

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
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MEDICARE ENROLLMENT & APPEALS GROUP

DATE: March 13, 2014

TO: Medicare Advantage Organizations and Prescription Drug Plan Sponsors with Service Areas in Idaho, Montana and Washington

FROM: Arrah Tabe-Bedward
Director, Medicare Enrollment & Appeals Group

SUBJECT: Expansion of Service Area and Part D Special Election Period for Medicare Pilot Program for Asbestos Related Disease

The purpose of this memorandum is to inform Medicare Advantage (MA) organizations and prescription drug plan (PDP) sponsors with service areas in certain counties in Idaho, Montana and Washington of an expansion of the Medicare Pilot Program for Asbestos Related Disease.

Background:

As described in the June 15, 2011, memorandum entitled, "Part D Special Election Period for Environmental Health Hazards Medicare Pilot Program," Section 10323 of the Affordable Care Act established Medicare entitlement for individuals who are diagnosed with an asbestos-related disease caused by exposure to an environmental health hazard (EHH) to which an emergency declaration applies. To assist these individuals with their specific health needs, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) established the Medicare Pilot Program for Asbestos Related Disease. The pilot program covers items and services that Medicare usually does not cover, such as special home care services and medical equipment, nutritional supplements, and prescription drugs not covered by Medicare (if the individual has Medicare Part D or other creditable prescription drug coverage). The pilot program is for individuals who are entitled to Medicare based on EHH, have both part A and Part B, and reside in the pilot program service area. Enrollment in a Medicare Part D plan is not required to participate in the pilot; however, pilot participants will receive additional services through the pilot if they have Medicare prescription drug coverage (or other creditable coverage).

The service area of the pilot program was expanded as of March 1, 2014, to include eligible individuals residing in the following counties:

Idaho	Montana	Washington
Benewah	Glacier	Ferry
Bonner	Lake	Lincoln
Boundary	Mineral	Pend Oreille
Clearwater	Missoula	Spokane
Kootenai	Sanders	Stevens
Latah		Whitman
Shoshone		

Parameters of the Part D SEP:

Eligible individuals residing in the expanded service area are eligible for a special enrollment period (SEP) to permit enrollment into Part D in order to access to additional services available through the pilot program.

This one-time SEP began on March 1, 2014, and ends on May 30, 2015. It is limited in scope as follows:

- The individual must have entitlement to Medicare based on EHH, even if the individual is otherwise Medicare eligible (i.e., age, disability);
- The individual must not currently have Part D coverage;
- The individual must reside in one of the 18 counties listed above; and
- The individual must express intent to participate in the pilot program.

CMS systems will not reflect entitlement to Medicare based on EHH; therefore, plan sponsors will need to obtain from the applicant an attestation to having Medicare based on EHH. The SEP allows an individual to prospectively enroll in a plan with Part D coverage. Enrollments are effective the first day of the month following receipt of the enrollment request by the plan. Individuals may enroll in either a stand-alone PDP or an MA plan that includes prescription drug coverage. They may not switch PDP or MA plans under this SEP unless their current MA plan does not include prescription drug coverage.

Beneficiaries will not incur any additional uncovered months as a result of enrollment using this SEP. Plan sponsors must ensure that no uncovered months are added to the beneficiary’s record for the period prior to enrolling via this SEP. To do this, sponsors must include the values of “Y” and “0” (zero) in the appropriate fields on the enrollment transaction. Sponsors do not need to conduct the otherwise required activities to determine any uncovered months for such individuals. Existing uncovered months and late enrollment penalty assessments should remain unchanged in the MARx system.

EXAMPLE: Mr. Smith was enrolled in a Part D plan from January 1, 2009, through December 31, 2010. Mr. Smith later enrolled in a Part D plan effective January 1, 2012. The sponsor completed its creditable coverage determination and determined that Mr. Smith has 12 uncovered months. Mr. Smith disenrolled from this plan effective December 31, 2012, and did not have creditable drug coverage thereafter. Mr. Smith resides in one of the expanded pilot

program counties and submits an enrollment request on May 15, 2014, to a Part D plan using the Part D SEP for Medicare Pilot Program for Asbestos Related Disease. He meets all the eligibility criteria for the SEP and the Part D coverage is effective on June 1, 2014. The plan sponsor will not do a creditable coverage determination for Mr. Smith for the period that occurred between January 1, 2013 and May 30, 2014 (the period prior to his enrollment in this new plan). The sponsor will set the creditable coverage flag to “Y” and “0” uncovered months and set the effective date of the transaction equal to the enrollment effective date.

As always, individuals may enroll in Part D plans through 1-800-MEDICARE, Medicare.gov, or directly through the Part D plan.

For Assistance

For more information about the pilot program, visit www.noridianmedicare.com/ard or call Noridian Administrative Services, the contractor that is running the pilot for CMS, at 1-888-469-9464.

If you have any questions about the limited SEP, please contact Roslyn Thomas at 410-786-9621 or Roslyn.Thomas@cms.gov.