

**Message for Physicians and Providers
Regarding Part D Formulary Information**

On January 1st, for the first time, Medicare will begin offering prescription drug coverage. This is the most important new benefit in Medicare's forty-year history. People with Medicare and all patients who have both Medicare and Medicaid will now receive drug coverage under Medicare Part D.

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Service recognizes the important role physicians have played in helping people learn about the new benefit and we appreciate your efforts this fall to help us raise awareness and educate people with Medicare and those with disabilities about this new program.

The Part D enrollment period began on November 15 and will run through May 15, 2006. We are pleased to announce that as of January 1st more than 21 million Americans will begin receiving drug coverage through the Medicare program.

To help you care for your patients and easily obtain information about Part D formularies and whether a specific drug is covered by a Part D plan, Epocrates, Inc. has provided Part D formulary information through their free Epocrates Rx® software which is available through their web-based system or hand-held PDA system. This is online and operational as of now and can be accessed through www.epocrates.com. CMS has also created a web-based formulary finder:

<http://formularyfinder.medicare.gov/formularyfinder/selectstate.asp>. The CMS Formulary Finder provides a list of all Part D plans in a given state and links directly to a plan's home page for a complete formulary. It also provides general information about a plan's drug utilization and appeals process. In mid-January the CMS Formulary Finder will be linked directly to individual plan formularies.

It is important to note that during January all plans will have a transition process that will allow enrollees to continue their current drugs. During this period the physician can work with their patients to adjust drugs to new formularies or request formulary exceptions

We sincerely appreciate your efforts in helping us provide important prescription drug coverage to people with Medicare.