



Information for Pharmacists



Medicare-Approved Drug Discount Cards and Transitional Assistance Program

As part of the Medicare Modernization Act of 2003 (MMA), the Medicare-Approved Drug Discount Cards and Transitional Assistance Program begins in 2004 to help Medicare beneficiaries save on prescription drugs. Medicare will contract with private companies to offer new drug discount cards until a Medicare prescription drug benefit starts in 2006. A discount card with Medicare's seal of approval can help Medicare beneficiaries save on prescription drug costs.

Medicare-Approved Drug Discount Cards

- Open enrollment started in May 2004;
- Available to beneficiaries eligible for or enrolled in Medicare Part A or enrolled in Medicare Part B, **unless** receiving outpatient prescription drug coverage through State Medicaid programs;
- May charge an annual enrollment fee of no more than \$30, which may be paid by Medicare for some low-income beneficiaries;
- Do **not** require that beneficiaries purchase discount drugs through mail-order pharmacies; and
- Provide beneficiaries the ability to use their discount cards in pharmacies near their homes.

Transitional Assistance Program

Beneficiaries with the greatest need will have the greatest help available to them. Individuals with an annual income in 2004 of no more than \$12,569 if single or \$16,862 if married, and individuals receiving help from their state in paying their Medicare premiums or cost sharing, may qualify for a \$600 credit on their discount card to help pay for prescription drugs. These income limits change every year. Residents of Puerto Rico or a U.S. territory are not eligible for the \$600 credit from Medicare. However, they may be eligible for similar assistance provided by the territory in which they reside. Beneficiaries cannot qualify for the \$600 if they already have outpatient prescription drug coverage from certain other sources.

Information and Assistance Resources For Beneficiaries

The 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227) Toll-Free Call Center

Medicare representatives are available 24 hours per day, 7 days per week to answer questions and perform price comparisons for the drug discount cards. Upon request, representatives will send beneficiaries their individualized price comparison results. TTY users should call 1-877-486-2048.

The Prescription Drug and Other Assistance Programs Website

www.medicare.gov/AssistancePrograms/home.asp

This site includes a tool that provides eligibility, enrollment, and price comparison information.

State Health Insurance Assistance Programs (SHIP)

Beneficiaries may contact their SHIP counselor for information on assistance programs. Call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227) or visit www.medicare.gov/Contacts/Related/Ships.asp for information on your local SHIP.

Information Resources for Pharmacists

- Download a free patient-education brochure at www.medicare.gov (or call 1-800-MEDICARE to order a limited number of free copies);
- Read *The Medicare-Approved Drug Discount Cards and Transitional Assistance Program - A Brochure for Pharmacists and Other Pharmacy Professionals* at www.cms.hhs.gov/medlearn;
- Attend CMS Open Door Forums. These forums address concerns and issues of the pharmaceutical industry. Visit www.cms.hhs.gov/opendoor for details; and
- Visit www.cms.hhs.gov/medicarereform for the latest information on MMA.

THE CENTERS FOR MEDICARE & MEDICAID SERVICES (CMS)

Medicare-Approved Drug Discount Cards

