



Seniors' Health Insurance Information Program Insurance Commissioner Wayne Goodwin

NEWS

855-408-1212 • www.ncshiip.com

**For Immediate Release
September 1, 2016**

**Contact: Colin Day
919-807-6011**

Do You Need Help Paying for Your Prescriptions?

RALEIGH— Do you ever have difficulty paying for your prescription drugs? Do you have limited income and assets? If you answered "yes" to either of these questions and you are a person with Medicare, Extra Help may be available for you.

The federal Extra Help program assists qualified Medicare beneficiaries with out-of-pocket expenses associated with Medicare Part D prescription drug expenses. There are more than 80,000 Medicare beneficiaries in North Carolina who may be eligible for this program but have yet to apply. The Seniors' Health Insurance Information Program—or SHIIP—is a division of the N.C. Department of Insurance that can help beneficiaries understand and apply for this assistance.

"Medicare is confusing and can be extremely overwhelming for Medicare beneficiaries," said Insurance Commissioner Wayne Goodwin. "Luckily, SHIIP provides unbiased information to help people with Medicare understand what they may be qualified to receive."

To qualify for Extra Help, a Medicare beneficiary must meet certain income, resource and asset level requirements. The income and asset limits for Extra Help are \$1,485 per month with assets up to \$13,640 if you are single, and \$2002.50 per month with assets up to \$27,250 if you are married.

Income includes monthly earnings, Social Security and Veterans' benefits, disability payments, cash contributions, retirements and pensions. Resources and assets include the value of items that the person owns, such as cash, stocks, bonds, retirement accounts, the value of a second car, boats and any real property that is not the primary residence and does not produce income. Resources do not include appliances and other household furnishings, clothing or other personal items, such as jewelry. Assets excluded from the evaluation process are a home, all property attached to the home, personal belongings, one vehicle and irrevocable burial contracts and plots.

Individuals who qualify for these programs will receive Extra Help with their Medicare Part D prescription drug plans at the 100 percent level. This means they will pay a reduced co-pay of \$2.95 for generic drugs and \$7.40 for name-brand drugs, as well as lower monthly premiums.

2-2-2-2-2

When you apply for Extra Help through Social Security's website, you can also choose the option to apply for Medicare Savings Programs during the online application process. The SHIIP office can assist you with applying online for the Extra Help program and, subsequently, the Medicare Savings Programs through the Social Security Administration website at www.socialsecurity.gov. Medicare beneficiaries may also apply online themselves or by contacting the Social Security Administration at 1-800-772-1213.

SHIIP, a division of the North Carolina Department of Insurance, has volunteers in all 100 counties in North Carolina who offer one-on-one counseling and provide free, unbiased information about Medicare, Medicare supplements, Medicare Part D, Medicare Advantage and health plan options and long-term care insurance. To contact SHIIP, call 1-855-408-1212 or visit www.ncshiip.com.

-NCDOI-