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Congresswoman Matsui Announces Medicare Open Enrollment Begins Monday

Individuals can change Medicare coverage between October 15-December 7

SACRAMENTO, CA – Congresswoman Doris Matsui (CA-05) announced that the Medicare open enrollment period starts Monday, October 15 and runs through December 7. During this period, which is also known as the Annual Election Period (AEP), individuals can change their Medicare Advantage plan, their Medicare Part D coverage, and they can return to original Medicare. Any plan changes made during the AEP are effective January 1, 2013.

“The open enrollment period is an opportunity for individuals with Medicare coverage to explore their options and make sure they are enrolled in the plans that work best for them,” said Congresswoman Matsui. “Thanks to the Affordable Care Act, Medicare enrollees have more high quality options than ever before, and premiums have fallen. I encourage all enrollees to take advantage of this period to review their coverage.”

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) recently released the 2013 quality ratings for Medicare health and drug plans on their web-based tool “Medicare Plan Finder.” On this website, Medicare plans are given an overall rating on a one-to-five star scale, with one star representing poor performance and five stars representing excellent performance. During the open enrollment period, people with Medicare can use the star ratings to compare the quality of health and drug plan options and select the plans that are the best for their needs.

In 2013, people with Medicare will have access to 127 four or five star Medicare Advantage plans. The number of highly rated plans available has increased since 2012, when Medicare enrollees had access to 106 four or five star plans. They also have access to 26 four to five star prescription drug plans, up from 13 last year.

CMS' Medicare Plan Finder can be viewed at <https://www.medicare.gov/find-a-plan/questions/home.aspx>

For free Medicare help from volunteer counselors, visit the Health Insurance Counseling & Advocacy Program website: <http://www.cahealthadvocates.org/HICAP/index.html>

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