

# Oklahoma Medicaid Pharmacy Update

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**Dear Pharmacy Provider,**

## **Medicare Part D Prescription Drug Benefit**

Many of your patients have received information about the new Medicare Part D Prescription Drug Benefit. We know that your patients will turn to you for answers about their prescription benefit and we want to share with you some resources for information about Medicare Part D.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) have a webpage devoted to the needs of providers with respect to the Part D benefit. This webpage may be accessed at <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/medicarereform/pdbma/provider.asp>.

Provider associations, such as the Oklahoma State Medical Association and the Oklahoma Pharmacists Association, as well as their national counterparts, are also great resources for learning about the new Part D benefit.

For those patients who are eligible for both Medicare and Medicaid, their prescription coverage will be provided by Medicare instead of Medicaid beginning January 1, 2006. This will be a significant change for them and for you. Most will be auto-enrolled into a prescription drug plan. The Oklahoma PDP list can be accessed at the following website:

<http://www.medicare.gov/medicarereform/mapdpdocs/PDPLandscapeok.pdf>

Oklahoma Medicaid will continue to provide limited coverage for those drugs not included in Part D, such as Claritin-OTC, Prilosec-OTC, barbiturates and the benzodiazepines. The list of drugs that Oklahoma Medicaid will continue to cover for dual eligibles can be accessed here:

<http://www.okhca.org/provider/types/pharmacy/covereddrugs.asp>

Those who do not qualify for Medicaid, but are low income are encouraged to apply for a program called "Extra Help". This program is administered by the Social Security Administration. "Extra Help" will pay the costs of premiums and deductibles as well as reduce cost-sharing and co-payments for qualified individuals. They must submit an application to receive this help. More information is available at <http://www.ssa.gov/organizations/medicareoutreach2>. Patients who are eligible for both Medicare and Medicaid are automatically qualified to receive the subsidy.

Medicare-eligible patients who now have some form of private prescription coverage will need to make a decision whether to continue with their current carrier or switch to a Medicare PDP. Their decision will be based on a number of factors including PDP network pharmacy participation and formulary coverage. It is important to refer these patients to their current source of prescription coverage for accurate information. Unless their current plan is considered "creditable coverage", they will be subject to a penalty for late enrollment if they do not enroll in Part D at their first available opportunity. Information on "creditable coverage" can be found here: <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/medicarereform/Credcovrg.asp>

The late enrollment penalty will also apply when a patient who currently has no prescription coverage decides to apply for Part D after their first open enrollment period. The penalty is added to the monthly premium for the remainder of the patient's enrollment in Part D. Patients may call 1-800-MEDICARE or visit the [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov) website for further information.

**Thank you for your continued service to Oklahoma's Medicaid clients.**