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Quote: Life is an opportunity, benefit from it.
Life is a beauty, admire it.
Life is a dream, realize it.
Life is a challenge, meet it.
Life is a duty, complete it.
Life is a game, play it.
Life is a promise, fulfill it.
Life is sorrow, overcome it.
Life is a song, sing it.
Life is a struggle, accept it.
Life is a tragedy, confront it.
Life is an adventure, dare it.
Life is luck, make it.
Life is life, fight for it!
-Mother Teresa

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THE AMERIBEN ALLIANCE Insurance News For You
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Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage: Medicare Part D

On January 1, 2006 Medicare will be offering Medicare D prescription drug coverage to all people who are on Medicare or are Medicare eligible. Medicare will be working with employers and unions to ensure that those qualified to receive this coverage can do so.

The new prescription drug coverage is meant to protect Medicare beneficiaries from high out-of-pocket costs. The high out-of-pocket costs are associated with new drug therapies to treat chronic conditions associated with the aging population.

Medicare prescription drug coverage is available to everyone who has Medicare Part A(hospital insurance) or Medicare Part B(medical insurance).

Medicare beneficiaries are not automatically enrolled in a plan. For the first year, there is an extended open enrollment period which is from November 15, 2005-May 15, 2006. If a person with Medicare already has drug coverage from another source, he or she needs to decide whether to continue their current coverage or switch to a Medicare prescription drug plan.

A person who enrolls in a Medicare prescription drug plan will pay a monthly premium of around \$37.00 in 2006 and a yearly deductible of \$250.00. After paying the deductible, Medicare will pay 75% of the drug cost and the person will pay 25% up to a maximum of \$2,250.00. After this amount, the person with Medicare is responsible for paying 100% of his/her drug costs, up to a total of \$5,100.00 or \$3,600.00 in out-of-pocket expenses. Once reaching this amount, Medicare pays 95% of the drug costs for the remainder of that year.

Brand name and generic drugs are dispensed with the new Medicare prescription drug plan. Although, different plans may cover different drugs so you need to check the plan you are considering before you enroll to make sure the coverage meets your needs.

Extra help will be available for those with limited incomes on both Medicare and Medicaid and those who receive Supplemental Security Income.

People currently enrolled on a Medicare plan with prescription coverage will be notified by their current plan if their coverage is as good as the Medicare prescription drug coverage. There are two types of coverage categories: creditable coverage and non-creditable coverage. If your coverage is deemed creditable it means that your current coverage is at least as good as the Medicare prescription drug coverage. If it is deemed non-creditable coverage, then the person will need to enroll in Medicare D when they are first eligible or pay a higher premium to enroll later.

An entire website designed to answer all of your questions is www.medicare.gov or you can call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227).

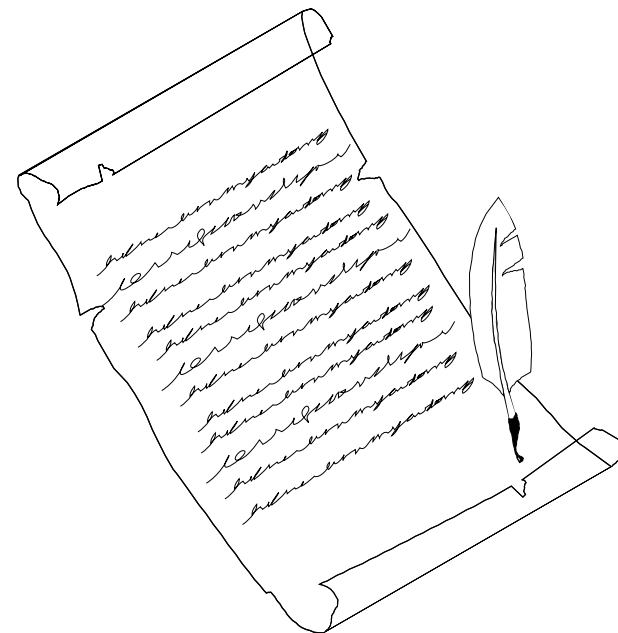


2005 Legislative Bills That Passed

Below is a listing of some of the most recent mandates/acts that passed in the 2005 Legislative session. All are effective October 1, 2005 unless otherwise noted. Those that would be most helpful to you are outlined below. You can find a full description of the mandates/acts and others that passed on the Department of Insurance web site at www.ct.gov/cid/site click on Legislative information.

