



# Kansas Insurance Department

Sandy Praeger, Commissioner of Insurance

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Consumer alert:** Medicare ‘donut hole’ payment recipients should beware of scam artists

TOPEKA, KS — Sandy Praeger, Kansas Commissioner of Insurance, is urging Medicare beneficiaries eligible to receive a \$250 “donut hole” check for their Part D coverage to be wary of scams surrounding the federal payment program.

“The Department of Health and Human Services is mailing the checks to Kansans who are eligible once they have reached the ‘donut hole,’” Commissioner Praeger said. “No Medicare official or anyone else should be contacting you to request personal or financial information. If someone tells you he or she can get your check to you faster for a fee, report it.”

The checks are for those Medicare beneficiaries nationwide who have Part D prescription drug coverage. The checks began mailing June 10. The money is expected to reach eligible beneficiaries the month after they hit the gap, or donut hole, through the rest of 2010.

According to a White House website, more than 35,000 Kansas Medicare beneficiaries reached the donut hole gap in 2009.

Medicare beneficiaries now buy Part D coverage that covers 75 percent of their prescription costs up to \$2,830. After they reach that number, they are responsible for paying the next \$3,610. That coverage gap between those figures is known as the donut hole.

The federal health reform law enacted earlier this spring phases out the donut hole by 2020 and provided the \$250 “rebate” for this year only.

Although officials and Medicare beneficiaries have been provided with information about the check program, Commissioner Praeger said that scam artists will continue attempting to swindle eligible beneficiaries out of their money.

“Remember, if you think something is amiss, **Stop** the transaction, **Call** the Kansas Insurance Department, and **Confirm** that the transaction is legal,” Commissioner Praeger said. The department’s Consumer Assistance Hotline (in Kansas) is 800-432-2484.

*The Kansas Insurance Department, established in 1871, assists and educates consumers, regulates and reviews companies and licenses agents selling insurance products in the state. It is an entirely self-funded agency. More about the department is online at [www.ksinsurance.org](http://www.ksinsurance.org).*