I just finished our first of five Medicare Drug Card Fairs down here in my hometown of Columbus, Indiana. The room at the Greentree Living Center was packed with seniors armed with questions about the new prescription drug benefit. After a brief presentation from our panel, I did my best "Phil Donahue" and worked the room with a microphone.

People seemed to really appreciate the chance to ask some very direct questions without waiting on hold for a Medicare representative. Most seniors seemed relieved to learn that the discount card was completely voluntary.

Others were pleased to know they could keep using private discount cards they have and sign up for a Medicare-approved card.

In the end, the folks seemed to leave in a better mood than when they arrived. A few less questions, a few more answers and, hopefully, a few families genuinely helped.

One down, four Medicare fairs to go! mrp