



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

25 SIGOURNEY STREET • HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-5033

Important ConnPACE Notice

June 1, 2011

Dear ConnPACE Member:

We are sending you this letter to notify you about an important change to the ConnPACE program. **Due to a change in the Connecticut state budget, effective July 1, 2011, ConnPACE will no longer be available to individuals who are eligible for Medicare.** The ConnPACE program will be available to only those individuals who meet all of the current ConnPACE eligibility requirements and are **NOT eligible for Medicare.** Most current ConnPACE members, therefore, will no longer qualify for ConnPACE because they are eligible for Medicare. Medicare Part D will be the only insurance that covers their prescription drugs.

It is important for you to know how this change in the law will affect you and what steps you may take to avoid having to pay more for your prescriptions. Please review the following information:

If you are on ConnPACE and Medicare, and you do not have Low Income Subsidy (LIS)/ “Extra Help”:

Because you will no longer be eligible for ConnPACE, you will be responsible for paying all of your Medicare Part D co-pays in full, even in the “donut hole,” and for all Medicare D-excluded drugs (barbiturates and benzodiazepines). You will also be responsible for paying your Medicare Part D monthly premiums in full.

What should you do now?

- You should apply for the Medicare Savings Program (MSP), if you have not already done so. We strongly encourage you to take advantage of the many benefits this program offers. There is no asset limit for this program, and the income limits are the same as those used to determine eligibility for ConnPACE.

What are the benefits of enrolling in the MSP?

- Being enrolled in both the MSP and Medicare Part D automatically qualifies you for the LIS/ “Extra Help.” This means your Medicare Part D co-pays will be \$6.30 or less. This also means that Medicare will cover the entire monthly premium if you are enrolled in a Connecticut-approved Medicare Part D benchmark plan and will pay a portion of your monthly Part D premiums if you are enrolled in a non-benchmark plan. If you receive the LIS/ “Extra Help” benefit, you may switch to a different Medicare Part D Plan at any time; you won’t have to wait for the open enrollment period.
- Once you are approved for the MSP, the Department will pay your monthly Medicare Part B premiums (\$96.40-\$115.40 per month), which means that you will receive more in your Social Security check every month.
- Some individuals who are eligible for the MSP may even qualify to have their 20% co-insurance and Medicare deductibles covered by the state.

If you are on ConnPACE and Medicare with Low Income Subsidy (LIS)/ “Extra Help”:

If you applied and qualified for full LIS / “Extra Help” through the Social Security Administration (SSA), or you automatically qualified for full LIS/ “Extra Help” benefits because you are enrolled in both the MSP and Medicare Part D, your pharmacy benefits won’t change very much when your ConnPACE eligibility ends on July 1, 2011. Since your co-pays are \$6.30 or less, ConnPACE is already not covering them, and if you are enrolled in a Connecticut-approved Medicare Part D benchmark plan, Medicare is already paying your Part D premiums in full. The only extra expense you could have is if your doctor prescribes any medications for you that are excluded from Medicare Part D (barbiturates and benzodiazepines). In that case, on and after July 1, 2011, you will be responsible for the costs of these prescriptions. Beginning January 1, 2013, however, Medicare Part D will be expanded to include coverage of barbiturates and benzodiazepines.

What should you do now?

- If you are already on the MSP, you do not need to take any action.
- If you previously applied for the MSP and were denied eligibility, we encourage you to apply again. Even if you were over the income limit in the past, you may be eligible now.
- If you are not on the MSP, but you applied and are qualified for LIS/ “Extra Help” benefits through SSA, we encourage you to still apply for the MSP to ensure you will always be on the LIS / “Extra Help.” The MSP provides you with additional benefits, such as paying your monthly Medicare Part B premiums. Some individuals may even qualify to have their 20% co-insurance and Medicare deductibles covered by the state.

If you are on ConnPACE ONLY (not Medicare eligible):

If you are currently on ConnPACE, and you are NOT eligible for Medicare, nothing will change for you. The ConnPACE program will continue to provide the same benefits to you. The eligibility requirements for the program will stay the same, and your renewals will be due in the same month as in past years. Again, nothing will change for ConnPACE members who are NOT eligible for Medicare.

As a reminder, new applicants, or individuals who have let their ConnPACE benefits lapse, may apply/re-apply to ConnPACE only during the annual open enrollment period of November 15th to December 31st with an effective eligibility date of January 1st. The only exceptions to the open enrollment period are for individuals who are within 31 days of their 65th birthday or of becoming eligible for Social Security Disability Income (SSDI) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI). If an applicant meets one of these criteria, he or she may apply for ConnPACE outside of the open enrollment period. Such applicants must still meet all current ConnPACE eligibility requirements and NOT be eligible for Medicare.

For questions about the ConnPACE program, please call ConnPACE at 1-800-423-5026 or (860) 269-2029.

For questions on the Medicare Savings Programs, you can call 2-1-1 (Infoline, toll-free) or visit the following website at www.ct.gov/dss/MedicareSavingsPrograms.

Thank you. We hope this information is helpful to you in response to the change in state law.

Si prefieres recibir una copia de esta carta en Español, de llamar a ConnPACE a 1-800-423-5026 o 860-269-2029.