

From: Jacobs, Chris (RPC)
Sent: Friday, October 21, 2011 1:06 PM
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Subject: It's Medicare's Open Season -- So Where's Andy Griffith...?

Amidst the stories this week surrounding the CLASS Act debacle and the release of the final ACO reg, open season started for Medicare beneficiaries last Saturday. Due to a provision in Obamacare, open season now starts a month earlier, and will end several weeks earlier as well. And as a Kaiser Health News [piece](#) from last week cited one survey indicating that 65 percent of seniors were unaware of the changed dates for Medicare's open season as of earlier this year.

This brings up the question I raised above: *Given the accelerated open season calendar, of which many seniors are unaware, where's Andy Griffith to inform seniors of these important changes?* As you probably recall, last year CMS engaged Andy Griffith to [take on the role](#) of "pitching President Barack Obama's health care law to seniors." Press reports note that the Administration spent [\\$3 million](#) in taxpayer funds to run an ad campaign in which Mr. Griffith was, in the [White House's own words](#), "delivering the good news" about Obamacare to seniors. And according to CMS' [response](#) to a Freedom of Information Act request, the ads were "only airing in September and October 2010" – i.e., the weeks and months right before November 2's mid-term election.

My point is NOT to argue that at a time of trillion-dollar deficits, CMS should spend millions running television ads using "weasel words" and misleading rhetoric in an attempt to persuade seniors about Obamacare. My question is, ***why is the Obama Administration running the Andy Griffith ad campaign in even-numbered years, but not odd-numbered ones?*** Is timing such advertisements right around elections warranted or appropriate? And does anyone want to venture a guess that an ad campaign featuring Mr. Griffith will return next fall in states like Florida, Colorado, and Ohio...?

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