reaching Participants:

- The team provides Medicare education for the prescription drug benefit during the annual open enrollment period, as well as, provides unbiased educational information in group settings for all areas of Medicare.
- Changes in Medicare policies are also communicated through various media forms (newspaper, newsletters, radio, and Extension web sites).
- Future plans are to include on-line programs and web page development to increase program participation and information access.

Stakeholder Feedback:

- *"[I] encourage others to go to the [Medicare] meetings. Very informative and easily understood the presentation. I really appreciate that there is help in figuring out so many lasting changes in our lives."*
- *"Thank you very much! Very informative and beneficial! This information will be helpful as my parents are soon turning 65. Thank you!"*
- *"This is such a wonderful gift. We are excited about the savings. How can we thank you."*
- *"I am trying to help my 87 year old mother make the best decision on her Medicare coverage. Since I am 65 in May, it is a good opportunity for me to learn about the coverage."*
- *"The program has certainly helped us yearly to find the least expensive insurance company's programs or plans for paying for our medications."*

Public Value

When you support the UNL Extension's Medicare Education program, participants will increase their knowledge of Medicare and the Prescription Drug Plans. These wise choices will reduce their personal costs enabling them TO **BETTER** manage their limited income.



Extension is a Division of the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln cooperating with the Counties and the United States Department of Agriculture.

University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension educational programs abide with the nondiscrimination policies of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and the United States Department of Agriculture.



Understanding Your Medicare Benefits

Goals:

Current Medicare beneficiaries will understand their benefits and successfully access health care services.

2011 Results:

Reached 70 adults in four different counties. Age ranged from 30-89 years old and 72% were female.

Post-pre surveys showed statistically significant differences in responses for all 8 areas covered.

Topics covered included Social Security, Medicare part A, B, C and D, Medicare Supplemental Insurance, assistance for drug plan premiums and prescription drugs, and Medicare's Preventive Services.



Medicare Mysteries No More: Medicare Explained

Goals:

Pre-Medicare beneficiaries will understand enrollment timelines and avoid penalties for late enrollment into Medicare.

2011 Results:

Reached 250 adults in twelve different counties. Age ranged from 30 to 70 years old and 60% were female.

Post-pre surveys showed statistically significant differences in responses for all 10 areas covered.

Topics covered included applying for Social Security and Medicare, Medicare Part A, B, C and D, Original Medicare, Medicare Supplemental Insurance, Medicare Preventive Services, finding records on-line, and locating additional information.



Medicare Part-D Educational Sessions

Goals:

Medicare beneficiaries will enroll in a prescription drug plan that meets both their health and financial needs.

2011 Results:

Reached over 2000 adults in 38 different counties. Over 800 surveys were returned with ages ranging from 30 to 103 years old, 68% were female, and 34% were new participants.

Approximately 88% found the sessions very useful and 47% referred others to UNL Extension, resulting in over 900 additional people learning about Extension.

Approximate total savings equaled \$628,505, with average individual savings at \$315.

Additional Information and Links:

- Medicare Basics Neb Guide: <http://www.ianrpubs.unl.edu/eublic/live/g2087/build/g2087.pdf>
- Medicare Education Program Team Members: Lisa Franzen-Castle, Mary Ann Holland, Jeanne Murray, Carla Mahar, Mary Loftis, Cheryl Tickner, Sandy Preston, Sue Pearman, Ann Fenton, Nancy Frecks, Sonya Glup, Eileen Krumbach, Ruth Vonderohe, and Deb Schroeder.