

not preparing an analysis for section 1102(b) of the Act.

Section 202 of the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act of 1995 also requires that agencies assess anticipated costs and benefits before issuing any rule that may result in expenditure in any 1 year by State, local, or tribal governments, in the aggregate, or by the private sector, of \$110 million. This notice has no consequential effect on State, local, or tribal governments or on the private sector.

Executive Order 13132 establishes certain requirements that an agency must meet when it promulgates a proposed rule (and subsequent final rule) that imposes substantial direct requirement costs on State and local governments, preempts State law, or otherwise has federalism implications. This notice has no consequential effect on State or local governments.

In accordance with the provisions of Executive Order 12866, this notice was reviewed by the Office of Management and Budget.

Authority: Sections 1813(b)(2) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395e-2(b)(2)).

(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Program No. 93.773, Medicare—Hospital Insurance)

Dated: August 30, 2004.

Mark B. McClellan,

Administrator, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services.

Dated: September 1, 2004.

Tommy G. Thompson,

Secretary.

[FR Doc. 04-20414 Filed 9-3-04; 5:00 pm]

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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services

[CMS-8022-N]

RIN 0938-AN15

Medicare Program; Part A Premium for 2005 for the Uninsured Aged and for Certain Disabled Individuals Who Have Exhausted Other Entitlement

AGENCY: Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), HHS.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: This notice announces the Hospital Insurance premium for calendar year 2005 under Medicare's Hospital Insurance program (Part A) for the uninsured, not otherwise eligible aged (hereafter known as the "uninsured aged") and for certain

disabled individuals who have exhausted other entitlement. The monthly Medicare Part A premium for the 12 months beginning January 1, 2005 for these individuals is \$375. The reduced premium for certain other individuals as described in this notice is \$206. Section 1818(d) of the Social Security Act specifies the method to be used to determine these amounts.

EFFECTIVE DATE: This notice is effective January 1, 2005.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Clare McFarland, (410) 786-6390.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Background

Section 1818 of the Social Security Act (the Act) provides for voluntary enrollment in the Medicare Hospital Insurance program (Medicare Part A), subject to payment of a monthly premium, of certain persons aged 65 and older who are uninsured under the Old-Age, Survivors and Disability Insurance (OASDI) program or the Railroad Retirement Act and do not otherwise meet the requirements for entitlement to Medicare Part A. (Persons insured under the OASDI program or the Railroad Retirement Act and certain others do not have to pay premiums for hospital insurance.)

Section 1818(d) of the Act requires us to estimate, on an average per capita basis, the amount to be paid from the Federal Hospital Insurance Trust Fund for services performed and related administrative costs incurred in the following calendar year with respect to individuals aged 65 and over who will be entitled to benefits under Medicare Part A. We must then determine, during September of each year, the monthly actuarial rate for the following year (the per capita amount estimated above divided by 12) and publish the dollar amount for the monthly premium in the succeeding calendar year. If the premium is not a multiple of \$1, the premium is rounded to the nearest multiple of \$1 (or, if it is a multiple of 50 cents but not of \$1, it is rounded to the next highest \$1). The 2004 premium under this method was \$343 and was effective January 1, 2004. (See 68 FR 61002, October 24, 2003.)

Section 1818A of the Act provides for voluntary enrollment in Medicare Part A, subject to payment of a monthly premium, of certain disabled individuals who have exhausted other entitlement. These are individuals who are not currently entitled to Part A coverage, but who were entitled to coverage due to a disabling impairment under section 226(b) of the Act, and who would still be entitled to Part A

coverage if their earnings had not exceeded the statutorily defined substantial gainful activity amount (section 223(d)(4) of the Act).

Section 1818A(d)(2) of the Act specifies that the provisions relating to premiums under section 1818(d) through (f) of the Act for the aged will also apply to certain disabled individuals as described above.

Section 13508 of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1993 (Pub. L. 103-66) amended section 1818(d) of the Act to provide for a reduction in the premium amount for certain voluntary (section 1818 and 1818A) enrollees. The reduction applies to an individual who is eligible to buy into the Medicare Part A program and who, as of the last day of the previous month—

- Had at least 30 quarters of coverage under title II of the Act;
- Was married, and had been married for the previous 1-year period, to a person who had at least 30 quarters of coverage;
- Had been married to a person for at least 1 year at the time of the person's death if, at the time of death, the person had at least 30 quarters of coverage; or
- Is divorced from a person and had been married to the person for at least 10 years at the time of the divorce if, at the time of the divorce, the person had at least 30 quarters of coverage.

Section 1818(d)(4)(A) of the Act specifies that the premium that these individuals will pay for calendar year 2005 will be equal to the premium for uninsured aged enrollees reduced by 45 percent.

II. Monthly Premium Amount for 2005

The monthly premium for the uninsured aged and certain disabled individuals who have exhausted other entitlement, for the 12 months beginning January 1, 2005, is \$375.

The monthly premium for those individuals subject to the 45 percent reduction in the monthly premium is \$206.

III. Monthly Premium Rate Calculation

As discussed in section I of this notice, the monthly Medicare Part A premium is equal to the estimated monthly actuarial rate for 2005 rounded to the nearest multiple of \$1 and equals one-twelfth of the average per capita amount, which is determined by projecting the number of individuals aged 65 and over entitled to Hospital Insurance and the benefits and administrative costs that will be incurred on their behalf.

