



VIMI MEDICARE WATCH

VIRGIN ISLANDS MEDICAL INSTITUTE, INC.

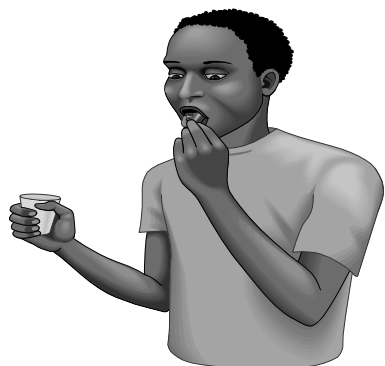
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The Quality Improvement Organization for the US Virgin Islands
Dedicated to Improving the Quality of Medical Care

WHAT IS THE MEDICARE DRUG BENEFIT ?

The Medicare Drug Benefit is part of the Medicare Prescription Drug Improvement and Modernization Act (MMA) of 2003, which was signed into law in December 2003 to provide prescription drug discounts to Medicare beneficiaries. It is the biggest change to Medicare since the beginning.



Seniors spend much of their Social Security checks just on their medications and they cut down on the dosage of their medications to make them last longer. This new law wants to put a stop to this.

There are two plans currently available in the Virgin Islands:

1. VI Medicare Transitional Assistance Drug Discount Program (TAP) for the low income, and
2. Medicare Approved Drug Discount Card for everyone else.

Transitional Assistance Drug Discount Program (TAP)

Medicare beneficiaries who do not have outpatient prescription drug coverage and whose income level is \$12,569 for a single person or \$16,862 for a married couple may be eligible for the drug discount card under the TAP. These cards are good until December 31, 2005 when Medicare's new prescription drug benefit begins on January 1, 2006. You might qualify for at least \$465 credit to help pay for your medicines. Thanks to AARP Virgin Islands and their volunteers for organizing and implementing the first phase of the enrollment process for the TAP. If you have not signed up and think you may be eligible under the TAP, please contact VI Medicare/SHIP at 772-7368 on St. Croix or 714-4354 on St. Thomas.



Medicare Approved Drug Discount Card

If you did not qualify under the TAP, and you are a Medicare beneficiary, you are still eligible for discounts on some of your prescription drugs through the Medicare approved drug discount card program. To enroll in the Medicare approved drug discount card program, contact the VI Medicare/SHIP offices at 772-7368 on St. Croix or 714-4354 on St. Thomas. For more information on this program, you can call 1-800-MEDICARE or visit www.medicare.gov on the web.





www.medicare.gov



The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid (CMS) is committed to helping people with Medicare understand the new benefits contained in the Medicare Prescription Drug Improvement and Modernization Act (MMA). CMS has launched a national multi-media campaign to alert the public about MMA's new benefits.

The CMS campaign goal is to address early confusion about changes in Medicare resulting from MMA. The campaign reassures people with Medicare that Medicare is the same program they have always counted on, only with more benefits. We want them to continue to call **1-800-MEDICARE** with questions about the new Medicare Law or visit www.medicare.gov on the web.

The campaign features some of the **new Medicare benefits:**

-  Medicare-approved Drug Discount Cards (August 2004)
-  Extra assistance for people with lower incomes in the territories.
-  Preventive Services in 2005
 - One-time initial physical exam within six months of Medicare Part B enrollment
 - Blood screening tests for early detection of cardiovascular diseases
 - Diabetes screening tests for people with Medicare at risk of getting the disease
-  Prescription Drug Coverage in 2006

The U.S. Virgin Islands, however, may be different, contact VI SHIP at 772-7368 on St. Croix or 714-4354 on St. Thomas for updates.



ADDING SAFEGUARDS TO THE NEW DRUG BENEFIT

The new law requires Quality Improvement Organizations (QIO)s, like the Virgin Islands Medical Institute (VIMI), to offer quality improvement assistance related to medication therapy provided by the new drug benefit. QIOs will work with providers to promote adoption of safe medication therapy and effective systems to prevent errors and adverse events associated with the use of prescription drugs. VIMI will continue to work with physicians, pharmacists and hospitals to develop systems to safeguard the health of our Medicare beneficiaries.



TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

TAKE THE FOLLOWING SHORT QUIZ

CIRCLE (T) IF YOU THINK THE ANSWER IS TRUE

CIRCLE (F) IF YOU THINK THE ANSWER IS FALSE

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. MMA means Medicare Prescription Drug Improvement and Modernization Act. | T | F |
| 2. Anyone with Medicare can get a drug discount card if eligible. | T | F |
| 3. To get a card, a beneficiary would contact VISHIP. | T | F |
| 4. To be eligible for a card under the TAP, your income must be \$15,000 or less for a single and \$20,000 or less for a couple. | T | F |
| 5. The Discount Cards are good until December 31, 2005. | T | F |
| 6. The aim of the CMS campaign is to reduce confusion about MMA. It features some of the new benefits like preventive services in 2005. | T | F |
| 7. The Virgin Islands Medical Institute is not required to offer any assistance in adopting safe medication therapies. | T | F |

Answers



- 1 **True** - The Medicare Prescription Drug Improvement and Modernization Act will help beneficiaries meet the cost of their medications.
2. **True**
3. **True** - VI Medicare/VI S.H.I.P. (State Health Insurance Assistance Program)
(340) 772-7368 - St. Croix and (340) 714-4354- St. Thomas
4. **False** - Your income must be \$12,230 or less for a single and \$16,360 or less for a couple.
5. **True** - The card is good until the new plan begins on January 1, 2006.
6. **True** - Other benefits include assistance credit for low income persons and prescription drug coverage in 2006.
7. **False** - The Virgin Islands Medical Institute (VIMI) is required to offer quality improvement assistance related to medication therapy provided by the new drug benefit.

Consumer Advisory Council

Represented Organizations

AARP Virgin Islands
VI SHIP
Veteran Affairs
Queen Louise Home
University of the Virgin Islands
American Red Cross
Interfaith
SSA
Seaview Nursing & Rehabilitation Facility
Herbert Grigg Home
Senior Services Inc.
MAP
Hospital Facilities Board
Lutheran Social Services
Massac Nursing Home
Department of Human Services
Roy Lester Schneider Hospital & Community Center
Juan F. Luis Hospital & Medical Center
Consumers
Caregivers

VIMI Beneficiary

HOTLINE

Call 712-2444

*For quality of care problems or
if you are receiving information
that you do not understand or
that is not in your language.*

Call 1-800-MEDICARE

For Medicare Questions

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