



News Release

SOCIAL SECURITY

The Cast of *The Patty Duke Show* Reunites to Tell Americans About New Online Medicare Application

Cast Reprises Original Roles in New TV Spots

Michael J. Astrue, Commissioner of Social Security, today joined award-winning actress Patty Duke and the cast of her hit 1960s sitcom, *The Patty Duke Show*, to unveil Social Security's newest online service – an application for Medicare benefits. This new online application, which takes less than 10 minutes to complete, is for people reaching the Medicare eligibility age of 65 who want to delay filing for Social Security retirement benefits. Currently about a half million Americans enroll in Medicare each year without applying for monthly benefits.

“Social Security’s online services are the best in all of government and exceed the top private sector companies in customer satisfaction,” Commissioner Astrue said. “The new Medicare application is a welcome addition to our suite of online services and will make it easier than ever to sign up for Medicare. I am thrilled that Patty Duke has once again volunteered to help us get the word out. The fact that this time her TV family has joined her makes this even more special and I thank William Schallert, Eddie Applegate, and Paul O’Keefe for their service to America. I also want to thank Dr. David Kessler, former FDA Commissioner, who appeared with Patty as a befuddled family physician in some of our spots.”

To apply online for Medicare, go to www.socialsecurity.gov and choose Retirement/Medicare under the header, “Select Below To Apply For.” You will be asked a brief series of questions. If you have a question or need additional information, there are convenient “more info” links. When you’re done, just select the “Sign Now” button to submit the application. There are no paper forms to sign, and usually no additional documents are required. If more information is needed, Social Security will contact you by phone or letter.

For a variety of reasons, more and more Americans are choosing to delay receiving Social Security retirement benefits past the Medicare eligibility age of 65. Although the age to collect full retirement benefits used to be age 65, it is now age 66 for individuals just becoming eligible for retirement benefits and will eventually become age 67. Benefits can be increased by up to 32 percent if someone

delays receiving them until age 70. To learn more, see our *When To Start Receiving Retirement Benefits* fact sheet at www.socialsecurity.gov/pubs/10147.html.

“We are continuing to look for ways to improve our existing online services and to add new services that make it easy for people to do business with Social Security,” said Commissioner Astrue. “Later this year, we will make our online Retirement Estimator at www.socialsecurity.gov/estimator available in Spanish, a first for the federal government. Providing the public with the best online services in the government and private sectors is one of our top priorities.”

To see all of Social Security’s online services, go to www.socialsecurity.gov/online services.

To view the new public service announcements featuring the cast of *The Patty Duke Show*, go to www.socialsecurity.gov/medicareonly.

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