

The Renzi Report

VOL. 4 ISSUE 3

MARCH 2006

Your Direct Link to the News and Events from Our Nation's Capital and Rural Arizona

Dear Fellow Arizonan:

As many seniors may already know, beginning this year, Medicare is offering prescription drug plans to help seniors pay for the prescriptions they need. Seniors now have the opportunity to enroll in the new Part D Prescription Drug Assistance Program.

It is important to note that while this program is groundbreaking in its aim to ensure affordable drugs for those on Medicare, it is entirely **voluntary**. Seniors already enjoying employer sponsored benefits can keep that coverage. **But those wishing to enroll must do so by May 15, 2006.**

With any new, comprehensive initiatives such as this one, there is always confusion and some hesitation. This is why I am sponsoring several town hall meetings to help explain the Medicare Prescription drug benefit for seniors in rural Arizona. We will have several experts from the Medicare Access Network of Arizona and my office to meet with seniors one-on-one and help them navigate the many different options and plans. For more information on these meetings, please visit my website at: <http://www.house.gov/renzi/medicare.shtml>

As always, feel free to tell your family members, friends and neighbors about the Renzi Report. You can sign up to receive this email and find additional information about developments in Congress at my website. Just click on the following link: <http://www.house.gov/renzi>.

If you have any questions or comments about this e-newsletter or anything else, please e-mail me at rick.renzi@mail.house.gov and I will get back to you as quickly as possible. Thank you and may God Bless America.



Rick Renzi

If you no longer want to receive this newsletter, please send an email to rick.renzi1@mail.house.gov and type UNSUBSCRIBE.



Congressman Renzi welcomes Marianne Bean, of Dewey, Arizona and her mother, to the nation's capital to recognize her winning submission in the Arizona Veterans of Foreign Wars Voice of Democracy essay contest.

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Rural Arizona Healthcare Update

Renzi's Town Hall Meetings in Pinal County Help Seniors with New Medicare Prescription Drug Plan

Recent Medicare town hall meetings held throughout Pinal County and sponsored by Congressman Rick Renzi were hailed as a success for providing area seniors with assistance in signing up for the new Medicare Part D prescription drug program.

The meetings were coordinated by Congressman Renzi's office and the Medicare Access Network of Arizona. The town hall meetings are designed to provide one-on-one help for seniors who require assistance with the new Medicare program and are occurring through out Arizona's First District. The last meeting in Pinal County was held in Coolidge on March 23, 2006. Previous meetings were held in Florence and Casa Grande. Additional meetings are scheduled for Show Low, Prescott, Globe and Flagstaff over the next few months. **The deadline to sign up for the Medicare Prescription drug plan is May 15, 2006.**

"This program will help increase competition and lower prescription drug prices for our seniors," said Congressman Renzi. "The plans will be especially beneficial to seniors with low incomes."

Renzi noted the importance of convenient access to affordable prescription drugs in rural Arizona and said he supports allowing consumers, pharmacies, and wholesalers to import improved drugs from certain developed foreign countries like Canada.

"I am supporting legislation to give Americans the opportunity to purchase FDA-approved drugs at the same low cost as in Canada and other developed countries," Congressman Renzi said. "I will continue the fight for convenient access and fair pricing of prescription drugs for our seniors."

Renzi Fights Against Medicare Cuts in Budget

Congressman Rick Renzi (AZ-1) joined several of his colleagues to oppose cuts to Medicare in the Administration's FY 2007 budget request. Renzi said the Medicare reductions will hurt the people who depend on the program for care.

"Congress must work towards a strong and healthy America, while ensuring fiscal discipline, but these cuts to Medicare will do more harm than good," said Congressman Renzi. "I am especially concerned that funds for skilled nursing facilities and home health agencies are also facing cuts, and these facilities are vital to rural Arizona."

President Bush's FY 2007 budget request reduces Medicare spending by \$36 billion over five years and \$105 billion over 10 years. Renzi said he was concerned about how the cuts would affect patients requiring care after hip and knee replacements, as well as skilled nursing facilities and home health agencies.

MEDICARE FAST FACTS

- More than 27 million people have signed up for the new Medicare Prescription Drug Benefit.
- Seniors are signing up at a rate of 380,000 a week.
- The average premium seniors pay for their prescription drug benefits are a third less than expected -- just \$25 per month.

