

ask Medicare



Information to Help You Care for Others



In this edition:

2009 Part B Premiums

Stay Healthy: Flu Shots

Are You Ready for
Open Enrollment?

Get Free Caregiver Support

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If Your Loved One Falls

Remember, you
can always visit
www.medicare.gov/caregivers
for the latest
news and updates.

Coming next edition:

How to Get Answers
from 1-800-MEDICARE

Glaucoma Awareness

Medicare-covered Heart
Screenings

Comparing Nursing Homes



Dear Family Caregiver:

It's not always easy helping a loved one make health care decisions.

We want to make sure you get the Medicare information you need. This bi-monthly newsletter should answer your questions, tell you what's new, show you where to get help, and offer tips to help you take care of yourself.

Welcome to the first edition! We hope to help you as you help others.

Kerry N. Weems, Acting Administrator



2009 Part B Premium Holding Steady

Did you know the Medicare Part B premium is staying the same for most people in 2009? The standard 2009 Medicare Part B premium is **holding steady at \$96.40**.

This is only the sixth time ever the premium hasn't increased from one year to the next. Learn more about 2009 Medicare rates at www.medicare.gov/caregivers.



Medicare Covers Flu Shots - FREE!

Flu season is closing in fast. Fortunately, **flu shots are free for people with Medicare** when given by providers that accept Medicare, including senior centers, pharmacies, and grocery stores that hold flu shot clinics. Schedule your loved one's flu shot now!

Learn what other preventive shots and screenings Medicare covers at www.medicare.gov/caregivers.



CAREGIVER TIP: Save time - get your own flu shot along with your loved one!

**Not sure whether Medicare covers an item or service?
Use the Medicare Coverage Database to look it up, fast.
Visit www.medicare.gov to get started.**



Does Your Doctor e-Prescribe?

Electronic prescribing, or “e-prescribing,” can save you time, money, AND help keep your loved one safe.

With e-prescribing, **doctors send electronic prescriptions directly to your pharmacy.** This means fewer phone calls between the doctor and the pharmacy, and less chance for errors. Usually, all you need to do is pick up the prescription. It’s that simple!

Next time you visit the doctor, ask: “Do you e-prescribe?” Learn more about the benefits of e-prescribing at www.cms.hhs.gov/ePrescribing.



Free Support for Caregivers

The demands of caring for a loved one can be overwhelming. The Administration on Aging (AoA) has a **National Family**

Caregiver Support Program that can provide you with information about respite services, support groups, local resources, and much more.

Take advantage of this new program by visiting www.aoa.gov and clicking on “Elders and Families” at the top.



4 Ways to Prevent Falls from CDC

Each year, one in three older U.S. adults suffers a fall. But falls don’t have to be an inevitable part of aging. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has researched **proven strategies for reducing the risk of falls** and related injuries, including four steps you can take NOW.

Visit www.cdc.gov and click on “Injury, Violence & Safety” to learn more about fall prevention.



If Your Loved One Falls

If your loved one does suffer a fall or other health crisis, you should know that **Medicare may cover certain skilled nursing facility (SNF) care.** SNFs can provide short-term nursing or rehabilitation services.

To learn more about the SNF services Medicare covers, visit www.medicare.gov/caregivers and view “Medicare Coverage of Skilled Nursing Facility Care.”

Tell us what you care about!
Email us at caregiver_comments@cms.hhs.gov.

Open Enrollment Nov. 15 - Dec. 31

Plans Change. People Change.

Are You Ready for Open Enrollment?



Is a better Medicare health or drug plan available for your loved one in 2009?

Medicare coverage and costs can change from year to year, so it’s worth taking the time to see if your plan still works for you.

Here’s what to do

Watch the mail for information about your coverage, like the *Medicare & You* 2009 handbook, notices from your plan, letters from Medicare, and plan advertising materials.

Review these materials, but don’t stop there:

- Compare plans online at www.medicare.gov.
- Call different plans in your area to compare.
- See the list of plans in *Medicare & You* 2009.
- Contact your local State Health Insurance Assistance Program for free counseling.

**Shopping around may
get you better coverage
at a better price.**