1. *Public Act No. 05-196 (SB No. 508) An act concerning Health Insurance coverage for infertility treatment and procedures.* The bill requires health insurance policies to cover medically necessary expenses incurred for the diagnosis and treatment of infertility including ovulation induction, intrauterine insemination, IVF, uterine embryo lavage, embryo transfer, GIFT, ZIFT and low tubal ovum transfer. The bill defines "infertility" as the inability of a presumably healthy person to conceive or produce conception or sustain a successful pregnancy during a one-year period.
2. *Public Act No. 05-69 (SB No. 30) An act concerning Health Insurance coverage for Breast Cancer screening.* This bill requires health insurance policies to cover physician recommended ultra sound screening for breast tumors, subject to any policy provisions applicable to other covered services.
3. *Public Act No. 05-253 (SB No. 1034) An act establishing the Nutmeg Health Partnership Insurance Plan.*
4. *Public Act No. 05-94 (SB No. 1003) An act concerning the appeals of Health Insurance determinations made to the Insurance Commissioner.* This bill requires a health insurer to 1. have a grievance process for enrollees to appeal the insurer's actions or inactions and 2. notify enrollees of the process at enrollment; annually; and when it denies a service, admission or hospital stay extension. It also expands the external appeal law to permit a plan enrollee to appeal to a health insurer denial to the Insurance Commissioner after exhausting the insurer's process. **Effective July 1, 2005.**

5. *Public Act No. 05-97(SB No. 1297) An act concerning Managed Care grievance procedures.* By law, a grievance must be resolved within 60 days after it is initiated, unless the enrollee requests and extension. *please look up the act for further details.
6. *Public Act No. 05-61 (SB No. 6806) An act concerning Insurance Producer compensation.*
7. *Public Act No. 05-237 (HB No. 6619) An act concerning Discount Health Plans. Effective July 1, 2005.*
8. *Public Act No. 05-233 (HB No. 5292) An act concerning the requirement that prescriptions be filled by mail order.* This bill prohibits insurance policies that cover prescription drugs and are issued to individuals from requiring the insured person to receive RX from a mail order pharmacy. **Effective July 1, 2005.**
9. *Public Act No. 05-238 (HB No. 6655) An act concerning groups covered under the State Employee Health Plan and Association Group Plans.*
10. *Public Act No. 05-10 (SB No. 963) An act concerning Civil Unions.* This bill authorizes same sex couples to enter into Civil Unions, granting them the same legal benefits, protections and responsibilities as married couples. It incorporates Civil Unions by reference in most statutes that use or define terms indicating a spousal relationship. The bill restricts Civil Unions to couples over age 18.



Carrier News and Information

CBIA

- Effective September 1, 2005 the dependent age limit for full-time students enrolled with ConnectiCare changed from 25 to 23 years old. The change was made to align ConnectiCare's benefit offerings with other carriers in the State.
- If the life insurance benefit you offer to your employees is non-contributory (you pay 100% of the cost) please remember to enroll all of your new employees at the time of enrollment. If you do not, and a claim needs to be submitted it will be a liability to your company.

Anthem

- Please remember that your ID cards now have ten randomly selected numbers in the place of your Social Security Number. Additionally, SSN's will no longer appear on external communications such as correspondence, vouchers or EOB's.
- HIPAA changes: effective July 1, 2005 all member enrollment applications and change forms must include the date of hire or date of qualifying event. Special notices will be sent to all members applying for coverage regarding pre-existing conditions and special enrollment.
- Effective 10/01/05 for new and renewing business Anthem will no longer offer the \$2,000 maximum on prescription drug riders. The options available are the unlimited rider or the new deductible options.

ConnectiCare®

- Healthy Alternatives offers new member discounts. They've added five new categories to Healthy Alternatives, the program that offers discounts to members. Lasik Eye Surgery, Yoga, Meditation/Guided Imagery, Tai Chi and Spa Services. Please remember that you must use a Healthy Alternatives Provider to receive a discount. You can access the provider list at www.connecticare.com or by calling Member Services at 1-800-251-7722.



Did You Know...

Effective January 1, 2006 the State minimum hourly wage will increase to \$7.40/hour.

Civil Unions

Public Act No. 05-10 (SB No. 963)

As referenced in the 2005 Legislative Bills That Passed section, Civil Unions became legal in Connecticut October 1, 2005.

The general guidelines for becoming a Civil Union are the following:

1. Parties must be of the same sex.
2. Parties must be at least 18 years of age.
3. Parties must not be related.
4. There must be a license and a ceremony to form a Civil Union.

There are many unanswered questions regarding Civil Unions. At this time, you should update your Employee Handbooks to cover Civil Unions. By adding this general statement, you will be protected from misinterpretation or misrepresentation "Throughout this manual, whenever the term "spouse" is used, such term will incorporate those encompassed by the Civil Union Law." This also applies to your bereavement policy. It is best to contact your attorney or tax advisor for guidance on this new law as well as for its implications on COBRA, State Continuation, FMLA, Workers Compensation etc.

Please remember that effective October 1, 2005, you, as an employer, must cover employees who are legally joined together as a Civil Union. Since each carrier has different guidelines and forms for processing paperwork for Civil Unions, it is best to contact our office for specific information. We will do all we can to make sure the process is a seamless one.

Anthem Billing

This is a reminder for you to check your billing statement the month following your renewal. We have some concerns with regard to Anthem's billing and want to make sure that your bill is correct. If at any time you have questions or would like us to review it for you, please fax it to our office. Please remember that when you compute the total premium, you must add the medical and prescription drug portions together to get the total.