MEDICARE FAST FACTS

- According to a recent survey, a majority of Americans approve of the new prescription drug benefit and think it is good for our seniors.
- Meanwhile, a majority of those who have signed up for the benefit found it very easy or fairly easy to enroll.

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Rural Arizona Healthcare Update part 2

Renzi Pushes for Better Access to Rural Healthcare

Congressman Rick Renzi (AZ-1) is pushing for better access to rural healthcare with a bill he is co-sponsoring called the Rural Health Care Capital Access Act of 2006 (HR 4912). The bi-partisan measure helps reimburse Critical Access Hospitals (CAH), which are designed to improve access to rural health care. Critical Access Hospitals provide essential services to rural communities and are reimbursed by Medicare for services provided to Medicare patients. Arizona's First District has three Critical Access Hospitals, Sage Memorial Hospital, Page Memorial Hospital, and Winslow Memorial Hospital. The bill will ensure that these hospitals continue to provide critical access healthcare to the residents of rural Arizona by continuing Medicare reimbursements.

"We are fighting to provide access to quality health care for residents of rural Arizona," said Congressman Renzi. "Arizona faces unique healthcare challenges including uncompensated care for illegal immigrants, and the large number of Native Americans who live in remote and isolated areas of the state. This bill will help ensure that our critical hospitals continue to provide access to safe, affordable healthcare for those who need it most."

Renzi noted that the Medicare Rural Hospital Flexibility Program established in the bill will help improve the delivery of health care for the residents of rural Arizona by encouraging development of collaborative rural health networks that include critical access hospitals. Renzi said the goal of this "networked community health" strategy is to improve access to primary and preventive services, enhance the quality of services provided, and create financial and administrative stability for local community hospitals in rural areas of Arizona.

Congressman Renzi's Medicare Town Hall Meetings

Wed. April 5, 2006

9:00am
Globe Senior Center
599 S. Broad Street
Globe, AZ

Wed. April 5, 2006

2:00pm
Graham County Bldg.
921 Thatcher Blvd.
Safford, AZ

Tuesday April 18, 2006

10:00am
Show Low Senior Center
301 East McNeil
Show Low, AZ

Fri. April 27, 2006

11:00am
Payson Senior Center
514 West Main Street
Payson, AZ

Monday May 1, 2006

11:00am
St. Johns Senior Center
295 South First Street
St. Johns, AZ

Wed. May 3, 2006

10:00am
Holbrook Senior Cent
216 Joy Nevin
Holbrook, AZ

Friday May 5, 2006

11:00am
Round Valley Senior Center
356 South Papago Street
Springerville, AZ

Tues. May 9, 2006

10:00am
Flagstaff Adult Cent.
245 N. Thorpe Road
Flagstaff, AZ

Friday May 12, 2006

10:00
Prescott Adult Center
335 E. Aubrey St.
Prescott, AZ

Friday May 12, 2006

12:00pm
Prescott Valley Senior Center
9360 East Manzanita Circle
Prescott Valley, AZ

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Arizona Native American Update



Congressman Renzi meets with members of the Navajo Hopi Land Commission. From left to right are Raymond Marx, Amos T. Johnson, Roman Bitsuie, and Lee Jackson.

Renzi Calls for More Funding for Indian Housing

Congressman Rick Renzi (AZ-1) called for more funding for Native American housing programs in rural Arizona. Renzi also cited the continuing problems with the land title process on tribal lands coordinated by the Bureau of Indian Affairs and said he would be holding a hearing to address the issue and improve the home ownership process for Native Americans.

“Home ownership is the cornerstone of a strong community,” said Congressman Renzi. “It is important that Congress works to promote home ownership in Indian Country. These federal housing funds and programs will help young Native American families to stay on tribal lands in order to live, work and raise a family. I will continue the fight to increase funding for these important federal programs.”

Renzi also said that he would fight to improve the home ownership process on tribal lands, especially because the home ownership rate for Native

Americans is well below 50 percent, while the national home ownership rate is more than 68 percent. Renzi said that he planned to hold a field hearing on the BIA land title process in rural Arizona this summer to address this issue and improve the situation.

“The home ownership process for Native Americans has been hobbled by bureaucratic delays and regulations,” said Congressman Renzi. “And at the heart of the problem is the BIA land title process. The issue is especially severe in rural Arizona where Native Americans reside on land owned by their sovereign nations, but held in trust by BIA.”