The steps involved in projecting these future costs to the Federal Hospital Insurance Trust Fund are:

- Establishing the present cost of services furnished to beneficiaries, by type of service, to serve as a projection base;

- Projecting increases in payment amounts for each of the service types; and

- Projecting increases in administrative costs.

We base our projections for 2005 on: (a) current historical data, and (b) projection assumptions derived from current law and the Mid-Session Review of the President's Fiscal Year 2005 Budget.

We estimate that in calendar year 2005, 34.89 million people aged 65 and over will be entitled to benefits (without premium payment) and that they will incur \$156.827 billion of benefits and related administrative costs. Thus, the estimated monthly average per capita amount is \$374.57 and the monthly premium is \$375. The full monthly premium reduced by 45 percent is \$206.

IV. Costs to Beneficiaries

The 2005 premium of \$375 is about 9 percent higher than the 2004 premium of \$343.

We estimate that approximately 433,000 enrollees will voluntarily enroll in Medicare Part A by paying the full premium. We estimate an additional 1,000 enrollees will pay the reduced premium. We estimate that the aggregate cost to enrollees paying these premiums will be about \$166 million in 2005 over the amount that they paid in 2004. We estimate that the total cost, in 2005, to enrollees paying these premiums will be about \$1.951 billion.

V. Waiver of Notice of Proposed Rulemaking

We are not using notice and comment rulemaking in this notification of Part A premiums for 2005, as that procedure is unnecessary because of the lack of discretion in the statutory formula that is used to calculate the premium and the solely ministerial function that this notice serves. The Administrative Procedure Act permits agencies to waive notice and comment rulemaking when this notice and public comment thereon are unnecessary. On this basis, we waive publication of a proposed notice and a solicitation of public comments.

VI. Regulatory Impact Statement

We have examined the impacts of this notice as required by Executive Order 12866 (September 1993, Regulatory Planning and Review), the Regulatory Flexibility Act (RFA) (September 16, 1980, Pub. L. 96-354), section 1102(b) of the Social Security Act, the Unfunded

Mandates Reform Act of 1995 (Pub. L. 104-4), and Executive Order 13132.

Executive Order 12866 (as amended by Executive Order 13258, which merely reassigns responsibility of duties) directs agencies to assess all costs and benefits of available regulatory alternatives and, if regulation is necessary, to select regulatory approaches that maximize net benefits (including potential economic, environmental, public health and safety effects, distributive impacts, and equity). As stated in Section IV, we estimate that the overall effect of these changes in the premium will be a cost to voluntary enrollees (section 1818 and 1818A of the Act) of about \$166 million. Therefore, this notice is a major rule as defined in Title 5, United States Code, section 804(2) and is an economically significant rule under Executive Order 12866.

The RFA requires agencies to analyze options for regulatory relief of small entities. For purposes of the RFA, small entities include small businesses, nonprofit organizations, and government agencies. Most hospitals and most other providers and suppliers are small entities, either by nonprofit status or by having revenues of \$6 million to \$29 million in any 1 year. Individuals and States are not considered to be small entities. We have determined that this notice will not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities. Therefore, we are not preparing an analysis for the RFA.

In addition, section 1102(b) of the Act requires us to prepare a regulatory impact analysis if a rule may have a significant impact on the operations of a substantial number of small rural hospitals. This analysis must conform to the provisions of section 604 of the RFA. For purposes of section 1102(b) of the Act, we define a small rural hospital as a hospital that is located outside of a Metropolitan Statistical Area and has fewer than 100 beds. We have determined that this notice will not have a significant effect on the operations of a substantial number of small rural hospitals. Therefore, we are not preparing an analysis for section 1102(b) of the Act.

Section 202 of the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act of 1995 also requires that agencies assess anticipated costs and benefits before issuing any rule that may result in expenditures in any 1 year by State, local, or tribal governments, in the aggregate, or by the private sector, of \$110 million. This notice has no consequential effect on State, local, or tribal governments or on the private sector.

Executive Order 13132 establishes certain requirements that an agency must meet when it promulgates a rule that imposes substantial direct requirement costs on State and local governments, preempts State law, or otherwise has Federalism implications. This notice will not have a substantial effect on State or local governments.

In accordance with the provisions of Executive Order 12866, this regulation was reviewed by the Office of Management and Budget.

Authority: Sections 1818(d)(2) and 1818A(d)(2) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395i-2(d)(2) and 1395i-2a(d)(2)). (Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Program No. 93.773, Medicare—Hospital Insurance)

Dated: August 30, 2004.

Mark B. McClellan,
Administrator, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services.

Dated: September 1, 2004.

Tommy G. Thompson,
Secretary.

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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services

[CMS-8020-N]

RIN: 0938-AN18

Medicare Program; Medicare Part B Monthly Actuarial Rates, Premium Rate, and Annual Deductible Beginning January 1, 2005

AGENCY: Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), HHS.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: In accordance with section 1839 of the Social Security Act (the Act), this notice announces the monthly actuarial rates for aged (age 65 and over) and disabled (under age 65) enrollees for the Part B account in the Medicare Supplementary Medical Insurance (SMI) trust fund for 2005. It also announces the monthly Part B premium to be paid by enrollees during 2005. The monthly actuarial rates for 2005 are \$156.40 for aged enrollees and \$191.80 for disabled enrollees. The monthly Part B premium rate for 2005 is \$78.20. (The 2004 premium rate was \$66.60.) The 2005 Part B premium is equal to 50 percent of the monthly actuarial rate for aged enrollees, or about 25 percent of Part B costs for aged enrollees.