

New Medicare Prescription Coverage

The 6 month enrollment period for Medicare's new prescription drug coverage runs November 15 to May 15, 2006. Several tools are available to help Medicare beneficiaries make better decisions about drug coverage plans. Medicare beneficiaries can now choose between drug plans w/ a deductible below the standard \$250. Also, beneficiaries will be able to find plans w/ premiums of \$20 a month or less.

For general information and questions, call 1-800-633-4227 (1-800-MEDICARE), or visit www.medicare.gov; this Website includes the 'Getting Started' brochure and other valuable information. The "Medicare and You" 2006 handbook is available by calling the hotline, and gives a summary of benefits, rights, and answers to frequently asked questions. Another resource, the Prescription Drug Plan Finder, online at www.medicare.gov, offers a comparison of drug plans by cost & coverage. In addition, the Medicare Prescription Drug Plan Cost Estimator, online at www.medicare.gov/medicarereform/MPDP_cost_estimator.asp describes the potential savings that people Medicare recipients can anticipate. Another resource, BenefitsCheckUpRx, online at www.BenefitsCheckUpRx.org, assesses drug coverage needs, what coverage they are eligible for, and their rights and options. Also, the Formulary Finder, online at (<http://plancompare.medicare.gov/formularyfinder/selectstate.asp>), allows a user to enter a combination of drugs to find out which plans in an area have formularies that cover these drugs.

Other Contact Information:

Center for Medicaid & State Operations, Lisa J. Wilson, lisa.wilson@cms.hhs.gov, (410) 786-3499
The Ohio Department of Insurance's Senior Health Insurance Information Program (OSHIIP) 1-800-686-1578.

Medicare Rx Access Network 224-0794

Access to Benefits Coalition 1-800-648-1176

Central Ohio Area Agency on Aging 1-800-589-7277