

Bulletin

February 28, 2006

Minnesota Department of Human Services □ 444 Lafayette Rd. □ St. Paul, MN 55155

OF INTEREST TO

- County Directors
- Social Services Supervisors and Staff
- County Financial Workers
- Community Organizations
- Healthcare Providers
- Pharmacists
- MAXIS and MMIS Users

ACTION

Please review updates and implement policy changes as discussed in bulletin.

DUE DATE

Program HH pilot program updates effective February 13, 2006.

Updates for the Pilot Program Instituted by Program HH to Assist Medicare Part D Eligible Enrollees

TOPIC

Updates for the pilot program implemented on January 1, 2006 by Program HH for its Medicare Part D clients who have incomes between 0 and 300 percent of Federal Poverty Guidelines.

PURPOSE

Provide updates and important deadlines for the Program HH Medicare Part D Assistance Program to county social and financial workers, healthcare professionals, case managers and community organizations.

CONTACT

The Program HH Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage Liaison, at 651-431-2414 or toll free in Minnesota 1-800-657-3671.

SIGNED

LOREN COLMAN
Assistant Commissioner
Continuing Care

Background

This bulletin provides an update and important deadlines for the pilot program instituted by Program HH to assist Medicare-eligible enrollees. (See previous DHS Bulletin dated January 26, 2006) The Minnesota ADAP Program (Program HH) is one of the only such programs in the country to offer assistance to Medicare-eligible enrollees, an initiative that has been well received by the HIV community in Minnesota. The Minnesota ADAP has locally extended the federal deadlines to better assist clients in making necessary program transitions. HIV community leaders and individuals with HIV have expressed gratitude for the assistance and have recognized Program HH's commitment to seamless client care.

The Program HH Medicare Part D Assistance Program applies to all Medicare-eligible Program HH clients whose income falls between 0 and 300 percent of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL). This is a tiered assistance program in which client income is used as a guideline for determining the assistance level.

Medicare Part D Pilot Program Details and Updates

It is anticipated that this pilot program will continue for the long term given no unforeseen changes in Medicare Part D policy and/or Program HH funding. Assistance tiers, program deadlines and updates are outlined below. In addition, answers to commonly asked questions are included as well.

Consumers up to 135percent FPL

- Clients are eligible to receive full or partial federal subsidies to meet their Medicare Part D out-of-pocket costs.
- Federal and Program HH rules have instructed that all eligible Program HH clients be transitioned to a Medicare Part D drug plan by January 31, 2006. Clients can no longer receive drug and insurance coverage through Program HH as of February 1, 2006. They are still eligible for the Program HH nutrition, dental and mental health programs.
- Program HH will pay the Medicare Part D drug co-payments of \$1-5 for medications listed on the Program HH formulary. These charges should be billed directly to DHS at the point of sale. Pharmacies may contact Program HH or the DHS Provider Helpline (651-431-2700 or 1-800-366-5411) for billing assistance.
- Current Program HH clients have received phone calls and multiple written notices regarding their program transitions and deadlines. Clients have been asked to send copies of their Social Security Administration income verification letter to Program HH for confirmation of eligibility.

Consumers between 135-150 percent FPL

- Clients may be eligible to receive partial federal subsidies to help meet Medicare Part D out-of-pocket costs.

- Federal and Program HH rules have mandated that all Program HH clients be transitioned to a Medicare Part D drug plan by February 28, 2006. Clients can no longer receive drug and insurance coverage through Program HH as of March 1, 2006. They are still eligible for the Program HH nutrition, dental and mental health programs.
- Clients may apply for an assistance program administered by the Minnesota AIDS Project (MAP) that will pay their \$50 yearly deductible and the 15 percent drug co-insurance costs. The 15 percent co-insurance payments will be made for medications listed on the Program HH formulary only.
- The MAP assistance program begins March 1, 2006. Applications and release of information forms are available from the Program HH office. Once enrolled, clients will be sent information to present at their pharmacy to instruct the pharmacist how to bill eligible expenses to the Minnesota AIDS Project's Medicare Part D Assistance Program.
- Current Program HH clients have received phone calls and multiple written notices regarding their program transitions and deadlines. They have been asked to send copies of their Social Security Administration income verification to Program HH for confirmation and enrollment into the assistance program.

