

**University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension**  
**Medicare-Approved Prescription Drug Discount Cards & Credit**  
**Educational Campaign**  
**November-December 2004**

**Summary of Reported Activities**

**Project Leaders:** Elizabeth Birnstihl, Associate Dean  
Kathleen Lodl, 4-H Youth Development Specialist

**Project Coordinator:** Judy Weber, Extension Educator Retired

**Cooperating Partner:** Amy Larrick, Training Specialist, Nebraska Senior Health Insurance Information Program

**Cooperating Extension Staff:** Approximately 40 Extension Educators and Assistants across the state of Nebraska

**Following is a summary of educational activity in the months of November and December 2004 as reported by 26 cooperating staff:**

1. Number of Medicare recipients who received individual assistance with their *Personal Information Worksheets*: **431 (an additional 60-70 completed their own as a result of on-site sessions.)**
2. Estimated number of Medicare recipients who applied for a Medicare-approved discount card or \$600 credit after receiving assistance completing the worksheet: **376**
3. Number of adult children or caregivers given information to use to help a Medicare recipient complete the *Personal Information Worksheet*: **438**
4. Estimated number of Medicare recipients actually enrolled for the drug cards and/or \$600 credit as a result of the support of their adult children: **145 (33%)**

**\*\*Estimated potential savings to Medicare recipients: \$820,320.**

5. (a) Number of civic or organizational groups contacted about the Medicare-approved Prescription Drug Discount Card/Credit Program: **Over 177**  
("Contact" varied from formal programs and presentations to announcements. In most instances, *Personal Information Worksheets* were exhibited and distributed and then explained if time allowed.)
6. Examples of the types of groups contacted: **Senior centers, county boards of supervisors, Extension Boards, senior housing units, public health boards, educational committees, social clubs, quilting groups, ministerial associations,**

**Future Business Leaders of America (youth), Rotary, family support agencies, Senior Nutrition Center, community educational clubs, church congregations, assisted living centers, nursing homes, low income housing facilities, DAR, county diabetes education team, Diabetes Education Program, Commodity Distribution Centers, food pantries, and Omaha Housing Authority Towers.**

7. Estimated number of individuals who received *Personal Information Worksheets* at these group meetings; and used the form for themselves, family members or acquaintances to complete and enroll for prescription drug cards and/or credit: **834+**
8. Estimated number of news releases and psas (newspaper, radio and television): **Over 334. In addition, several monthly church newsletters and Sunday bulletins contained news releases or articles. Information was also posted by three Extension Educators on email listservs reaching over 350 rural families. Radio or TV coverage included all areas of the state.**
9. Estimated reader/listener numbers: **Over 199,900**
10. Estimated number of volunteers recruited to assist Medicare recipients with the *Personal Information Worksheets* and application process: **42 (Of these, 8 were high school youth.)**
11. Estimated numbers with whom the volunteers worked to complete the worksheet and enroll: **249**
12. Number of on-site sessions held to provide assistance to Medicare recipients in completing their worksheets and submitting information: **28**

**Anecdotal stories follow:**

1. In north-central Nebraska, *the mother of an Extension Educator was urged to look at the card/credit program, since her prescriptions cost as much as \$220/month. Her pharmacist was extremely helpful in the process of her enrollment. She now pays less than \$20 a month for prescription drugs, a monthly savings to her of over \$200.*
2. In one southeast Nebraska county, *a nursing home administrator corresponded with the families of all residents about the prescription drug card/credit program and included copies of the Personal Information Worksheet in the mailing.*
3. In a neighboring rural county in southeast Nebraska, a couple attended an afternoon clinic scheduled by the Extension Educator. *This couple currently was borrowing money to pay for their prescription drugs. As a couple they were able to enroll for a total of \$2400 credit (for both years) as well as prescription drug cards. What a Christmas present! They were thrilled, and the gentleman's parting words were, "Now I may be able to get rid of my debt before I die!"*

4. *One person received as much as the \$1200 credit plus an annual drug cost savings of \$1800. Another couple did not see a savings. However, they already had a drug discount card. They said their minds were now at ease knowing they were doing the best they could for themselves. They liked the fact that an Extension Educator personally reviewed their situation for them.*
6. *An Extension Educator commented, "This promotion effort has really created talk among seniors." Some people were not aware they already had a card, and the information that was shared helped them understand the process.*
7. *"It was surprising to see how many people have over \$200 a month devoted to prescriptions," was an Educator's comment. One individual indicated that the \$600 credit reduced his mother's prescription bill from \$72 to \$17 a month, an annual savings of \$660.*
8. *Another Educator said, "I counseled one person in our office who did the calculations for her parents. She found they wouldn't save money, but felt positive about making every effort to check into the possibilities for them."*
9. *One woman who had signed up for a discount card with her local pharmacy, found by going through the worksheet and enrollment process that she could save at least \$500 more per year*
10. *Comments from an Educator: "I think the services we provided with this promotion were very good. We either helped people with a card and potential \$600 credit or were able to determine a discount card they already had was best. Except for one veteran, I was able to provide help to everyone with whom I worked. The Medicare number as well as our local pharmacies did a fine job responding to our request and made our jobs with direct contact with seniors much easier. I think it's most important for this effort to continue into 2005."*
11. *An Educator in a county in eastern Nebraska assisted 12 people in completing the enrollment forms. Four were eligible for the \$600 credit and were signed up in December 2004. The documented economic impact of her efforts in November and December are \$4800 in drug credits applied for and \$3330 in drug cost savings, for a total savings of \$8130.*
12. *Amounts saved in prescription costs varied. In a small northeast county in Nebraska, one lady saved \$50 per month and the other \$500. Others were amazed at the amount of money they could save.*
13. *One educator in central Nebraska said, "Both my mother and my office manager's mother enrolled and received the \$600 credit. My mom was so excited when she found she will save over \$150 a month on her diabetic drugs. Jerryl's mom was spending over \$200 a month and will save as well."*

14. *In a central Nebraska county, the pharmacist is extremely helpful and assists seniors in the enrollment process.*
15. *One beneficiary enrolled was under the age of 65 and receiving disability. She was facing many financial difficulties and was thrilled to have received this benefit. She didn't think she was eligible because of her age.*
16. *From an Educator, "As a result of the newspaper articles, I have had volumes of phone calls. One older gentleman indicated that he and his wife were paying a combined total of \$125 for their (two) prescriptions of Lipitor each month. After completing the drug discount form (they did not qualify for the credit), their new monthly cost for two prescriptions of Lipitor was \$30, or \$15 per person. That represents a \$90 savings on just that one prescription for that couple. He called to thank me (over and over) for providing them the information and assistance. The money they saved is nearly \$1,000 annually that can be spent to stock their cupboards!"*
17. *One senior's daughter called from Colorado after reading the newspaper article in her hometown newspaper on prescription drug cards. She wanted the forms for her father.*
18. *During the last two days of December another Educator worked personally with a couple who should each qualify for the extra \$600 credit. This will amount to a savings of \$2400 for the two of them.*
19. *An Educator in north central Nebraska worked with a lady who paid \$145 monthly for her four prescriptions. She enrolled during the last two days of 2004 and is able to secure her prescriptions now for only \$10 a month, a monthly savings of \$135. How cool is that!? Her comments to Carol were, "Now we can live again." She qualified for card and credit for both years, and her husband probably will too.*