



Information Pharmacists Can Use on:

Helping People with Medicare Apply for Extra Help

As of January 2007

Pharmacists 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 2006 and don't automatically qualify in 2007 must apply through the Social Security Administration to see if they are eligible for extra help in 2007. 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 2007.

People who don't apply for extra help in 2007 could experience increased cost-sharing at the pharmacy counter in January when they have to pay higher copayments, premiums and deductibles.

Pharmacists are encouraged to continue helping people with Medicare submit applications for extra help. People who no longer qualify for extra help have an opportunity to switch to a different Medicare drug plan starting January 1, 2007 through March 31, 2007. They may want to switch to a different drug plan with costs and coverage that better meet their needs.

Read below for more detailed information about limited income and resources.

- **Limited income** (below \$15,315 for an individual or \$20,535 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.** Some examples where income may be higher include if a person or their spouse
 - support other family members, who live with them, or
 - have earnings from work, or
 - live 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 \$11,710 for an individual or \$23,340 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 of a trade or business essential to your self-support
- 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.
- 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.