



Get Educated, Get Enrolled NMHA's Medicare Rx Benefit Campaign

November 18, 2005

Welcome

The National Mental Health Association is a leading voice in ensuring that the scope and implementation of the Medicare Rx benefit meets the needs of beneficiaries with mental health disorders, particularly those who are dual eligibles. To help consumers and advocates with the approaching enrollment period, NMHA has created the "*Get Educated, Get Enrolled*" Medicare Rx Benefit Campaign. As part of the campaign, we will send out regular email bulletins with program updates and new resources. Please forward the bulletin to others in your community and encourage them to subscribe by emailing shcrinfo@nmha.org.

Countdown

43 days until the new prescription drug benefit begins (January 1, 2006)

166 days until the end of the initial enrollment period (May 15, 2006)

Tools You Can Use

Medicare Rx: A National Conversation

Learn more about Medicare prescription drug coverage and how it works when this CMS sponsored television program, "Medicare Rx: A National Conversation" airs on Saturday, November 19th from 6:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. EST on cable channel CNBC.

Medicare Rx Coverage Workbook for Mental Health Consumers

The NMHA Medicare Rx Consumer Workbook is helping thousands of Americans with Medicare enroll in the new Medicare prescription drug program. To obtain copies,

- Individuals may request a free copy of the workbook through the [NMHA Resource Center](#), 800-969-NMHA(6642);
- Download the PDF version at www.nmha.org/medicare; or
- Order larger quantities to share with Medicare beneficiaries by visiting [NMHA's bookstore](#).

Want to Help with Enrollment? Join the CMS Medicare Rx Volunteer Initiative!

The **CMS MedicareRx Volunteer Initiative** is Medicare's official volunteer network of trained individuals committed to helping people with Medicare understand and join a Medicare prescription drug plan if they choose. Donate your time and talent to be a part of this landmark effort to help people with Medicare in communities nationwide get access to more affordable prescription drugs. The Initiative is seeking compassionate individuals who have:

- Basic understanding of Medicare and an interest in helping people with Medicare consider their options and join a plan if they choose
- Access to and familiarity with the Internet (enrollment activities will be computer-based)
- Transportation to local community enrollment events

Visit [VolunteerMatch](#) to register to become a volunteer in the CMS MedicareRx Volunteer Initiative, receive free training materials, and learn more about how you can get involved in helping people with Medicare make this important decision.

Bilingual Assistance Available

The [National Alliance for Hispanic Health](#) has established a toll-free helpline to offer bilingual support to Medicare beneficiaries in the Hispanic community. Bilingual assistance is available by calling 1-866-SU-FAMILIA

CMS Documents to Help Dual Eligibles Choose and Enroll Into a Drug Plan

Three new documents from CMS targeted at helping dual eligibles understand the enrollment process and how to choose a drug plan:

- [Choosing a Medicare Drug Plan: For People with Medicare & Medicaid](#)
- [People with Medicare & Medicaid: Medicare will enroll you in a plan automatically. How do you find out which plan?](#)
- [Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage Personal Information Worksheet for People with Medicare & Medicaid](#)

New Online Tool From Medicare Rights Center

[Medicare Interactive](#) is a new tool from the Medicare Rights Center that aims to help Medicare beneficiaries and their caregivers and case managers learn more about all aspects of the Medicare program, including Parts A, B, and D. Go to [NMHA's Medicare Rx webpage](#) and click on the Medicare Interactive link.

New Resource For Case Managers, Social Workers, and CMHC Staff

[The ABCs of Part D: Helping Consumers Access the Medicare Prescription Drug Benefit](#) is now available online. This handy daily reference guide will assist direct service staff in helping consumers make informed decisions about their new prescription drug coverage. Go to www.nccbh.org/SERVICE/Bookstore/ABCs.htm#abcs to download now and to obtain four hours of CEU credit.

