

The Medicare PDP Market: Build It the Plans Will Come...But Will the LIS Eligibles Come Too?

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What we will cover

- ✓ Progress report on Part D and the LIS
- ✓ Challenges for the LIS population
- ✓ Reaching low-income beneficiaries
 - How ABC coalitions are helping people with Medicare with limited incomes
 - What else is ABC doing
- ✓ Where do we go from here?

Part D and the LIS: Where we are now now

- ✓ Over 9.5 million people currently receiving the Extra Help/Low-Income Subsidies (LIS)
 - 7.5 million automatically enrolled in LIS because receiving Medicaid, Medicare Savings Programs or SSI
 - Over 2.1 million have qualified for LIS through the Social Security Administration Administration (SSA) application process (as of October 2006)
- ✓ ***Of the remaining 4+ million beneficiaries who still have no drug coverage, at least three-quarters (over 3 million) are thought to be LIS eligible***
- ✓ More than 630,000 beneficiaries who had been deemed eligible for LIS in 2006 have received letters saying they are losing their deemed status – i.e., i.e., they will not automatically qualify for the LIS in 2007
 - Have the option to apply for LIS if they think they may be eligible
- ✓ An unknown number of beneficiaries already in Part D plans may be eligible eligible for LIS and not know it

Finding the 3 million: Federal activity since May 15

✓ CMS:

- Through demonstration program, established a Special Enrollment Period Period to allow people who newly qualify for LIS to enroll in plans after the the initial enrollment period ended (May 15) without paying a Late Enrollment Penalty
- Issued Extra Help/LIS Outreach Toolkit in July (includes LIS targeting data data)

✓ SSA:

- Targeted media and events
- New mailings to targeted groups (people receiving SSDI, those who received the \$600 TA credit but did not apply for LIS, and more)

Challenges for LIS eligibles – 2006, 2007 and beyond

- ✓ SEP for new LIS eligibles – and waiver of Late Enrollment Enrollment Penalty -- expires December 31, 2006
- ✓ Getting those who have been “undeemed” to apply for LIS LIS
- ✓ Persistent premium withhold issues
- ✓ More plans meeting regional low-income benchmarks in 2007
- ✓ 5% of LIS recipients nationwide must change plans for 2007 to stay in a \$0 premium plan
- ✓ Reassignment if plan no longer meets the regional low-income benchmark
- ✓ Reaching those who are hardest to reach – and finding the resources to support that effort at the community level level

How our coalitions have been helping LIS eligibles

- ✓ While low-income beneficiaries can make plan choices, they often require much “hand-holding”
 - People who receive assistance from community-based organizations (CBOs) are much more likely to actually apply for benefits if the CBOs can later follow up with them
- ✓ ABC has 43 coalitions in 34 states and the District of Columbia
 - Since September 2005, our coalitions have helped, on average, over 9,000 9,000 beneficiaries/month apply for LIS
- ✓ Our local/state coalitions are on the ground providing hands-on assistance with LIS applications and plan selection to low-income beneficiaries during this SEP
 - Strategic partnerships
 - Use of client and other program lists
 - Finding “gatekeepers”
 - Media outreach
 - Enrollment events

What else are ABC and NCOA doing?

- ✓ *Innovative practices:* Investigating other promising methods of finding and helping beneficiaries to apply for LIS:
 - Use of lists of likely eligible beneficiaries
 - Working with plans to identify members likely to be eligible for LIS
 - Performance-based philanthropy/benefits enrollment fund
- ✓ *Technology:* Through a partnership with SSA, NCOA's BenefitsCheckUp (www.BenefitsCheckUp.org) now has its own Online Medicare Rx Extra Help Application which is submitted directly to SSA
 - BCU also does "shadow screening" of beneficiaries for other valuable benefits including Medicare Savings Programs, Medicaid, SSI, and SPAPs (if applicable)
- ✓ *Advocacy:* Creation of a National Center for Senior Benefits Outreach and Enrollment under the Older Americans Act

Where do we go from here?

✓ Legislative changes

- Elimination of the asset test
- Similar to Part B, permit eligible low-income beneficiaries to enroll in Part D without penalty at any time
- Removal of questions about cash surrender value of life insurance policies and value of in-kind support and maintenance

✓ Administrative and regulatory changes

- Extension of the SEP and waiver of LEP for those eligible for LIS
- Availability of applications and correspondence in other languages
- Dedicated LIS enrollment experts in SSA field offices (or regions)
- Better data sharing about LIS enrollments

✓ Other

- Increased funding for community-based organizations
- Use of “warm transfers” from 1-800-MEDICARE or plan information lines to SSA hotline or other LIS phone enrollment center
- More opportunities for continuous learning and sharing of that learning

For more information

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For more information about ABC, our coalitions and where where they are located, visit www.accesstobenefits.org.

To learn more about BenefitsCheckUp and our online Medicare Rx Extra Help Application, visit www.BenefitsCheckUp.org