



# The Medicare Counselor

Medicare Rights Center



[www.medicarerights.org](http://www.medicarerights.org)

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*The Medicare Counselor* is a free publication of the Medicare Rights Center. Each issue will address timely topics that will help you—social workers, health care providers and other professionals—keep up-to-date on important Medicare issues that affect the well-being of your clients.

In this issue:

1. **Getting Transition Fills When You Enroll in a New Medicare Part D Plan.** It is January 1 and the new Medicare prescription drug plan (Part D) you signed up for during the Annual Coordinated Election Period (ACEP) is finally in effect. You go to the pharmacy to pick up your prescriptions only to find out that one of the medications you take regularly is not covered by your new plan. You fear that you will have to pay the full cost of this drug for the rest of the year. What can you do? [Read the full article.](#)
2. **Changes to Medicare in 2009.** There are many new and recent changes to Medicare coverage rules that may affect the way you receive coverage in 2009. It is important to look at these changes so that you know your rights when receiving Medicare coverage in the New Year. [Read the full article.](#)
3. **Changes to Extra Help in 2009.** Whether you currently receive Extra Help—the federal program that helps pay for the costs of Medicare prescription drug coverage—or are interested in applying for it, you should be aware that asset limits for the program have recently changed. [Read the full article.](#)
4. **What You Can Do During the Open Enrollment Period.** If you are dissatisfied with how you currently receive your Medicare health coverage, you might be wondering if and when you can switch your health plan. You can make some changes right now during the Open Enrollment Period (OEP), which began on January 1 and ends on March 31. [Read the full article.](#)
5. **Enrolling in the Medicare Drug Benefit after the Annual Coordinated Election Period (ACEP).** The Annual Coordinated Election Period (ACEP), which runs from November 15 to December 31 each year, is the time when you can make any changes to your Medicare health and drug coverage. With regards to your drug coverage, you can enroll in the Medicare drug benefit (Part D), drop Medicare drug coverage, or switch Part D plans. If you enroll or make a change during this time, your new coverage begins on the first day of the new year (January 1). Even though the ACEP has recently ended, if you are without a Medicare private drug plan you may still be able to enroll in one through a Special Enrollment Period. [Read the full article.](#)
6. **Medicare Coverage of Flu Shots.** Influenza, commonly referred to as the flu, may not seem like a dangerous disease, but every year about 20,000 Americans die because of it. Many people who should get a flu shot fail to do so each year because they do not want to spend the time or money. But Medicare takes away part of the hassle, covering the full cost of a flu shot for you. [Read the full article.](#)

The current issue of *The Medicare Counselor* can always be found online at [www.medicarerights.org/thecounselor.pdf](http://www.medicarerights.org/thecounselor.pdf).

Questions and comments about the topics in this issue may be addressed to [thecounselor@medicarerights.org](mailto:thecounselor@medicarerights.org). We encourage suggestions for article topics in future issues that pertain to the well-being of your clients with Medicare.

*The Medicare Counselor* is presented to you in PDF format. To view it, you will need Adobe Acrobat Reader or another program that reads PDF files. If you do not already have Adobe Acrobat Reader installed on your computer, you can [download it](#).

Thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,

*The Medicare Counselor*