Policy Tools You Can Use

Medicaid Outpatient Drug Coverage Excluded Drug Coverage Information By State

As of January 1, 2006, dual eligibles will no longer receive their pharmacy benefits under their State Medicaid agency, except for excluded drugs. Each State has the option to cover these drugs for their Medicaid beneficiaries who also have Medicare coverage. A list of drugs covered by Medicaid for each state is provided here:

<http://www.cms.hhs.gov/medicarereform/states/optdrugcov.asp>

Model State Activities on Medicare Rx

CMS released a [document](#) that highlights the steps that “model” state agencies are taking to assure low-income Medicare beneficiaries continue to have access to their prescription drugs once Medicare Part D begins. You may find information about your own state to help in your outreach activities, or this may generate some ideas for advocacy as Medicare Part D implementation moves forward. Available at:

http://www.cms.hhs.gov/medicarereform/states/model_state.pdf

All You Ever Wanted to Know About Special Needs Plans

Click on this [link](#) to find out all about Special Needs Plans from CMS, including fact sheets, a list of SNPs, and guidance documents:

<http://www.cms.hhs.gov/healthplans/specialneedsplans/default.asp>

New Fact Sheet on Extra Help and Enhanced Benefit Plans Now Available from CMS

The fact sheet [Extra Help for the Basic Premium](#) is now available from CMS at

<http://www.cms.hhs.gov/medicarereform/Basic-Premium-fact-sheet.pdf>. This tip sheet explains how Extra Help applies to Medicare prescription drug plans with an enhanced alternative option.

Information for Dual Eligibles Impacted by Hurricanes

CMS has released [outreach messages](#) for full benefit dual eligibles affected by Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and Wilma. If you are doing enrollment events that reach hurricane displaced dual eligibles, these messages may be helpful to you. Download the materials at:

<http://www.cms.hhs.gov/katrina/OutreachFullDualsAuto.pdf>

An Overview of CMS' Auto-Enrollment Planning for Dual Eligibles

CMS released a [memo](#) containing information on how the agency has been working with the States to ensure that all current and future full benefit dual eligibles will have Medicare prescription drug coverage. Information includes how duals are identified and the different ways that dual eligibles can learn about their auto-assigned plans. Find the memo at

http://www.cms.hhs.gov/medicarereform/states/auto_enrollment_overview.pdf

Policy Resources: Access to Drug Coverage Under Part D

The Center for Medicare Advocacy and the Kaiser Family Foundation prepared [three policy papers](#) examining access to the Medicare prescription drug benefit, including one on long-term care and nursing home issues. The papers are a useful analysis and summary of key information of importance to beneficiaries, advocates, and those in policy positions who may be able to initiate corrective actions. Find them at

http://www.medicareadvocacy.org/PartD_2005KaiserPapers.htm.

In the Community

- [The Mental Health Association of Greater St. Louis](#) will provide Medicare Part D presentations to the Independence Center on November 22, Legal Services of Eastern Missouri on November 30, and to the Burrell Community Mental Health Center on December 7.
- The [Mental Health Association in North Carolina](#) has trainings scheduled for November 22, 28, and tentatively for December 8. They are collaborating with state agencies and NC's SHIP and each training will address a different audience, including consumers and family members, case managers, and psychiatric staff and doctors.
- The [Mental Health Association of Southwest Ohio](#) will be conducting a Medicare Rx training on November 29 at the Mercy Hospital Clermont and will offer CEUs to training participants.

If you would like to share local activities in your area, please [email us](#) and let us know what events you're organizing. You may also post your event at <http://www.nmha.org/calendar/>

In the News

[Lawmakers Express Concern About Transfer of Prescription Drug Coverage for Dual Eligibles](#)
Kaiser Daily Health Policy Reports – November 18, 2005

The federal government's plan to transfer dual eligibles from Medicaid drug coverage to the new Medicare prescription drug benefit has many problems, including an over reliance on voluntary efforts by state governments, drug plans sponsors and pharmacists, Sen. Max Baucus (D-Mont.) said Wednesday.

[Fed's Medicare letter contradicts state's](#)

Chicago Sun-Times - November 16, 2005

Letters mailed to Illinois senior citizens from the federal government about Medicare's new prescription drug program contradicts an earlier message from state officials suggesting benefits are automatic.

[New York Times Examines Choice Between Charity Programs, Medicare Drug Benefit for Some Beneficiaries](#)

Kaiser Daily Health Policy Reports – November 7, 2005

Drug companies say people who choose a new Medicare prescription program may lose free medications they are getting now.

Get Educated, Get Enrolled e-bulletin is a project of the [National Mental Health Association](#), the country's oldest and largest nonprofit organization addressing all aspects of mental health and mental illness. To subscribe, email us at shcrinfo@nmha.org. For further information on the Medicare Rx campaign, go to <http://www.nmha.org/medicare>.