

Medicare Part D Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

WHAT IS “MEDICARE PART D?”

Medicare Part D is the new prescription drug benefit available to everyone enrolled in Medicare. For those who have signed up or have been automatically enrolled, coverage begins on January 1, 2006. Competing private insurance plans will provide coverage – each plan has its own formulary, list of pharmacies, and set of copayments, premiums and deductibles.

DOES EVERYONE IN MEDICARE NEED TO SIGN UP FOR MEDICARE PART D?

No. Some people may choose not to sign up for the new benefit. Many retirees, such as former Baltimore City employees, can continue to get benefits through their employers.

Others may be automatically enrolled in Medicare Part D. For example, people who are receiving both Medicare and Medicaid will be automatically assigned to a plan.

Many other individuals on Medicare will have the option of signing up for the drug benefit.



HOW CAN I FIND OUT WHETHER MEDICARE PART D IS RIGHT FOR ME?

1. Call MEDICARE at 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227) to ask questions.
2. Call Social Security at 1-800-772-1213 to find out if you qualify for extra help paying for prescription drugs through Medicare Part D.
3. Call the city's Commission on Aging and Retirement Education (CARE) at 410-396-2273 to discuss enrolling in a new prescription plan.

I AM SIGNED UP FOR MEDICARE PART D. WHAT CAN I DO TO MAKE SURE THE TRANSITION GOES WELL?

1. Refill prescriptions before January 1 to provide a buffer during the transition period.
2. Talk to your doctor about any concerns you have about specific medications.
3. Have a back-up plan in case of problems. For example, sign up for a “ScriptSave” prescription discount card, offered by the Baltimore City Health Department to all city residents, employees, and retirees. This card can be used at participating pharmacies to obtain discounts on certain medications. To enroll, call 1-800-700-3957 or go to www.scriptsave.com (Group # 576). *Please note: not all pharmacies participate in the ScriptSave program.*

WHAT SPECIAL STEPS IS BALTIMORE CITY TAKING TO IDENTIFY AND RESOLVE PROBLEMS WITH MEDICARE PART D?

On January 1, 2006, the Baltimore City Health Department and CARE will implement the Medicare Part D Surveillance and Response initiative.

Through this effort, pharmacists in the city will report problems with Medicare Part D to the Health Department, which will then arrange follow-up with patients by CARE within 72 hours. The Health Department will also provide 24-hour support to pharmacies to promote access to medications.

I AM A BALTIMORE CITY RESIDENT, BUT MY PHARMACY IS OUTSIDE OF THE CITY. CAN I STILL GET HELP IF I HAVE PROBLEMS GETTING MY MEDICATIONS AFTER JANUARY 1?

Yes, help is available to all city residents who need it during this transition, regardless of the location of your pharmacy.

For help, you can call CARE at 410-396-2273. You can also call 1-800-MEDICARE (633-4227).

Also, your pharmacist can report a problem to the Health Department, which will arrange follow-up by CARE.

