

ICAN and Families USA Caution Seniors and People with Disabilities about the New Medicare Law



Deb Stehr, vice president of Iowa Citizen Action Network, addresses over 200 people who came to learn about the new Medicare law. Joining her in addressing the crowd are: (from left to right) Representative Leonard Boswell, Governor Tom Vilsack, and Ron Pollack, executive director of Families USA.

Des Moines/April 13, 2004— The Iowa Citizen Action Network, the state’s largest grassroots consumer advocacy organization, educated over 200 people today about the new Medicare prescription drug law. ICAN, the statewide coalition of community, senior, faith, farm, labor, and environmental organizations, co-sponsored the Des Moines stop of the Medicare Road Show. This educational event traveling to 21 cities across America was organized by Families USA, a national nonprofit, non-partisan organization located in Washington, D.C., dedicated to the achievement of high-quality, affordable health care for all Americans.

The goal of the Medicare Road Show is to educate people with Medicare about what the new prescription drugs law does and does not do. Seniors and people with disabilities watched a video hosted by veteran journalist Walter Cronkite that detailed the new law. They also heard from a local married couple who shared their own prescription drug story in light of the changes to Medicare.

“Unless something changes with this law, it’s going to be very confusing to a lot of seniors on how to figure it out,” said **Bill Rieckhoff, a Des Moines senior**. Rieckhoff and his wife Lois use over \$8,000 in prescription drugs annually. Attendees also participated in a question and answer segment to learn how the new law will affect their coverage.

“The Medicare Prescription Drug law is very complex and presents an array of confusing and conflicted choices for beneficiaries. The Medicare Road Show gave Iowans an opportunity to ask questions and get answers,” said **Deb Stehr, vice president of ICAN**. Stehr also mentioned that the Iowa Citizen Action Network Education Foundation would continue this outreach effort with a Medicare Education campaign running through August.



Iowa Citizen Action Network used the Medicare Road Show to kick off its Medicare Education Project. Hannah Lehman, the project organizer shares ICAN's education plan with the capacity crowd of over 200.

ICAN Education Foundation will organize multiple educational presentations at locations across the state to ensure that all Iowans on Medicare get the information they need about the new law. The program will also train a corps of older volunteers to lead these presentations at senior centers, retirement communities, government agencies, church groups, and service clubs.

“Seniors and people with disabilities are being bombarded with political ads, questionable news programs, and fraudulent products trying to sell the public on what the new law will do. Our goal is to cut through the rhetoric and give Medicare beneficiaries and their families complete, unbiased, and accurate information about the new law,” said **Hannah Lehman, Organizer of ICAN EF’s Medicare Education campaign.**