House Passes Renzi Amendment to Fight Meth on Tribal Lands

The House recently approved an amendment offered by Congressman Renzi to direct the Office of National Drug Control Policy to include tribal governments as part of the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) program. The purpose of the HIDTA program is to enhance and coordinate drug control efforts among local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies. Renzi’s amendment will direct the Office of National Drug Control Policy to specifically include in its drug control efforts the Navajo Nation, the San Carlos Apaches, the White Mountain Apaches, the Yavapai Apaches and the Tohono O’odham Nation which is located just south of Congressman Renzi’s district, near the Mexican border.

“Our reservations in rural Arizona are the central battleground in the war on meth,” said Congressman Renzi. “We must aggressively fight this problem before it completely overtakes those living on tribal lands. My amendment will ensure the Office of National Drug Control Policy will work together with local tribal governments to combat drug trafficking and illegal drug use.”

Rural Arizona Legislative Update

Renzi Works to Build Consensus on Federal Response to Wildfires

Congressman Renzi is leading the debate in Congress to build consensus on the federal response to forest fires in rural Arizona and across the nation. Renzi is working collaboratively with the forest related community in Washington and Arizona to raise awareness and promote the importance of restoration efforts and improve the health of our nation's forests. Congressman Renzi sponsored the first of several briefings on forest fires in the West for members of Congress and their staffs. Congressman Renzi is pushing for cooperation across state and federal agencies and multiple state jurisdictions to improve and enhance forest restoration to prevent the devastating forest fires like the Rodeo-Chediski in northern Arizona and the Los Alamos fire in New Mexico.

"It is vital for Congress and the Administration to understand the need for consensus on the federal response to wildfires in Arizona," said Congressman Renzi. "The Forest Service has been very receptive and has responded to Arizona's request for more tankers, and a stepped up deployment for Hot Shot Crews. But we must focus our efforts on prevention if we are to break the cycle of devastating wildfires that have blazed across the West in recent years."

Renzi invited Dr. Wally Covington, Forest Ecologist from Northern Arizona University to brief members of Congress and their staffs on forest health and forest fires. Renzi's goal is to build support for aggressive response and increased funding to prevent forest fires by focusing on forest health issues to help prevent or lessen the severity of wildfires in Arizona.

"Currently we invest more money in fire suppression than preventative treatments and this must change. By investing in fire prevention efforts, we can save millions of dollars in the loss of timber, water quality reduction, recreation opportunities and wildlife habitat."

Renzi Addresses Arizona Wildfire Academy in Prescott

Congressman Rick Renzi met with students and instructors of the Arizona Wildfire Academy in Prescott recently to discuss the latest wildfire fighting techniques. Congressman Renzi also discussed the latest initiatives he is working on like forest fire prevention and suppression.

Congressman Renzi told the wildland firefighters that he appreciated their bravery and thanked them for their hard work to keep rural Arizona safe. Congressman Renzi pledged to help find additional funding for the Arizona Wildfire Academy. Renzi noted the funding was needed because of the low tuition which is designed to make the training more affordable for smaller fire departments and local government agencies.

The Congressman recently introduced legislation (HR 3590) to expand the successful Collaborative Forest Restoration Program (CFRP) currently in place in New Mexico to Arizona. The bill would help reduce the fire threat by encouraging forest restoration tools like the utilization of small diameter trees to use for biomass and bio-diesel.

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In Case You Missed It...

Antenna on Mount Graham approved

http://www.ecourier.com/articles/2006/03/27/local_news/news03.txt

Renzi tours Wildfire Academy, offers help

<http://prescottdailycourier.lupsoftware.com/main.asp?Search=1&ArticleID=39080&SectionID=1&SubSectionID=1&S=1>

Renzi visits YRMC East Campus

<http://prescottdailycourier.lupsoftware.com/main.asp?Search=1&ArticleID=39081&SectionID=1&SubSectionID=1&S=1>

Navajo, Hopi work together to improve road's condition

<http://www.gallupindependent.com/2006/mar/032206rdcnd.html>

Embry-Riddle Hosts National Security And Intelligence Symposium

<http://www.aero-news.net/index.cfm?ContentBlockID=01d98aa2-b28d-4d77-b3d6-4c08a6fb2837>

BIA title operations may be turned over to tribes

<http://www.indiancountry.com/content.cfm?id=1096412651>

As Congress talks, states act on immigration issue

<http://www.azcentral.com/news/articles/0314stateborders0314.html>

Area Officials Prepare For A Dangerous Fire Season

<http://www.azjournal.com/pages/news/2006/March06/030806Preparations.html>

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