



## SHIIP NEWS RELEASE

### **Iowans on Medicare May Save \$3,900 on Prescription Drugs**

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**Q.** My mother is having trouble paying for her prescription drugs. She has a Medicare Part D prescription drug plan, but still struggles with costs. Is there any other help for her?

**A.** Medicare Part D includes an important benefit which offers “Extra Help” with drug costs. Medicare estimates that 15,500 Iowans could be eligible for this help but haven’t applied. We need all Iowans to talk with friends and family on Medicare to see if they are aware of and may qualify for Extra Help

**Q.** How do you qualify for the Extra Help?

**A.** Some people with Medicare automatically qualify for Extra Help while others will need to be at or below certain income and resource levels. An individual whose annual income is under \$16,245 and who has less than \$12,510 in resources may qualify. A married couple that lives together may qualify if their income is below \$21,855 and they have less than \$25,010 in resources.

Resources include bank accounts, stocks and bonds, but do not include your home, cars or other exempt assets. Effective this year, cash values on life insurance policies and financial support from family and friends will no longer count as income and resources in determining eligibility. These changes make it possible for even more Iowans to qualify for Extra Help.

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**Q.** What if my mother's income is slightly higher than these levels?

**A.** Even if your annual income is higher than these guidelines, you still may be able to receive Extra Help. That's why it's so important to fill out an application. People on Medicare who believe they may qualify, as well as those who have applied in the past and were turned down, should apply or re-apply. There is no enrollment deadline and no late-enrollment penalty when applying for Extra Help. Once you qualify, you can choose a Part D plan. If you do not select a plan, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services will randomly select a plan for you.

**Q.** How does a person apply for the Extra Help?

**A.** You can apply in person at your local Social Security Administration (SSA) office, online at [www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov) or call SSA at 800-772-1213. Iowans can call the state of Iowa's Senior Health Insurance Information Program (SHIIP) at 1-800-351-4664 (TTY 800-735-2942) for more information and assistance. SHIIP counselors across the state are ready to help individuals complete the application for Part D Extra Help. SHIIP is a free, confidential and objective service of the state of Iowa. It does not sell, endorse or promote any insurance products.