

The Affordable Care Act or “Obama Care”

Signed into law in March of 2010 and taking effect in 2014, the AFA will give seniors the security they need, as well as the important new benefits listed below:

- Elimination of the “Donut Hole” for prescription drugs by 2020.
 - Free preventive services like mammograms and colonoscopies, as well as a free annual wellness visit.
 - Better care coordination between doctors, hospitals and other providers to help them work better as “teams” to provide you the highest quality care.
 - Fight fraud and abuse in Medicare, and strengthen the Medicare Trust Fund.
 - Protect Medicare coverage for the long term, with benefits not being reduced or taken away.
- And, as always, you will be able to choose your own doctor.

Because of the Affordable Care Act, seniors on Medicare receive free checkups and preventive care with no co-pay or deductible, and get a discount on their prescription drugs. That has already saved over 6 million seniors more than \$700 each (annually). That’s already been happening. Seniors may not know that they’ve been getting \$600 discounts, but it’s there.

New Medicare Program for Durable Medical Equipment and Diabetic Testing Supplies

Effective July 1, Medicare will have a new program for Durable Medical Equipment in our area. There will also be a med National Mail-Order Program for diabetic testing supplies. If you have **Original Medicare** (not a Medicare Advantage HMO or PPO plan), these changes will apply to you.

Some of the items covered under this new Durable Medical Equipment program are:

- Oxygen and oxygen equipment
- Standard (power and manual) wheelchairs and scooters
- Hospital beds
- Walkers

If you are already renting certain medical equipment or receiving oxygen, you may have to switch your supplier. In certain circumstances you may be able to keep your supplier. **Make sure Medicare will continue to pay for your item to avoid any disruptive service!**

To have Medicare pay for **diabetic testing supplies** delivered to your home, you will need to use a Medicare national mail-order supplier. If you don’t want to use mail-order, you can go to a local pharmacy or storefront **that accepts Medicare assignment** and you will get the same low mail-order cost.

To find a Durable Medical Equipment or National Mail-Order Program supplier, you can go to www.medicare.gov/supplier or call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227)

Assistance is also available from the SHINE Program. Call your senior center and ask for a SHINE Appointment. Trained Shine volunteers offer free, confidential counseling on all aspects of health insurance to anyone on Medicare. You can reach a SHINE counselor by telephone at 508-336-8772.