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History

The Medicare and Medicaid programs were signed into law on July 30, 1965. President LBJ is pictured at the signing ceremony in Independence, Missouri at the Truman Library. Former President Truman is seated beside him. LBJ held the ceremony there to honor President Truman's leadership on health insurance, which he first proposed in 1945. You can read LBJ's speech at the signing ceremony and listen to his taped conversations relating to CMS programs. Key speeches and press conference excerpts from other President's are also available. See the links in the Downloads section below.

The most significant legislative change to Medicare--called the Medicare Modernization Act or MMA--was signed into law by another President from Texas, George W. Bush, on December 8, 2003. This historic legislation adds an outpatient prescription drug benefit to Medicare and makes many other important changes. You can read his speech at the signing ceremony and see pictures of the event at the White House web site. See the links in the Downloads and Related Links Outside CMS sections below.

Oral histories of former Secretaries, Administrators, Members of Congress and other important players in the history of CMS programs are available as well as more oral histories and other CMS related-materials on the SSA web page. See the links in the Downloads and Related Links Outside CMS sections below.

Since 1965, a number of changes have been made to CMS programs. A more detailed listing of those changes is at CMS milestones. Moreover, the agencies charged with implementing the programs have changed as well. See agency history for more information about Medicare's early days in Social Security, Medicaid's early days in the Social and Rehabilitative Services Administration, and why they were joined together into one agency in 1977. Learn why CMS headquarters is located in Baltimore County, Maryland and how it was almost moved to the City of Baltimore. See the links in the Downloads and Related Links Outside CMS sections below.

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