

DEPARTMENT OF AGING

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DEPT. OF PUBLIC HEALTH
BOARD OF PHARMACY
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March 22, 2006

Dear Colleague:

On January 1, 2006, the new Medicare Part D (Prescription Drug Program) began and Medicare beneficiaries still need lots of help in transitioning to the new benefits. Because your organization directly serves many Medicare beneficiaries, we are once again asking for your assistance in the further education of California's 4.1 million Medicare beneficiaries about Medicare Part D. Your distribution of our initial informational flyer ("Medicare Is Changing! What You Can Do To Take the Next Step.") was much appreciated and proved to be of significant benefit to our mutual constituency.

Feedback from Health Insurance Counseling and Advocacy Program (HICAP) Counselors across the State has alerted the California Department of Aging (CDA) to beneficiaries' continuing difficulties in obtaining medications which should fall into the transition coverage provision of their Prescription Drug Plan. In response to this and other reported problems, CDA is continuing to produce a series of informative flyers to educate beneficiaries regarding their options if problems occur when using their Medicare Part D benefit.

The enclosed document ("**YOU HAVE RIGHTS!!!**") is the second in this series of flyers. It is specifically designed to alert Medicare beneficiaries to their rights in obtaining refills of currently prescribed medications under their Prescription Drug Plan's transition provision, and to advise them about applying for an exception for medically necessary medications which are not covered in their Plan's formulary.

We ask your assistance in disseminating this information to your constituents. This simple handout will help individuals understand what they must do and whom they should contact for additional guidance. Thank you for your partnership in this important effort.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Wayne R. Lindley".

Wayne R. Lindley
State SHIP-HICAP Director

Enclosure





YOU HAVE RIGHTS!!!

WHEN YOU FIRST USE YOUR NEW MEDICARE PART D PRESCRIPTION DRUG PLAN

If you are told by your pharmacy that your Prescription Plan “does not cover” some of the medications you are currently taking...

DON'T GIVE UP – SPEAK UP!!!

You have the right to a 30-day refill of your *CURRENT* medications during the first 30 days your Plan is in effect. *

Ask your pharmacist to get your medicine through your Prescription Plan's “Transition” policy.

▪ WHAT TO DO NEXT

Talk to your Doctor as soon as possible about your medication options.

Your Doctor will determine which medications will work best for you.

If the medications you need are not covered by your Plan, your Doctor can start an “Exception Process” with your Prescription Plan to get you the medications that you need.

▪ ADDITIONAL OPTIONS

- If your current Medicare Prescription Drug Plan is not meeting your needs, you have the right to change your Medicare Prescription Drug Plan one time before May 15th, 2006. You can also change your Prescription Plan annually during the “Open Enrollment Period,” November 15 - December 31, 2006.
- If you have full-benefit Medi-Cal and Medicare, you have the right to change your Prescription Plan once a month.
- Call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227) for help in comparing and choosing another plan or for any other assistance you might need with Medicare Part D.
- Or call your local HICAP office at 1-800-434-0222.