



National Association of Health Underwriters

America's Benefits Specialists

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NAHU Statement on Medicare Regulations on Commissions

(Arlington, VA)—Janet Trautwein, CEO of the National Association of Health Underwriters (NAHU), today released the following statement on the recent Government Accountability Office (GAO) report *Opportunities Exist for Improving Information Sent to Enrollees and Scheduling the Annual Election Period* (GAO-09-4):

“This GAO report underscores the vital role and value that professionally licensed health insurance agents and brokers bring in helping Medicare beneficiaries understand their private plan choices and what is the best fit for them.

“Selling and servicing any Medicare-related products, if done correctly, is a very labor-intensive process that requires great patience, compassion, specialized training and knowledge of the many facets of the Medicare program. Each year plans may change their cost and covered benefits and calling 1-800 MEDICARE just isn’t sufficient for many seniors. Millions of seniors rely on professional health insurance agents and brokers to guide them in selecting the best Medicare option for their individual needs and in assisting them in getting problems solved quickly and efficiently. NAHU members who work with seniors spend countless hours explaining how coverage works and helping them when problems arise.

“The GAO report also cited delays in completing beneficiary enrollments for those seeking to switch plans during open enrollment. NAHU has long maintained that establishing a longer open enrollment period that begins earlier in the year would make the open enrollment process easier on both beneficiaries and those providing enrollment support. CMS allows plan marketing materials to be made available to beneficiaries as early as October 1, and encourages Medicare beneficiaries and their insurance producers to complete the process as early as possible. Congress could extend the open enrollment window in order to allow beneficiaries more time to make informed decisions.

“The National Association of Health Underwriters’ membership of more than 20,000 professionally licensed health insurance agents, brokers and employee benefit specialists is committed to helping consumers find the right coverage that works best for them. We look forward to continuing our service as champions of seniors, and to serving as resources for federal and state policymakers on Medicare-related issues.”

The National Association of Health Underwriters represents 20,000 professional health insurance agents and brokers who provide insurance for millions of Americans. NAHU is headquartered in Arlington, VA. For more information, please contact Kelly Loussedes, vice president of public relations at 703-276-3835 or kloussedes@nahu.org.

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