



**The National Asian Pacific  
Center on Aging (NAPCA)  
Presents:**

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**Get Help Paying for Your  
Healthcare and Prescription  
Drug Costs**

The National Asian Pacific Center on Aging's mission is to serve as the nation's leading advocacy organization committed to the dignity, well-being, and quality of life of Asian Pacific Americans (APA) in their senior years.

This booklet includes information about the following:

- Extra Help Paying for Medicare Prescriptions
- Medicare Savings Programs
- Medicaid
- State Prescription Assistance Programs (SPAP)
- Programs of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE)
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Benefits
- Children's Health Insurance Program

Keep all information you get from Medicare, Social Security, your Medicare health or prescription drug plan, Medigap insurer, or employer or union. This may include notices of award or denial, Annual Notices of Change, notices of creditable prescription drug coverage, or Medicare Summary Notices. You may need these documents to apply for the programs explained in this section. Also keep copies of any applications you submit.

## **Programs for People with Limited Income and Resources**

If you have limited income and resources, you might qualify for help to pay for some health care and prescription drug costs.

The U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and the Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands provide their residents with help for Medicare drug costs. This help isn't the same as the Extra Help described below.

## **Extra Help Paying for Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage (Part D)**

You may qualify for Extra Help, also called the low-income subsidy (LIS), from Medicare to pay prescription drug costs if your yearly income and resources were below the following limits in 2010:

- Single person—Income less than \$16,335 and resources less than \$12,640
- Married person living with a spouse and no other dependants—Income less than \$22,065 and resources less than \$25,260

These amounts may change next year. You may qualify even if you have a higher income (like if you still work, or if you live in Alaska or Hawaii, or have dependants living with you). Resources include money in a checking or savings account, stocks, and bonds. Resources don't include your home, car, household items, burial plot, up to \$1,500 for burial expenses (per person), or life insurance policies.

If you qualify for Extra Help and join a Medicare drug plan, you will get the following:

- Help paying your Medicare drug plan's monthly premium, any yearly deductible, coinsurance, and copayments
- No coverage gap
- No late enrollment penalty

You automatically qualify for Extra Help if you have Medicare and meet one of these conditions:

- You have full Medicaid coverage.
- You get help from your state Medicaid program

paying your Part B premiums (in a Medicare Savings Program).

- You get Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits. To let you know you automatically qualify for Extra Help, Medicare will mail you a purple letter that you should keep for your records. You don't need to apply for Extra Help if you get this letter.
- If you aren't already in a Medicare drug plan, you must join one to get this Extra Help.
- If you don't join a Medicare drug plan, Medicare may enroll you in one. If Medicare enrolls you in a plan, Medicare will send you a yellow or green letter letting you know when your coverage begins.
- Different plans cover different drugs. Check to see if the plan you are enrolled in covers the drugs you use and if you can go to the pharmacies you want. Compare with other plans in your area.
- If you're getting Extra Help, you can switch to another Medicare drug plan anytime. Your coverage will be effective the first day of the next month.
- If you have Medicaid and live in certain institutions (like a nursing home), you pay nothing for your covered prescription drugs.

If you don't want to join a Medicare drug plan (for example, because you want only your employer or union coverage), call the plan listed in your letter, or call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227). TTY users should call 1-877-486-2048. Tell them you don't want to be in a Medicare drug plan (you want to "opt out"). If you continue to qualify for Extra Help or if your employer or union

coverage is creditable prescription drug coverage, you won't pay a penalty if you join later.

If you have employer or union coverage and you join a Medicare drug plan, you may lose your employer or union drug, and possibly health coverage even if you qualify for Extra Help. Your dependants may also lose their coverage. Call your employer's benefits administrator for more information before you join.

- If you didn't automatically qualify for Extra Help, you can apply:
- Visit [www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov) to apply online.
- Call Social Security at 1-800-772-1213 (interpreters are available upon request) to apply by phone or to get a paper application. TTY users should call 1-800-325-0778.
- Visit your State Medical Assistance (Medicaid) office. Call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227), and say "Medicaid" to get the telephone number, or visit [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov). TTY users should call 1-877-486-2048.

Note: You can apply for Extra Help at anytime. With your consent, Social Security will forward information to your state to start an application for a Medicare Savings Program.

Drug costs for most people who qualify will be no more than \$2.50 for each generic drug and \$6.30 for each brand-name drug. Look on the Extra Help letters you get,

or contact your plan to find out your exact costs.

To get answers to your questions about Extra Help and help choosing a plan, call the NAPCA Helpline at 1-800-336-2722. You can also call 1-800-MEDICARE. Medicare gets information from your state or Social Security that tells whether you qualify for Extra Help. If Medicare doesn't have the right information, you may be paying the wrong amount for your prescription drug coverage.

If you automatically qualify for Extra Help, you can show your drug plan the purple, yellow, or green letter you got from Medicare as proof that you qualify. If you applied for Extra Help, you can show your "Notice of Award" from Social Security as proof that you qualify.

