



News Release

SOCIAL SECURITY

Social Security Website – www.socialsecurity.gov – the Newest Location for People to Apply For Extra Help with their Medicare Prescription Drug Costs

Florida Seniors First in Nation to Apply Online

Jo Anne Barnhart, Commissioner of Social Security, today unveiled Social Security's new Internet application -- located at www.socialsecurity.gov -- which people now can use to apply for financial help with Medicare prescription drug costs. Two Florida seniors at the Senior Friendship Center in Sarasota were the first people in the nation to use this new online service.

"Social Security is committed to providing a variety of ways for seniors and people with disabilities to get the extra help they need with Medicare prescription drug costs," said Commissioner Barnhart. "The online application is simple and easy to understand and can be completed by the Medicare beneficiary or by family members, caregivers -- anyone in a position to assist the person applying."

Social Security is working with federal and state agencies and local community groups to let potentially eligible people know about the help available with prescription drug costs. Social Security is mailing nearly 19 million applications to potentially eligible Medicare beneficiaries. These applications are being mailed over a 12 week period that began in late May and will continue through mid August 2005. Applications also can be filed via Social Security's toll-free number at 1-800-772-1213 (TTY 1-800-325-0778).

Medicare beneficiaries with limited income and limited resources are eligible for extra help paying for the costs of the new Medicare prescription drug coverage available January 1, 2006. The extra help will pay most of the costs of monthly premiums, annual deductibles and prescription co-payments. After applying for extra help with Social Security, beneficiaries also will need to enroll in a Medicare-approved prescription drug plan between November 15, 2005, and May 15, 2006.

"President Bush recently asked people on Medicare, as well as those who care about them, to become better informed about the new prescription drug benefit," said Barnhart. "The benefit and the extra help that is available will make their lives better and the prescription drugs they need more affordable."

NOTE TO CORRESPONDENTS: A [fact sheet](#) about the help available to pay the costs of Medicare's new prescription drug plan is attached. More detailed information about the new Medicare prescription drug coverage is available at www.Medicare.gov.