

# RxCONNECTOR

A publication of the North Dakota Insurance Department

## NO MEDICARE PART D LATE FEE

CMS Acting Administrator Leslie V. Norwalk announced the elimination of the 2007 late enrollment penalty (LEP) for any beneficiary eligible for the low income subsidy for a Part D plan even if they failed to sign up by the program's initial deadline.

"It is very important that we remove whatever barriers may be preventing low-income beneficiaries from taking advantage of this great, cost-saving program," said Ms. Norwalk. "This is our most difficult population to reach and the one for which we continue to focus our efforts. By continuing to remove the fear of a late fee for those who may not be able to pay, we are taking a positive step aimed at broader coverage for

everyone."

By taking this action, CMS is continuing the same protection Late Enrollment Penalty for low-income Medicare beneficiaries as it did during last year's launch of the massive new program. Under the initiative announced today, certain low-income Medicare beneficiaries can enroll in a Medicare prescription drug plan with no penalty through December 31, 2007.

People who filed new apps for full Medicaid or the Medicare Savings Programs (SLMB, QMB, etc) and were determined eligible can enroll in a Part D plan this year without fear of being charged a penalty.

### Welcome to the RxConnector newsletter!



Jim Poolman  
Insurance Commissioner

Dear Friends,

*This newsletter is designed to keep you up to date about the Prescription Connection for ND program and to keep you in the know about the various prescription assistance programs that are available. In addition, from time to time, we may also include other items of interest related to Medicare and the Senior Health Insurance Counseling (SHIC) program.*

*As always, thank you so much for all that you do for the Prescription Connection program! Without your help, our work would be that much harder. Your efforts are valued and appreciated!*

*If you have items of interest that you think should be included in this newsletter, we would love to hear about them! Please contact Sharon St. Aubin by email at [ssaubin@nd.gov](mailto:ssaubin@nd.gov) or call her toll free at 888.575.6611.*

Jim Poolman  
Insurance Commissioner

**Contact the  
Department:**

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DAKOTA**  
a program of the  
North Dakota  
Insurance Department

**Prescription  
Connection**  
for North Dakota

## INCOME AND ASSETS FOR EXTRA HELP

As of 2007, Medicare helps pay for outpatient prescription drugs. Medicare provides additional help with drug costs to beneficiaries who qualify based on low incomes and limited resources. The information in the hyperlink below describes the different levels of assistance available to people who meet the eligibility requirements.

(Figures may be rounded numbers)

For exact income figures, please see 2007 Poverty Level Guidelines on Page 3.

Source: <http://www.kff.org/medicare/med062804oth.cfm?RenderForPrint=1>

## PFIZER HELP FOR PEOPLE ENROLLED IN PART D

The Pfizer Helpful Answers Team has announced that lower income patients who have prescription coverage such as Medicare Part D, Medicaid, or private insurance, may be eligible for Hardship Exceptions through the Pfizer Connection to Care patient assistance program.

In order to request a Hardship Exception, patients will first need to submit the standard Connection to Care application form. Patients who meet the income eligibility requirement for Connection to Care (that is, income at or below two times the federal poverty level, adjusted for family size), but

have prescription coverage will be sent a Hardship Exception Request Form that they will need to complete to describe the nature of their hardship. *Each application will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.* Patients with prescription coverage who qualify for a Hardship Exception will receive their Pfizer medicines for free through their doctors' offices through the end of the calendar year in which they apply.

For more information call 1-866-706-2400. Also check the web at [www.PfizerHelpfulAnswers.com](http://www.PfizerHelpfulAnswers.com)

## HANDS ACROSS NORTH DAKOTA

Hands Across North Dakota has assistance in three areas for those in your community that may be affected by the affects of the drought and wild-fires.

Salem are being offered February 10-11 and 17-18.

- Financial Assistance for hay, fuel for hauling feed, family living expenses and utilities.
- Couples Retreats in New
- Someone to listen—from

the comfort of your own home or tractor! No expense, no travel, just a telephone!

For more information on how you can participate, call 1-800-950-2901 or call the ND Helpline by dialing 211.

The Senior Health Insurance Counseling Program (SHIC) is looking for volunteers, especially in the Fargo area. If you or anyone you know would be interested in becoming a volunteer, please contact us today @ 1-888-575-6611. All meals, motel and travel are paid for training.

**New Counselor Training:**

**March 27-29 in Bismarck  
Expressway Inn (1-800-456-6388)**

**Update Training:**

**May 22<sup>nd</sup> (Bismarck)  
Expressway Inn (1-800-456-6388)**

**May 24<sup>th</sup> (Fargo)  
C'Mon Inn (1-800-297-2576)**

## 2007 HHS POVERTY GUIDELINES

The following figures are the 2007 poverty guidelines which were published in the Federal Register on January 24, 2007. For family units of more than eight members, add \$3,480 for each additional member.

<b>2007 Poverty Level Guidelines</b> <i>(All states except Alaska, Hawaii and D.C.)</i> <i>Both Annual and monthly amounts are shown</i>					
Persons in Family	100%	135%	140%	145%	150%
1	\$10,210.00 \$ 850.83	\$13,783.50 \$1,148.63	\$14,294.00 \$1,191.17	\$14,804.50 \$1,233.71	\$15,315.00 \$1,276.25
2	\$13,690.00 \$1,140.83	\$18,481.50 \$1,540.13	\$19,166.00 \$1,597.17	\$19,850.50 \$1,654.21	\$20,535.00 \$1,711.25
3	\$17,170.00 \$1,430.83	\$23,179.50 \$1,931.63	\$24,038.00 \$2,003.17	\$24,896.50 \$2,074.71	\$25,755.00 \$2,146.25
4	\$20,650.00 \$1,720.83	\$27,877.50 \$2,323.13	\$28,910.00 \$2,409.17	\$29,942.50 \$2,495.21	\$30,975.00 \$2,581.25
5	\$24,130.00 \$2,010.83	\$32,575.50 \$2,714.63	\$33,782.00 \$2,815.17	\$34,988.50 \$2,915.71	\$36,195.00 \$3,016.25
6	\$27,610.00 \$2,300.83	\$37,273.50 \$3,106.13	\$38,654.00 \$3,221.17	\$40,034.50 \$3,336.21	\$41,415.00 \$3,451.25
7	\$31,090.00 \$2,590.83	\$41,971.50 \$3,497.63	\$43,526.00 \$3,627.17	\$45,080.50 \$3,756.71	\$46,635.00 \$3,886.25
8	\$34,570.00 \$2,880.83	\$46,669.50 \$3,889.13	\$48,398.00 \$4,033.17	\$50,126.50 \$4,177.21	\$51,855.00 \$4,321.25

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## PRESCRIPTION DRUG PRICES

The Kaiser network reported that the [Boston Globe](#) examined factors that contribute to prescription drug prices. According to Stephen Schondelmeier, a University of Minne-

sota researcher who tracks prescription drug prices, brand-name pharmaceutical companies spend about 31% of revenue on sales, marketing and administrative costs; 30%

on manufacturing, shipping and distribution costs; 13% on research and development costs; and 6% on taxes and liability protection costs. *(Henderson, Boston Globe, 1/17).*