You can also give your plan documents (also called "Best Available Evidence") as proof that you qualify for Extra Help. Your plan must accept these documents. These documents must show that you were eligible for Medicaid during a month after June of last year. If you aren't already enrolled in a Medicare drug plan and paid for prescriptions since you qualified for Extra Help, you may be able to get back part of what you paid. Keep your receipts, and call Medicare's Limited Income Newly Eligible Transition (NET) Program at 1-800-783-1307 for more information. TTY users should call 1-877-801-0369.

For more information, visit <http://go.usa.gov/loo> to view the fact sheet "Are You Paying the Right Amount for Your Prescriptions?" You can also call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227) to see if a copy can be mailed to you. TTY users should call 1-877-486-2048.

## Medicare Savings Programs (Help with Medicare Costs)

States have programs that pay Medicare premiums cases, and in some cases, may also pay Part A and Part B deductibles, coinsurance, and copayments. These programs help people with Medicare save money each year.

To qualify for a Medicare Savings Program, you must meet all of these conditions:

- Have Part A
- If you are single, have monthly income less than \$1,246 and resources less than \$6,680
- If you are married and living together, have monthly income less than \$1,675 and resources less than \$10,020

Note: These amounts may change each year. Many states figure your income and resources differently, so you may qualify in your state even if your income or resources are higher. Resources include money in a checking or savings account, stocks, and bonds. Resources don't include your home, car, burial plot, burial expenses up to your state's limit, furniture, or other household items.

### For More Information

- Call or visit your State Medical Assistance (Medicaid) office, and ask for information on Medicare Savings Programs. The names of these programs and how they work may vary by state. Call if you think you qualify for any of these programs, even if you aren't sure.
- Call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227), and say

“Medicaid” to get the telephone number for your state. TTY users should call 1-877-486-2048.

- Visit <http://go.usa.gov/loA> to view the brochure, “Get Help With Your Medicare Costs: Getting Started.” You can also call 1-800-MEDICARE to see if a copy can be mailed to you.

## Medicaid

- Medicaid is a joint Federal and state program that helps pay medical costs if you have limited income and resources and meet other eligibility requirements. Some people qualify for both Medicare and Medicaid. These people are also called “dual eligibles.”
- If you have Medicare and full Medicaid coverage, most of your health care costs are covered. You have the option of Original Medicare or a Medicare Advantage Plan (like an HMO or PPO) for your Medicare coverage.
- - If you have Medicare and Medicaid, Medicare provides you with prescription drug coverage instead of Medicaid. Medicaid may still cover some drugs and other care Medicare doesn’t cover.
- People with Medicaid may get coverage for services that Medicare doesn’t fully cover, such as nursing home and home health care.
- Medicaid programs vary from state to state. They may also have different names, such as “Medical Assistance” or “Medi-Cal.”
- Each state has different Medicaid eligibility income and resource limits and other eligibility require-

ments.

- In some states, you may need Medicare to be eligible for Medicaid.
- Call your State Medical Assistance (Medicaid) office for more information and to see if you qualify. Call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227) and say “Medicaid” to get the telephone number for your State Medical Assistance (Medicaid) office. TTY users should call 1-877-486-2048. You can also visit [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov).

### **State Pharmacy Assistance Programs (SPAPs)**

Many states have State Pharmacy Assistance Programs (SPAPs) that help certain people pay for prescription drugs based on financial need, age, or medical condition. Each SPAP makes its own rules about how to provide drug coverage to its members. Depending on your state, the SPAP will help you in different ways. To find out about the SPAP in your state, call your State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP).

### **Programs of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE)**

PACE is a Medicare and Medicaid program offered in many states that allows people who need a nursing home level of care to remain in the community.

### **Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Benefits**

SSI is a cash benefit paid by Social Security to people with limited income and resources who are disabled, blind, or 65 or older. SSI benefits help people meet basic needs for

food, clothing, and shelter. SSI benefits aren't the same as Social Security benefits.

You can visit [www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov), and use the “Benefit Eligibility Screening Tool” to find out if you may be eligible for SSI or other benefits. Call Social Security at 1-800-772-1213 (interpreters are available upon request), or contact your local Social Security office for more information. TTY users should call 1-800-325-0778.

Note: People who live in Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, or American Samoa can't get SSI.

**Programs for People Who Live in the U.S. Territories** There are programs in Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, and American Samoa to help people with limited income and resources pay their Medicare costs. Programs vary in these areas. Call your local Medical Assistance (Medicaid) office to find out more about their rules, or call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227) and say “Medicaid” for more information. TTY users should call 1-877-486-2048. You can also visit [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov).

### **Children's Health Insurance Program**

Do you have children or grandchildren who need health insurance? The Children's Health Insurance Program provides low cost health insurance coverage to children in families who earn too much income to qualify for Medicaid but can't afford private health insurance.

In many states, uninsured children 18 and younger, whose

families earn up to \$44,100 a year (for a family of four) are eligible for free or low-cost health insurance that pays for doctor visits, dental care, prescription drugs, hospitalizations, and much more. Pregnant women and other adults may also be eligible for coverage. Each state has its own program, with its own eligibility rules. Call 1-877-KIDS-NOW (1-877-543-7669), or visit [www.insurekidsnow.gov](http://www.insurekidsnow.gov) to learn more.

The information contained in this booklet was adapted from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services' "Medicare and You" handbook 2011 and 2012

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