



For Planning Purposes: May 4, 2006

\*\*\**MEDIA ADVISORY*\*\*\*

## **Congressman Barrow to Help Seniors Avoid the Medicare Drug Benefit's May 15<sup>th</sup> Penalty**

*Barrow is urging Congress to extend the enrollment deadline past May 15<sup>th</sup>*

One week before the Medicare Prescription Drug Benefit enrollment period is scheduled to end, Augusta Congressman John Barrow (12<sup>th</sup> District) will join with a representative from *Georgia Cares* at the St. John's Retirement Center on **Monday May 8<sup>th</sup>** to discuss the looming May 15<sup>th</sup> enrollment deadline, and to help answer any questions seniors have about signing up. As the law is currently written, anyone who signs up for the Medicare Drug Plan after the May 15<sup>th</sup> deadline will be forced to pay higher monthly premiums for their drug coverage.

The meeting is scheduled to start at 2:30 PM.

Congressman Barrow was not in Congress when the Medicare Prescription Drug plan was written and passed, but he is committed to helping fix some of the obvious problems facing the new program. In Congress, Barrow is working to:

- Extend the current May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2006 enrollment deadline to December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2006.
- Allow participants to change plans – without penalty – if they discover that the plan they selected was not the best choice for them.
- Give Medicare the authority to negotiate lower prices for the drugs they purchase through the new program. The current bill bans Medicare from negotiating lower prices.
- Prohibit private drug plans from taking prescription drugs off the list of drugs they cover over the course of a year.

On March 6<sup>th</sup>, Congressman Barrow held a Medicare Prescription Drug workshop in Augusta at the Henry Brigham Community Center that was attended by more than 140 local Augusta residents.

**WHAT:** Congressman John Barrow and Representatives from Georgia Cares to discuss the upcoming Medicare Prescription Drug enrollment deadline; answer sign up questions.

**WHEN:** Monday, May 8<sup>th</sup>, starting at 2:30 PM.

**WHERE:** St. John Towers Retirement Community, 724 Greene Street, **Augusta**.

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