



CENTER FOR BENEFICIARY CHOICES

MEMORANDUM

DATE: July 14, 2006

Memorandum to: All Part D Plan Sponsors

From: Cynthia Tudor, Ph.D., Director, Medicare Drug Benefit Group

Subject: Part D Sponsors Call Center Surveillance Update

As you are aware, a contractor for the Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE) has been closely surveying call centers operated by Part D plan sponsors. We are pleased that recent findings from an analysis of the data collected from this survey have generally shown rapid access to customer and pharmacy service, with the wait time for calls to beneficiary help lines averaging less than one and a half minutes.

The purpose of this communication is to update Part D sponsors on the plans for current and future call center surveillance. As of June 14th, with the generally satisfactory performance observed, the first phase of call center surveillance has been completed. Since then and throughout the month of July, call center monitoring involves "spot check" calls to all plans on a weekly basis [CAN WE ADD: with a particular emphasis on plans that have had relatively worse performance]. Due to the relatively low number of weekly calls being made, this information will not be made available to Part D sponsors through the HPMS Call Center Performance module. However, we will continue to require corrective action steps for any particular plans that have performance problems.

Starting in the first week of August, the ASPE contractor will resume full call center surveillance at the beneficiary and pharmacy call centers and will make up to 90 survey calls to each call center dependent on enrollment size. This information will be shared with Part D sponsors on a weekly basis via the HPMS Call Center Performance module. Part D sponsors should be aware that CMS also intends to share information collected from this August surveillance period with beneficiaries to assist them with plan selection during the open enrollment period. Thus, Part D sponsors must remain adequately prepared to achieve a high level of call center performance.

All Part D sponsors should verify that the phone numbers posted in HPMS are accurate. Part D sponsors will have until Friday, July 21, 2006 to update these phone numbers to ensure they will

be correctly surveyed. Failure to update phone numbers in HPMS may result in poorer reported performance.

The source for the beneficiary calls is the toll-free number entry for "Customer Service for Current Members - Part D", which is a plan-level entry (not the contract level). To update plan-level contacts, HPMS users should use the following navigation path in HPMS:

- HPMS Homepage > Plan Bids > Bid Submission > 2006 > Manage Plans > Edit Contact Data.

The pharmacy call source is the "Pharmacy Technical Help Desk Contact", which is a contract level entry. To update contract-level contacts, HPMS users should use the following navigation path in HPMS:

- HPMS Homepage > Contract Management > Contract Management > Select a Contract Number > Contact Data.

In preparation for resuming the call center surveillance, ASPE has begun to conduct a phone number verification campaign for the beneficiary and pharmacy call center numbers collected from HPMS. During these verification calls, Part D sponsors may be asked if the number is the correct number for beneficiary inquiries or if it is the correct number for pharmacist inquiries. Plans should only provide an affirmative response if the number in question is the number they expect to have surveyed for the respective call center in this study. If a Part D sponsor's call center phone number as specified in HPMS is found to be invalid through this verification process, ASPE will alert CMS of the issue. CMS will then send an email requiring the identified sponsors to immediately provide a valid call center phone number and update HPMS. Sponsors that fail to respond timely will face further steps to assure compliance.

Again, thank you for your participation in the Medicare prescription drug benefit. While we have had many successes, it is important that we continue to improve. If you have any questions or comments please send an email to Emerson Carvalho at emerson.carvalho@cms.hhs.gov.