



Information Partners and Pharmacists Can Use on:

Helping People with Medicare Apply for Extra Help

Revised March 2008

You continue to be a valuable resource in helping people with Medicare apply for extra help paying their Medicare drug plan costs. People with Medicare who received extra help in 2007 and don't automatically qualify in 2008 must apply through the Social Security Administration to see if they are eligible for extra help in 2008. People who don't qualify for extra help are still enrolled in their Medicare drug plan unless they disenroll, but will now be responsible for plan costs and copayments for 2008.

People who don't apply for extra help in 2008 could experience increased cost-sharing at the pharmacy counter in January when they have to pay higher copayments, premiums, and deductibles.

You are encouraged to continue helping people with Medicare submit applications for extra help. Medicare is giving people who no longer qualify for extra help an opportunity to enroll in a plan or switch plans from January 1, 2008, through March 31, 2008, or starting the month they are notified through the 2 months after, whichever is later.

Read below for more detailed information about income and resources limits for applying for extra help. These income and resource amounts are for 2008.

- **Limited income** (below \$15,600 for an individual or \$21,000 for a married couple living together). **Even if their annual income is higher, a person still may be able to get some help with their prescription costs** if a person or their spouse meet one of the following conditions:
 - Supports other family members who live with them
 - Has earnings from work
 - Lives in Alaska or Hawaii

The following cash payments **don't count as income**:

- Food stamp assistance
- Home energy assistance
- Medical care assistance
- Housing assistance
- Disaster assistance
- Earned income tax credit payments
- Victim's compensation
- Scholarships and education grants



- **Limited resources** (below \$11,990 for an individual or \$23,970 for a married couple living together). These resource limits **include \$1,500 per person for burial expenses.**

The following items **don't count as a resource:**

- Your primary residence
- Your personal possessions
- Your vehicle(s)
- Resources you could not easily convert to cash, such as jewelry or home furnishings
- Property you need for self-support, such as rental property or land you use to grow produce for home consumption
- Non-business property essential to your self-support
- Up to \$1,500 (or \$3,000 if you are married and living with your spouse) of the cash value of life insurance policies
- Burial spaces

Social Security has a simple application process to help people with Medicare apply for extra help. There are several ways for people with Medicare to apply for extra help:

- Apply online at www.socialsecurity.gov on the web.
- Get an application or apply over the phone by calling Social Security at 1-800-772-1213. TTY users should call 1-800-325-0778.
- Attend a community event sponsored by Social Security or a civic or service organization where they can complete an application. Questions about extra help will be answered at these events. Staff from Social Security's 1,300 field offices are out in local communities taking applications at locations such as senior centers, libraries, and places of worship.
- Visit a local Social Security field office.

For more information about applying for extra help with your Medicare drug plan costs, call Social Security at 1-800-772-1213, or visit www.socialsecurity.gov/prescriptionhelp on the web.