



New Medicare Prescription Drug Benefit Starting January 1, 2006

Dear Medicare Beneficiary:

As part of a new Medicare law, the Medicare program will now provide prescription drug coverage. People currently on Medicare, but getting their medications through Medicaid, will automatically be switched to the new program. For most other people on Medicare, enrollment is voluntary, but it will be the best or only way to get access to life-saving prescription drugs. Depending on where you live, you will have several choices as to which Medicare prescription drug plan to join. Also, if you are low-income, you can apply for a subsidy or extra help to cover the costs.

This Tool Kit, entitled *The New Medicare Prescription Drug Benefit: An HIV/AIDS Enrollment Tool Kit*, is designed to help make sure that you are aware of the new drug benefit and the important changes that are about to take place - changes that could have a dramatic impact on how you get the prescription drugs you need. The Tool Kit was prepared through a collaborative Medicare drug benefit education campaign involving the Treatment Access Expansion Project, HIV Medicine Association, American Academy of HIV Medicine, and National Association of People with AIDS. Together, we are organizations representing consumers, case managers, advocates and health care providers. We have designed this Tool Kit to provide the following:

- Answers to key questions about coverage and costs under the new Medicare drug benefit.
- Information to assist you in selecting the right prescription drug plan and to help you receive an "extra help" low-income subsidy if you are eligible.
- Contact information to help you learn more about the Medicare drug benefit and enrollment assistance.

We hope this Tool Kit helps to make the transition to your Medicare prescription drug plan easier.

Turn this page over for a description of the documents that are in this Tool Kit.

THE NEW MEDICARE PRESCRIPTION DRUG BENEFIT: AN HIV/AIDS ENROLLMENT TOOL KIT

ISSUES TO CONSIDER IN CHOOSING THE RIGHT MEDICARE DRUG PLAN

This document explains why enrolling in the Medicare drug program is so important. It addresses particular concerns for people who are on both Medicare and Medicaid and for those who get their prescription drugs through an AIDS Drug Assistance Program. It outlines issues to consider in choosing the best plan for you and explains how to learn more about the drug plans that are available in your area. It lets you know that individual assistance in selecting the best drug plan for you is available by calling 1-800-MEDICARE or online at www.medicare.gov.

THE EXTRA HELP LOW-INCOME SUBSIDY: FINANCIAL HELP TO PAY FOR YOUR PRESCRIPTION DRUG NEEDS

This document explains the eligibility requirements for the "extra help" low-income subsidy. It describes how a subsidy will greatly reduce the cost of participating in a Medicare drug plan. It also lets you know that you can apply for an extra help low-income subsidy at your state Medicaid office, by calling the Social Security Administration at 1-800-772-1213, or online at www.socialsecurity.gov.

ATTENTION EVERYONE ON MEDICARE

This poster has been printed on heavier paper so that it can easily be distributed and hung in doctors' offices, health care centers, AIDS service organizations, and other community based organizations. The poster provides some basic information that will help to maximize successful enrollment in the new drug program. It briefly describes the issues to consider in selecting a Medicare drug plan and where you can learn more about your drug plan options. It also encourages low-income Medicare beneficiaries to apply for an "extra help" subsidy.

MEDICARE BENEFICIARY WORKSHEET

This worksheet helps you to compare your prescription drug needs with the Medicare drug plans available in your area. It can help you to figure out which plan will provide the best access to the drugs you need, is the most cost-effective, and will allow you to get your prescription drugs at a convenient pharmacy. All of these issues are important when choosing the right drug plan for you.

THE NEW MEDICARE DRUG BENEFIT: ENROLLMENT INFORMATION FOR HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS

This document gives health care providers information on why enrollment in a Medicare drug plan is very important to most people living with HIV and AIDS. It contains information on how to assist patients in applying for an extra help low-income subsidy and selecting the right drug plan. It provides a timeline of the steps patients need to take over the next few months to secure the right prescription drug plan.