

MEDICARE PART D: Suggestions for Clinicians

As of November 15, 2005, Medicare beneficiaries are able to purchase prescription drug insurance plans for coverage beginning January 1, 2006. People in Medicare and their caregivers face many decisions, and the Society believes we all have a role to play in helping them access the medicines they need at the most affordable price. The National MS Society is supporting informed decision-making among people with MS, their families and professional caregivers with information and referral, educational materials, and the promotion of national and community-based resources.

People with MS may ask their professional providers for help as they compare their coverage options. If you are a practicing clinician, there are critically important pieces of information you can provide to your patients with MS. We recommend the following:

- Provide your patients with MS (or their caregivers) with clear, up-to-date information about their current prescription drugs, including proper spelling, dosage, route of administration, and amount.
- Provide any/all managed care networks (Medicare Advantage plans) in which you participate with updated information about your practice, such as area(s) of specialization, willingness to accept new patients, and contact information. This will facilitate plan comparisons.
- ➤ Be prepared to support the medical necessity of any medication you prescribe in the event a formal appeal is required. The Society's home office can provide template letters and citations to assist.

RESOURCES FOR YOU AND YOUR PATIENTS

- ➤ The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid (CMS) is the primary resource on Medicare Part D. 1-800-MEDICARE, or www.medicare.gov
- People with MS, their caregivers and health providers are welcome to call 1-800-FIGHTMS to speak with a Society staff member about Medicare benefits and other resources.
- Print materials about Medicare Part D, including an overview article for Medicare beneficiaries with MS, appear on our web site, www.nationalmssociety.org/medicare
- Questions about current costs of prescription drugs should be referred to the patient's pharmacist.

- Patients on disease modifying therapies can contact the manufacturer's patient assistance program for help in reviewing plans and possible financial assistance.
- ➤ The consumer group, the Medicare Rights Center, has dedicated a toll-free hotline to questions from health professionals. Call 1-877-Rx HELP-0

Professional Resource Center



HealthProf info@nmss.org 1-866-MS-TREAT 1-866-678-7328