



June 2005
Medicare-Approved Drug Discount Card

\$600 Transitional Assistance

If your income is below a certain level, Medicare may pay your annual fee for a Medicare-approved drug discount card and pay up to \$600 in 2005 toward your prescription drug costs.

Who is eligible to get \$600 from Medicare to help pay for prescriptions?

You may be able to get \$600 in 2005 to pay for your prescriptions if

- ◆ you have Medicare Part A and/or Part B, and
- ◆ your income is not more than \$12,920 (\$17,321 for a couple), or you are enrolled in a Medicare Savings Program (the state is paying your Medicare Part B Premium).

Income includes money that you receive through retirement benefits from Social Security, Railroad Retirement, the Federal government, or other sources; benefits you receive for a disability or as a Veteran; and any other sources you would report for tax purposes.

You cannot get \$600 from Medicare to help with your prescriptions if you receive prescription drug coverage from any of the following:

- ◆ TRICARE for Life
- ◆ FEHBP (Federal Employees Health Benefit Plan)
- ◆ An employer group health plan or other health insurance coverage (other than a Medicare supplemental policy).

Your savings and other assets are not considered for the \$600 assistance.

How do I apply for the \$600?

Fill out the form and send it to the card sponsor. The card sponsor will send your completed form to Medicare and Medicare will decide if you qualify. If you qualify for the \$600, Medicare will also pay your annual fee for the discount card you choose.

When can I apply for the \$600?

You can apply anytime now through the end of 2005. The chart below shows how much you will get depending on when you join in 2005:

| If you join between | You will get |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|
| January 1- March 31, 2005 | \$600 |
| April 1 – June 30, 2005 | \$450 |
| July 1 – September 30, 2005 | \$300 |
| October 1 – December 31, 2005 | \$150 |

What happens if I don't get the \$600?

If you apply for the \$600 from Medicare and you are denied, you can appeal. The card sponsor will send you a letter explaining how to get a review.

How do I use the \$600 to pay for prescriptions?

If you are approved, the money will be applied to your discount card. Each time you fill a covered prescription you will have to pay 5% or 10% of the cost, depending on your income. The pharmacy will subtract the rest of the prescription cost from the \$600 on your card. You cannot use the \$600 to buy benzodiazepines, over-the-counter drugs, drugs used for cosmetic purposes and a few other drugs.

What happens when my \$600 runs out?

When you have used all of your \$600, you can continue to use your discount card to save money on your prescriptions. Note: If you also received the \$600 assistance in 2004, any left over amount can be used in 2005.

SHIP can help you compare the drug discount cards available in Maine and help you apply for the \$600 assistance.
Call **1-877-353-3771 (Voice and TTY 1-800-750-5353)** for more information.

SHIP (State Health Insurance Assistance Program) is funded through a grant from Medicare and sponsored in Maine by the Bureau of Elder and Adult Services, Maine's area agencies on aging and Legal Services for the Elderly. SHIP Counselors help people with Medicare make health insurance decisions. They do not sell insurance or recommend policies.