



North Carolina
Department of Health and Human Services
Division of Medical Assistance
Recipient Services MEU

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Michael F. Easley, Governor
Carmen Hooker Odom, Secretary

L. Allen Dobson, Jr., M.D., Assistant Secretary
for Health Policy and Medical Assistance

January 17, 2007

Re: North Carolina RX

Dear County Director of Social Services:

In October 2006, Governor Michael F. Easley announced a new prescription drug assistance program, North Carolina RX, (NCRX) to help North Carolina's low - income seniors participate in the federal Medicare Part D prescription drug program. State officials in North Carolina identified many seniors in need for assistance with premium payments, but are ineligible for the full Low Income Subsidy (LIS). NCRX will ensure those seniors receive assistance from the state so they can afford Part D coverage. NCRX pays \$18 toward monthly Part D premiums for participating Medicare Prescription Drug Plans. If the chosen plan's cost exceeds \$18, the individual will pay that part of the premium. In addition North Carolina RX:

- Provides resources to seniors who are attempting to navigate the complicated federal drug program by providing a toll free number and a website that will link seniors with trained professionals that can help choose the best program to fit an individual's needs and handle paperwork to make sure it is properly filed, and
- Begin a "medication therapy management" program - in which pharmacists work with patients to make sure seniors are taking the medications they need and preventing possible drug interactions.

An individual is eligible for NCRX if he meets all of the following criteria:

- North Carolina resident
- Medicare beneficiary
- Age 65 or older
- Income at or below \$17,150 for an individual and \$23,100 for married couples
- Combined savings, investments and real estate (other than your home, car, and \$1,500 per person to cover burial expenses) of \$20,000 or less for individuals and \$30,000 or less for a married couple
- Enrolled, or will enroll in a Medicare Prescription Drug Plan that participates with NCRX
- Has no other form of drug coverage that is as good, or better than Medicare Part D
- Not eligible for the full federal Low Income Subsidy for Medicare Part D

The Part D premium expense that the a/r is responsible for paying (including the \$18 NCRX assistance) is an allowable medical expense that can be used to help meet an individual's Medicaid deductible. If an individual receives the NCRX assistance, allow the full premium expense. Do not subtract the \$18 NCRX assistance. Refer to ABD Manual Section, MA-2360, Medicaid Deductible, III.C.

NCRX benefits became effective January 1, 2007, for those individuals who enrolled prior to December 31, 2006. Approximately 50,000 North Carolina low-income seniors are expected to sign up for this benefit. Please encourage potentially eligible individuals to take advantage of this health care cost savings program by enrolling.

North Carolina RX will work with senior centers and other programs that reach out to the elderly to provide advice and enrollment assistance. Application forms can be obtained by calling the toll free hotline, 1-888-488-NCRX (6279), or by accessing the special website, that has been set up to provide information about the program and coverage at www.ncrx.gov.

If you have any questions regarding the North Carolina RX program, please contact your Medicaid Program Representative.

Sincerely,

L. Allen Dobson

(This material was researched and written by Linda Faulkner, Program Consultant, Medicaid Eligibility Unit).