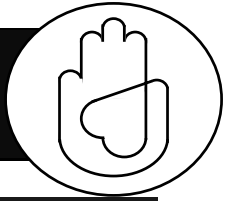


ELDERCARE UPDATE



Partnership for Eldercare: Partnering with Con Edison to help you with the needs of your aging loved ones.
SUMMER 2005

MEDICARE PRESCRIPTION PLANS: What You Need to Know

If you have an older relative who receives Medicare benefits, there are major changes planned for 2006. Although the information may be overwhelming, please know that **Partnership for Eldercare** is on hand with the information and guidance you may need.

Beginning in January 2006, new prescription drug plans will be available to people with Medicare. Insurance companies and other private companies will work with Medicare to offer these drug plans. These plans are different from the Medicare-approved drug discount cards, which phase out by May 15, 2006, or when enrollment in a Medicare Prescription drug plan takes effect, if earlier.

Does my relative have to get the Medicare prescription drug benefit? No, but unless he/she has drug coverage that is at least as good as Medicare's [your current drug plan will let you know] you need to **enroll between November 15, 2005 and May 15, 2006** to avoid a premium penalty for late enrollment.

If your relative does not have drug coverage at this time, he/she should consider enrolling in the Medicare prescription drug plan. Like all insurance, the new drug plan may cost more at first, but it will offer protection should prescription costs suddenly increase

Once enrolled, can my relative switch plans? He/she may change plans once a year between November 15 and December 31.

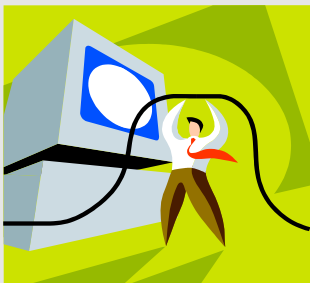
Will all of his/her drugs be covered? Each drug plan will have its own formulary and network of participating pharmacies. It is important to compare plans to get the best coverage for your relative's needs.

How much will my relative have to pay for this prescription coverage? In 2006, he/she will pay a monthly premium [around \$37] and an annual deductible [up to \$250.] There will also be co-payments on prescriptions. Costs will vary depending on the plan your relative chooses.

If your older relative's *income is low*, he/she may be eligible for extra help and may not have to pay a premium or deductible. To qualify, a single person would need to have an income below \$14,355 and assets lower than \$11,500. The figures are slightly higher for couples. If you believe your relative may qualify for this assistance, please contact **Partnership for Eldercare** for more information.

How will the Medicare prescription drug plans work with the drug coverage my relative has now? That will depend on his/her current coverage. Some plans [like retiree plans and state funded programs], will supplement Medicare coverage. Call the company that provides the current drug coverage to find out how it will work with the Medicare drug plan.

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is now *online!***



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www.partnershipforeldercare.org



If your relative is currently getting prescriptions through *Medicaid and also has Medicare*, he/she must get prescriptions through a *Medicare* drug plan beginning in January 2006. If a specific plan is not chosen by December 2005, a plan will be randomly assigned. Medicaid/Medicare recipients will automatically get extra help in paying for Medicare drug costs.

How do we find out about different plans?

Detailed information won't be available until the fall of 2005. Medicare recipients can expect to receive several mailings from Medicare and Social Security Administration.

Partnership for Eldercare is monitoring the situation constantly and will be able to provide you with the latest information on Medicare prescription drug plans.

Contact us at **1.800.94.ELDER** [outside of NYC] or **212.442.3113** or by email: cpietris@aging.nyc.gov, to receive a copy of *Medicare Basics: A Guide for Caregivers* along with additional information on the Medicare prescription drug plans.

Our counselors are available from Monday through Friday, 9am – 5pm EST. Please call for a confidential consultation.



Partnership for Eldercare

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