

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Medicare Payment Advisory Committee (MedPAC), an independent federal body established to advise congress on issues affecting the Medicare program, today unanimously approved three critical recommendations to encourage participation in both the Medicare Savings Programs and the low-income drug subsidy.

Those recommendations are as follows:

1. The secretary of Health and Human Services should increase the State Health Insurance Assistance Program's (SHIP) funding for outreach to low-income Medicare beneficiaries;
2. Congress should raise Medicare Savings Programs' (MSP) eligibility requirements to conform with current requirements for the low-income drug subsidy; and
3. Congress should change program requirements so that the Social Security Administration screens low-income subsidy applicants for federal MSP eligibility and enrolls them if they qualify.

Representative Xavier Becerra (CA-31), the Assistant to the Speaker of the House and the only congressional member from Southern California on the Committee on Ways and Means, wrote legislation earlier this year that is a near mirror image of MedPAC's recommendations. Portions of Rep. Becerra's legislation, H.R. 3127, the Medicare Savings Program Improvement Act of 2007, were included in the House-passed CHAMP Act (H.R. 3162).

“Today’s wise recommendations are good news for the millions of American Medicare beneficiaries who are of low or modest income,” Rep. Becerra said. “The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services should implement what it can immediately and congress would benefit by taking up H.R. 3127 in short order. Countless grandparents all across this nation are depending on us to ensure they have access to health care as well as an opportunity to save money on their prescription drugs.”

The State Health Insurance Assistance Program offers one-on-one counseling and assistance to people with Medicare and their families. Through federal grants directed to states, free counseling and assistance is given via telephone and face-to-face interactive sessions, public education presentations and programs, and media activities.

### [Becerra.House.gov](http://Becerra.House.gov) ###