



# News Release

SOCIAL SECURITY

## **Chubby Checker and Social Security Commissioner Astrue Announce a New “Twist” in the Law**

### **Changes Make it Easier to Qualify for *Extra Help* with Medicare Prescription Drug Plan Costs**

Michael J. Astrue, Commissioner of Social Security, and Chubby Checker, Grammy Award winner and rock and roll legend, today launched a new campaign to inform millions of Americans about a new “twist” in the law that makes it easier to qualify for *extra help* with Medicare prescription drug costs. The *extra help* program currently provides assistance to more than nine million senior and disabled Americans -- saving them an average of almost \$4,000 a year on their Medicare prescription drug plan costs. To apply for *extra help*, there is an easy-to-use online application available at [www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov).

“The changes in the Medicare law that take effect this month will allow hundreds of thousands of Americans who are struggling to pay their prescription drug costs to get *extra help* during these tough economic times,” said Commissioner Astrue. “I am thrilled that Chubby Checker has volunteered to help us spread this important message through a new television, radio, and Internet spot as well as pamphlets and posters.”

“Listen up, America! For 50 years, people of all ages and backgrounds have danced the Twist,” Chubby Checker said. “Now it’s important everyone learn about this new twist in the law. Check it out at [www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov).”

To qualify for *extra help*, people must meet certain resource and income limits. The new Medicare law eases those requirements in two ways. First, it eliminates the cash value of life insurance from counting as a resource. Second, it eliminates the assistance people receive from others to pay for household expenses, such as food, rent, mortgage or utilities, from counting as income. There also is another important “twist” in the law. The application for *extra help* can now start the application process for Medicare Savings Programs -- state programs that provide help with other Medicare costs. These programs help pay Medicare Part B (medical insurance) premiums. For some people, the Medicare Savings Programs also pay Medicare Part A (hospital insurance) premiums, if any, and Part A and B deductibles and co-payments.

To learn more about the *extra help* program and to view the new TV spot featuring Chubby Checker, go to [www.socialsecurity.gov/extrahelp](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/extrahelp).

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