

Improve Medicare Outreach: Urge CMS to Translate Materials into Additional Languages

To sign on, or for more information, please contact Charlie Arnowitz (charlie.arnowitz@mail.house.gov) by **Wednesday, May 1**.

April XX, 2019

Dear Administrator Verma:

We strongly believe that all of our constituents should have access to accurate, accessible, and comprehensive information about Medicare. To that end, we urge the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) to increase the number of languages used in educational and enrollment materials available to Medicare-eligible individuals.

The number of Americans speaking a language other than English at home continues to increase, growing from roughly 23 million in 1980 to almost 60 million in 2010, a 158% increase, according to American Community Survey data. The U.S. Census also estimates that as recently as 2017, over 10 million individuals over age 60 spoke a language other than English at home, with almost 6 million speaking English less than “very well.” In total, nearly 350 languages are spoken in U.S. homes.

CMS should ensure that all Medicare-eligible individuals and beneficiaries have access to unbiased and complete information on their Medicare options, in order to support a more seamless and informed decision-making and enrollment process. As our linguistic diversity increases, Medicare should therefore improve the accessibility of its educational and enrollment materials for all beneficiaries through translation of key materials into additional languages, beyond English and Spanish.

While CMS is to be lauded for making Medicare documents and materials available in both English and Spanish, CMS should specifically consider translating commonly used Medicare documents and materials into additional languages, including the “Medicare and You” handbook, Medicare.gov and Plan Finder websites, and the “Understanding Medicare Advantage Plans” booklet. We encourage CMS to begin the implementation of a deliberate process for additional language translation of educational and outreach materials, as feasible and appropriate.

With more than 10,000 individuals becoming eligible for Medicare every day, we appreciate your commitment to ensuring that CMS materials and information are accessible to all Medicare beneficiaries. Thank you for your attention to this matter, and we look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

CC: Demetrios Kouzoukas, Principal Deputy Administrator & Director of the Center for Medicare