

NEWS RELEASE

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NCPDP HOLDS EDUCATIONAL FORUM ON PRESCRIPTION DRUG BENEFIT *"Medicare modernization act and its Impact on the Industry."*

SCOTTSDALE, AZ - The National Council for Prescription Drug Programs, Inc. (NCPDP) presented its 3rd Annual Drug Benefit Educational Forum with a program titled, *"Medicare Modernization Act and Its Impact on the Industry,"* at the Hyatt Regency Atlanta on November 16, 2004.

The Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement and Modernization Act (MMA) of 2003 was created to provide seniors and people living with disabilities with a prescription drug benefit, more choices and better benefits under Medicare. Topics for the forum covered managing the benefit at the physician's office, Health Savings Accounts, e-Prescribing and the National Provider Identifier (NPI).

Sharad Mansukani, M.D., M.B.A, Senior Advisor and Medical Officer for the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services provided a comprehensive presentation on the historical timeline and subsequent development of the initiative from a government perspective. **Richard Brook**, Vice President, Pharmacy Services for ProxyMed, presented a walk through of the NCVHS recommendation letter to HHS regarding the standards to enable electronic prescribing in ambulatory care. Each recommendation was discussed with emphasis on where e-Prescribing is today and what it will take to reach industry wide compliance with the recommendation. **Patricia Peyton** of the Office of HIPAA Standards CMS/HHS provided an educational overview of the NPI, requirements of the NPI Final Rule and what steps covered entities should take in order to implement the NPI. **Walter Suarez**, President and CEO SGA, Midwest Center for HIPAA Education, presented a segment focused on the NPI specifically in reference to the Pharmacy Industry and associated practical implementation issues. **David Schulke**, Executive Vice President of the American Health Quality Association, introduced attendees to the current role of QIOs (Medicare Quality Improvement Organizations) under Medicare and explored how QIOs and pharmacy benefit managers, pharmacies and prescribers can best work together to assist in quality improvement for the Medicare beneficiary. A panel discussion was presented by the following speakers: **John R. Hickman**, Attorney at Law, **Aston Bird**, LLP on *HSA's Shift Consumer Driven Healthcare*; **Len Greer**, Vice President, Medco Health Solutions on *Expanding*

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the Consumer Choice Market: The Pharmacy Benefit; and **Elizabeth Hansen**, Eastern Region Account Executive, UnitedHealth Allies Business Unit of the Uniprise Consumer Solutions Group, *Uniprise, HSA's and Their Impact on Pharmacy Cost*.

The pharmacy benefit represents significant opportunity to engage consumers as part of the healthcare cost solution and this forum, which discussed how PBMs are embracing consumer driven healthcare and integrating the pharmacy benefit into the consumer driven healthcare model was among NCPDP's most attended thus far. For more details on all NCPDP Educational Programs, log on to the NCPDP web site: www.ncdp.org and click on the Educational Programs link.

About NCPDP

Founded in 1977, NCPDP is a not-for-profit, ANSI-accredited, Standards Development Organization (SDO). With over 1370 members representing virtually every sector of the pharmacy services industry, NCPDP has made great strides over the last 25 years. NCPDP has established HCidea, a new service that will create a healthcare identifier for individual healthcare prescribers. The NCPDP Provider Identification Number provides over 68,000 pharmacies with a unique identifying number for interactions with federal agencies and third party processors. NCPDP has eleven (11) active Work Groups dedicated to the technological advancement of pharmacy through standards development. NCPDP's Telecommunication Standard Version 5.1 and Batch Standard Version 1.1 were named the official standards for pharmacy claims in the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act's Final Rule. For more information about NCPDP Standards, Educational Programs and NCPDP Work Group meetings, visit the NCPDP website at www.ncdp.org.

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