

Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage Important Dates for Consumers



- May 2005** The Social Security Administration (SSA) starts mailing subsidy applications to low-income consumers to help with the costs of the Medicare Prescription Drug Benefit.
- Medicare begins sending notices to **dual eligibles** to tell them they automatically qualify for this help and do not need to apply. **Dual eligibles** have both Medicare and Medical Assistance (MA).
- July 1, 2005** Consumers can start applying for the low-income subsidies at either the local Social Security Office or at local County Assistance Offices and online at www.socialsecurity.gov/medicare.
- Early Fall 2005** Medicare will notify **full dual eligibles** that they will be automatically enrolled into a Prescription Drug Plan (PDP) if they fail to enroll in a plan on their own before December 31, 2005. **Full dual eligibles** get their prescription drug coverage through MA.
- Fall 2005** Department of Public Welfare will send notices to **full dual eligibles** to tell them they will be losing their prescription drug coverage through MA on December 31, 2005.
- October 1, 2005** Medicare PDPs will start to market their benefits.
- October 13, 2005** Consumers can compare plan benefits on www.medicare.gov or by calling 1-800-MEDICARE. CMS will mail consumers information about Medicare PDPs available to them.
- November 15, 2005** Consumers start to enroll in Medicare PDPs.
- January 1, 2006** Medicare Prescription Drug Benefit begins. **Full dual eligibles** now get their prescription drugs through Medicare instead of MA.
- April 2006** Medicare will notify **other dual eligibles** that they will be automatically enrolled into a Medicare PDP effective June 1, 2006 if they have not enrolled into a plan on their own by May 15, 2006. **Other dual eligibles** include individuals who have MA benefits that do not include prescription drug coverage (i.e., help paying their Medicare premium).
- May 15, 2006** The initial election period for the Medicare Prescription Drug Benefit ends. Consumers who have not enrolled into a plan may have to pay a higher premium if they enroll at a later date.



HELPLINE: 1-800-274-3258 (voice); 1-866-236-6310 (TTY)
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