



CMA Press Release – April 25, 2006

## **TWO ADVOCACY ORGANIZATIONS SEEK RELEASE OF PART D PLANS' PROPOSED FORMULARY CHANGES**

The Center for Medicare Advocacy (the Center) and Action Alliance for Senior Citizens of Philadelphia (Action Alliance) have asked the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to release information about Part D plans that are proposing to change their formularies.

“As the May 15 deadline for enrolling looms ever closer, it is critical that beneficiaries have this new information about plan formularies to help them make informed choices,” said Judith A. Stein, Executive Director of the Center.

In recent days, officials at CMS have stated publicly that plans are informing them of their intention to make changes to their formularies, but those officials have declined even to disclose the numbers of plans so intending.

“The design of Part D is premised on beneficiaries making choices among myriad private plans, based on information about the plans formularies, pharmacy networks, cost requirements and other relevant considerations. It is impossible for Part D to work for beneficiaries without full disclosure by plans of all relevant information,” said Ms. Stein. “Of course beneficiaries need to know what drugs the various plans will cover. What could be more basic to a prescription drug program? CMS is the entity with this information and it is irresponsible for the agency not to disclose it.”

Because they could not otherwise get this critical information for the people they serve, the Center and Action Alliance filed a Freedom of Information Act request with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, seeking expedited consideration due to the impending deadline for initial enrollment.

For further information, contact Judith A. Stein at the Center for Medicare Advocacy at (860) 456-7790 or Pedro Rodriguez at Action Alliance at (215) 557-0751.