



NEWS COLUMN – Area Agency on Aging District 7, Inc.

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Medicare Prescription Drug Plan Discount – Are You Eligible?

**Nina R. Keller, Executive Director, Area Agency on Aging District 7
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Do you know if you are eligible for the Medicare Prescription Drug Plan Discount? There are many individuals in our district who are unaware they are eligible to receive this wonderful assistance. A simple phone call to our Agency can help determine whether you meet the eligibility requirements. The Area Agency on Aging District 7 (AAA7) is able to provide this service through the Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act (MIPPA) grant from the Ohio Department of Aging. This project provides outreach to and enrollment assistance for individuals who may be eligible for the Low-Income Subsidy (“Extra Help”) and/or Medicare Savings Program, as well as other Medicare premium assistance programs.

Low Income Subsidy (LIS) or “Extra Help” is a discount plan that can lower your prescription co-pays; cover all or part of your Medicare Part D monthly premiums; or eliminate the “donut hole” of coverage for your medications. Part D is Medicare’s prescription drug coverage and is available to anyone eligible for Medicare Part A or Part B. Those with Medicare may enroll in Part D coverage through either a stand-alone plan or a Medicare Advantage plan. To be eligible for “Extra Help,” income guidelines and qualifications must be met, and the AAA7 can help determine whether you might be able to benefit from this program, and if so, assist you with the application process.

Each year, our Agency conducts outreach to our communities in order to better identify those who might be eligible for the “Extra Help” and Medicare Savings Programs. Last year in 2019, eligible individuals who reached out to us qualified for either the Medicare Savings Program, the “Extra Help” Program, or in some instances, qualified for both programs. In addition, individuals who called to have their Medicare drug comparisons checked during the “Open Enrollment” period, which runs from October 15th through December 7th each year, were also able to save money simply by changing their Medicare Part D provider. In all, through the special programs or drug plan comparisons, our Agency was able to save all the individuals we worked with over the year a combined total of \$1,448,000 in 2019! These savings have made a huge impact on peoples’ lives!

All of the individuals we were able to reach out to throughout our communities during the year were also assisted in additional ways, including Medicare Part D sign-ups, help with finding a Medicare supplemental insurance, providing other services made available through our Agency, and references to additional community organizations that may be able to help. The AAA7 covers the following counties: Adams, Brown, Gallia, Highland, Jackson, Lawrence, Pike, Ross, Scioto and Vinton.

If you would like to find out if you are eligible for “extra help” with your Medicare Part D coverage, call us - we can help! If you are single and your gross income is below \$1,561, or you are married and your combined gross income is below \$2,114, you may qualify for assistance. Contact Kristy Bowman at our Agency Monday through Friday from 8:00 am until 4:30 pm toll-free at 1-800-582-7277, extension 250 to learn more. We can complete the application over the phone in just a few minutes. In addition, we can also assist you with any other Medicare questions you might have.

Or, if your community group or agency has an event coming up that you would like us to participate in to provide more information, please let us know – you can reach us at 1-800-582-7277 or e-mail to info@aaa7.org.