

Tips for Reaching 1-800-MEDICARE

1-800-MEDICARE is currently experiencing an unprecedented call volume and some people may have difficulty getting through. 400,000 calls per day were received by Medicare following the introduction of approved drug cards beginning on May 3, 2004. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services is diligently working to ensure all callers reach 1-800 MEDICARE and receive prompt service.

Follow these tips to best reach 1-800-MEDICARE:

- ▶ 1-800 MEDICARE provides service to Medicare beneficiaries 24 hours a day, seven days a week in English, Spanish and TDD.
- ▶ **The best days to call 1-800-MEDICARE are Thursday, Friday and Sunday.**
- ▶ **The best times to call during the weekday are before 6:00 a.m. and after 6:00 p.m.**
- ▶ Medicare beneficiaries may want to check the website www.medicare.gov and look at "Prescription Drug and Other Assistance Programs." This will help you determine the best available drug prices and give you a list of companies in your area that offer Medicare-approved drug discount cards.
- ▶ Medicare beneficiaries have the entire month of May 2004 to enroll in a Medicare-approved drug discount card which will be effective June 2004. Beneficiaries can also enroll in future months until December 2005, and enrollment will be effective the first day of the month following receipt of a completed application.
- ▶ **Beneficiaries can enroll in a discount card only through a Medicare-approved drug discount card sponsor. They cannot enroll at 1-800-MEDICARE, but they can get information about the drug card options there.**