

What Health & Consumer Groups Are Saying About The Bush Administration's Drug Discount Cards

"The new Medicare drug discount card program is unlikely to provide the needed relief from high prescription drug prices and may lead to confusion and potential victimization of America's seniors and disabled ... The discount drug card program is extremely complicated for seniors, who will be locked into one card even though it is possible the prices and drugs on that card can change each week... Because seniors will be locked into the card they select, they may fall victim to 'bait and switch,' in which they pick a card because it has the drugs they need, but later the card drops those drugs."

-- Consumers Union, 4/1/04

"For most older adults and people with disabilities, the new discount cards offer no more savings than the cards they already have, and in many cases, they actually offer less. Different cards will cover different drugs and offer different discounts on the same drug. Additionally, companies offering the discount cards can regularly change which drugs they discount and the discounts they offer."

-- Medicare Rights Center, 2/10/04

"[Drug card] sponsors ... are explicitly authorized to switch the drugs that are on the discount list and the size of the discounts every seven days – and cardholders are unlikely to be informed of those switches. As a result, cardholders will only learn when they go to a pharmacy that the drug prescribed for them, which they thought would be discounted through their card, is no longer on the discount list."

-- Families USA, 12/19/03

"You can sign up for only one card ... Medicare beneficiaries should know that once you choose a card you are locked into it for a year ... Be aware that these cards do nothing to control the cost of drugs. As anyone who takes prescription medications knows, drug prices continually fluctuate and under the new law, the drug discount card sponsors can change which drugs their plans will cover as frequently as once a week. Consumers will have to constantly check to be sure their prescription drugs are still covered under the plan."

-- Alliance for Retired Americans, 12/8/03

"An individual who enrolls in a Medicare-endorsed prescription card will be locked in to that card until the next enrollment period. However, card sponsors can change the price of the prescriptions at any time."

-- Center for Medicare Advocacy, 3/04