



UNITED STATES SENATOR ★ SERVING THE CITIZENS OF IDAHO

LARRY CRAIG

NEWS RELEASE

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CRAIG DISCUSSES PART D SUCCESSES, PROBLEMS

“Pleasantly surprised at the level of success Medicare Part D has achieved”

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Idaho Senator Larry Craig discussed the Medicare Part D Prescription Drug Program today at a hearing of the Senate Special Committee on Aging, which he formerly chaired. The Committee held the first in a series of hearings on the Program. This one is entitled, “Medicare Part D: Is It Working for Low-Income Seniors.”

Craig began his statement by stressing that Medicare Part D has had an enormous and incredibly positive impact on the everyday lives of our seniors. He stated, “I have to admit that initially I was skeptical about the prescription drug program. . . . Since then, I have been pleasantly surprised at the level of success Medicare Part D has achieved – both in terms of beneficiary satisfaction and in decreased cost to the federal government. Recent reports indicate that Medicare Part D enjoys an 80 percent approval rating among beneficiaries and that the average beneficiary is saving over \$1,100 per year in out of pocket costs for medications.”

Recognizing the successes of Medicare Part D, Craig acknowledged the challenges the Program has faced, “There have been problems with implementation, particularly for ‘dual-eligible’ individuals who previously received prescription drugs through Medicaid. Some of these problems stem from inadequate data sharing between CMS and Social Security. Unfortunately, this problem is not limited to CMS and Social Security.

“As the Ranking Member of the Veterans’ Affairs Committee, I want to let the Committee know that data sharing is also a problem between Veterans Affairs and the DOD. They have come a long way, but more work needs to be done.”

Finally, Craig encouraged low-income seniors not already signed up to do so, “Eighty-seven percent of ‘dual-eligibles’ feel more secure with Part D, and ninety percent of low-income beneficiaries feel satisfied with the program. I encourage the approximately 3 million low-income seniors to sign up as soon as possible.”

Visit www.medicare.gov or call 1-800-MEDICARE-for more information.