



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

September 28, 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

17 days until dual eligible auto-enrollment notification (October 15, 2005)

47 days until enrollment begins (November 15, 2005)

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

Tools You Can Use

New! NMHA Medicare Rx Benefit Materials

NMHA's Medicare Rx website has been updated with many new materials including:

- [Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage Get Educated, Get Enrolled, A Workbook for Mental Health Consumers](#) – a workbook for consumers and caregivers to go step by step through the drug benefit enrollment process.
- [State Specific Resources for Medicare Prescription Drug Information](#) – resource lists for all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

Bookmark www.nmha.org/medicare to access these and other valuable resources.

New Website Sponsored by National Mental Health Organizations

NMHA and its partner organizations, APA, NASMHPD, NAMI, NCCBH, TEN, and AACP, have launched a [new website](#) for mental health professionals, community mental health centers, consumers, and caregivers. While some content is now available, much more will be released by September 30. Over the next few weeks, the www.mentalhealthpartd.org website will grow to include:

- Detailed information on drug coverage for different Medicare beneficiaries
- Detailed information on individual prescription drug plan (PDP) formularies
- Detailed information on the exceptions and appeals process
- An incident reporting tool to provide feedback and assistance on individual situations

[Auto-Enrollment Notice for Dual Eligibles Released](#)

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) released the finalized [notice](#) that full benefit dual eligibles will receive in October 2005 giving them their auto-assigned drug plan as well as information on how to switch plans. The first page of the link is an introduction to the auto-enrollment notice for advocates.

Medicare Prescription Drug Plan Cost Estimator

A cost estimator tool is now available at the www.medicare.gov website to help beneficiaries predict their savings under the new Medicare drug benefit. The cost estimator assumes that beneficiaries have no drug coverage currently. Access the tool [here](#).

Fact Sheet on *Things to Think About When You Compare Plans*

CMS released a [fact sheet](#) to help beneficiaries consider certain factors when comparing their Medicare drug plan options. These factors include: Coverage, cost, convenience and peace of mind now and in the future.

Medicare & You 2006 Handbook Released

[Medicare's official handbook](#) including a summary of benefits and information on the appeals process is now available on the [Medicare website](#). Regional-specific handbooks, which include information on local prescription drug plans, will be sent out to Medicare beneficiaries in early October.

CMS National Medicare & You Trainings on Prescription Drug Coverage

CMS will hold multiple trainings on the Medicare drug benefit around the country this fall. The two-day trainings give community-based organizations and advocates an opportunity to learn about resources and tools, conduct enrollment role plays, and learn about regional outreach strategies to reach beneficiaries. Attendance is free, but space is limited. The training schedule and registration information is available at <http://cmsworkshops.net/>

CMS Guidance for Organizations Providing Enrollment Assistance

Last week, CMS released [guidance](#) to aid SHIPs, AAAs, and other community-based organizations that provide personalized assistance to educate and enroll Medicare beneficiaries into a Medicare drug plan. The guidance includes information on CMS resources and tools and tips on how to provide enrollment assistance.

In the Community

- In addition to two previously-held meetings for seniors and human service agency employees, the Mental Health Association of Dubuque County, Iowa will have a booth at the [2005 Annual Iowa Mental Health Conference](#) on October 11-12, and plans to distribute Medicare Rx materials.
- The [Mental Health Association in South Carolina](#) is holding a Medicare Rx training on October 21 for consumers, family members, direct providers, and state leadership.
- On October 21, as part of the [Mental Health Association in New York State's Annual Awards Dinner and Conference](#), participants can attend a session on Medicare Part D facilitated by NMHA staff.

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

[Medicare Takes Major Step Toward 2006 Drug Benefit; Issues Approval to Plans Offering Coverage](#)

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services – Sept. 23, 2005

CMS released the names and number of drug plans in each region, including the drug plans available for dual eligible auto-enrollment. There will be between 11 and 20 organizations offering prescription drug plans in each region. Ten organizations will offer drug coverage nationwide. In every state but Alaska, there will be at least one prescription drug plan with a premium less than \$20/month. The plan breakdown for each state is available [here](#).

[Statement of Mark B. McClellan, Administrator, CMS on Medicare Prescription Drug Assistance](#)

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (Press Release) – Sept. 22, 2005

... The Social Security Administration is now processing the more than three million [Extra Help] applications it has received so far ...

[Premium For Basic Medicare Increasing 13% Next Year](#)

The New York Times – Sept. 17, 2005

... Bush Administration announced that the basic Medicare premium would shoot up next year 13 percent, to \$88.50 a month, mainly because of the increased use of doctors' services.

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