Consumers between 150-300 percent FPL

- Clients are currently using Program HH to pay their Medicare supplement policy premiums. Federal law mandates that this assistance be halted for persons under the age of 65.
- Program HH will transition individuals under age 65 to a standard health plan that includes prescription drug coverage (Medicare part D creditable coverage) and pay the premiums. This transition will occur before May 15, 2006 and these clients will not need to enroll in a Medicare Part D drug plan.
- Clients aged 65 and older will continue on a Medicare supplement plan with Program HH paying the premiums.
- Current Program HH clients have received phone calls and written notification regarding their Program HH status. They will be notified about insurance coverage transitions as details become available at a later date. Clients have been asked to complete the Social Security Administration income verification process for eligibility confirmation.

Frequently Asked Questions

Question:

How is Program HH handling changes in client FPL status and how does it affect client eligibility for the program?

Answer:

Program HH uses an internal process to compute a clients' FPL for program eligibility. Each client's FPL status will be reevaluated when they complete their annual Program HH reapplication. At that time, a client's status may change depending on which income tier they fall into, or if they become ineligible for continued enrollment in Program HH.

Question:

Do Medicare-eligible Program HH clients have to pay a cost share premium?

Answer:

After February 28, 2006, Medicare-eligible Program HH clients who have an income below 150 percent FPL do not have to pay a cost share premium to Program HH since their drug and insurance coverage will be through Medicare. The Program HH cost share premiums only apply to clients enrolled in the Program HH drug and insurance programs. A cost share premium will be calculated for Medicare-eligible clients who have an income above 150 percent FPL.

Question:

Do all Medicare-eligible clients have to meet the Program HH deadlines as stated in this bulletin?

Answer:

It is a federal mandate that Program HH can not provide insurance and drug coverage for clients below 150percent FPL. If, because of extenuating circumstances, a client fails to enroll in a Medicare Part D drug plan by the specified date, they should contact the Program HH office to request an extension of coverage. Program HH staff will work with the individual to insure there are no gaps in their prescription drug coverage.

Question:

What if a Medicare-eligible Program HH client does not have Medicare Part B coverage?

Answer:

Program HH is aware that some clients may not currently have Medicare Part B coverage. All clients, regardless of income, have been encouraged to enroll in Medicare Part B during the open enrollment period which ends March 30, 2006. Clients under 150 percent FPL whose insurance coverage will end with Program HH, and who are not enrolled in Medicare Part B, may request that their Program HH coverage be extended until June 30, 2006. Their Medicare Part B coverage will be expected to begin on July 1, 2006, making it imperative that they enroll with Medicare Part B during this open enrollment period. Clients over 150 percent FPL are strongly encouraged to enroll in Medicare Part B this year if they have not previously done so. In the event their financial situation changes in the future, Medicare Part B may become their primary health insurance plan.

Question:

Should individuals on Medical Assistance and Medicare also apply to Program HH?

Answer:

Dually-eligible individuals who are HIV-positive and have an income below 135 percent FPL may apply for Program HH coverage as well. If eligible, Program HH can help by paying their \$1-5 Medicare Part D drug co-pays for Program HH formulary drugs. Program HH can also provide dental, nutrition and mental health services coverage. To receive these benefits, individuals must be enrolled in Program HH in addition to MA and Medicare and should complete a Program HH application.

For More Information

Pharmacies needing assistance with billing the \$1-5 co-payments may contact the DHS Provider Helpline at 651-431-2700 or 800-366-5411, or the Program HH office at 651-431-2414 or 1-800-657-3761.

Applications for the Minnesota AIDS Project's Medicare Part D Assistance Program for individuals between 135-150 percent FPL can be obtained by contacting the Program HH Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage Liaison at 651-431-2414 or 1-800-657-3761.

Applications for Program HH are available at www.dhs.state.mn.us/hiv aids and through many community and clinic-based programs throughout Minnesota. Applications are also available through the Program HH office at:

HIV/AIDS Programs
Minnesota Department of Human Services
PO Box 64972
St. Paul, MN 55164-0972
Metro (651) 431-2414
Statewide (800) 657-3761
Fax (651) 431-7448

For more information on Program HH and its Medicare Part D Assistance Program, contact the Program HH Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage Liaison at 651-431-2414 or 1-800-657-3761.

Special Needs

This information is available in other forms to people with disabilities by contacting us at 651-431-2414 (voice), toll free at 1-800-657-3761 or through the Minnesota Relay Service at 1-800-627-3529 (TDD), 7-1-1 or 1-877-627-3848 (speech to speech relay service).