

(February 10, 2006) Lipinski Offers and Urges More Help For Medicare Beneficiaries

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Lipinski Statement at Field Hearing on the Cost of Medicare Prescription Drug Program

CHICAGO, IL - Congressman Daniel Lipinski, along with Congresswoman Schakowsky and Congressman Rush, hosted a hearing today with advocates, beneficiaries, and medical professionals who outlined their ongoing concerns about the Medicare drug benefit's implementation around Chicago.

Pictured above, Congressman Dan Lipinski (center), Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky (left), and Congressman Bobby Rush (right) listen to testimony regarding Medicare Part D. The Congressional Hearing took place on Friday, February 10th at the Metcalf Federal Building in downtown Chicago.

The witnesses at the hearing discussed how they were adversely affected by the new Medicare Drug Program and ways the program could be improved."

"The Medicare Prescription Drug Program has been an unmitigated disaster; it is too complicated, too expensive, and has even denied some seniors their life-saving medication. At the two dozen informational seminars I have held for seniors to help them with this program, my heart has gone out to all those who are understandably bewildered," Lipinski said. "Congress must act to change this program without any further delay."

One of the many problems discussed at the hearing was that the program is much too complicated. Medicare beneficiaries have to decide whether they should sign up for a drug plan and if so, which one of 60 plans will be best for them. They know that they only have until May 15 to sign up, or they will face a permanent penalty. Unfortunately, if they make a mistake and choose a plan that does not provide them with good coverage, they have to wait until next year to make a change.

"Medicare beneficiaries are understandably confused as they receive mountains of slick advertising mailers from insurance companies as well as clever television ads featuring Fred and Ethel Mertz come back to life," said Lipinski. "It's all too much, and as Fred and Ethel's neighbor would say, we 'have some 'splainin' to do' about this program."

