

Coverage Good for You, Your Patients and America.

As a physician, you and your office staff are often in a position to be asked questions about Medicare. When asked complex Medicare questions, all you need to say is “Call 1-800-MEDICARE for the answer to your questions.” For your information, the only things you need to know are:

- The Medicare prescription drug benefit is for ALL people with Medicare.
- It covers brand name as well as generic prescriptions.
- People with Medicare will have a choice of plans to provide this coverage.
- There is additional help for those with limited income and resources.
- If a patient receives a letter and four page application from Social Security, they should fill it out and mail it back. The folks at 1-800-MEDICARE, Social Security office (1-800-SSA-1213), State Health Insurance Program Assistance offices or a USDA extension office near you can give them more help.

You can always refer your patients to www.medicare.gov to get the most up-to-date information. We encourage your staff to have your patients call 1-800-MEDICARE to find the local resources where people with Medicare can get help with their applications and making a choice that works for them.


Limited Income Assistance

Some of your patients will be receiving a letter and application from the Social Security Administration telling them that they may be eligible to get extra help paying for their prescription drugs. You may get questions and we thought you'd like to have some answers.

Medicare and the Social Security Administration are working together to insure that all those people who have incomes under \$14,355 (individual) and \$19,245 (couple) apply for the extra help they need. There are now local resources available to help people with Medicare apply for extra help and, later in November, help them apply for a health plan that meets their needs.

We understand the pressure on your clinical time with your patients, which is why we would just ask that you inform your patients who have Medicare that the new prescription drug coverage could be valuable to them and worth exploring. All they have to do is call 1-800-MEDICARE or go to the web site www.medicare.gov where, starting in October, you or your office staff will be able to find a program that allows you to list your patient's drugs and identify possible plans that work for them.

Social Security Administration
Important Information



Our records show you may be eligible to get extra help paying for your prescription drugs.

Soon, a new Medicare Prescription Drug program will take effect. The new program will give you a choice of prescription plans that offer various types of coverage.

You may be able to get extra help to pay for the annual deductible, premiums and co-payments related to the new Medicare Prescription Drug program—an average of \$2,100 in extra help.

But before we can help you, **you must fill out the application, put it in the enclosed envelope, and mail it today.** Or you may complete an online application at www.socialsecurity.gov beginning July 1, 2005. We will review your application and send you a letter to let you know if you qualify for extra help. We also will send you information about the Medicare Prescription Drug program and tell you what you should do next.

If you need help completing the application, call Social Security at **1-800-772-1213** (TTY **1-800-325-0778**). You can find more information at www.socialsecurity.gov.

If you need information about the new Medicare Prescription Drug program, call 1-800-MEDICARE (TTY 1-877-486-2048) or visit www.medicare.gov.

Mailing your application today will allow us to give you a quicker decision about whether you qualify for the extra help.

Jo Anne B. Barnhart
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Commissioner

Form SSA-1020-OCR-SM (3-2005)

