

Ken's Korner Newsletter

Committed to HIV/AIDS Advocacy

October 2005



Agency Announcements

Changing Status of Benefit Programs

Adult Medical Program (AMP)/Adult Benefit Waiver (ABW): After opening enrollment the past few months the State Medical Program known as AMP or ABW closes open enrollment October 1 and will not accept any more applicants.

State Emergency Relief Changes: Beginning October 1, 2005, the suspension on energy payments is lifted and payments may be authorized.

Adult Dental Benefit Reinstatement: Also beginning October 1, 2005 the Medicaid program is reinstating the adult dental benefit for beneficiaries age 21 and older.

www.michigan.gov/documents/Dental_Database_2005_111781_7.pdf

State Disability Assistance (SDA) Program: The diagnosis for eligibility has changed to now include: "A person is disabled for SDA purposes if he is diagnosed as having...AIDS." All other eligibility criteria, such as income, must still be met, however.

Other Announcements

Project HOPE: Please join the Advisory Board for an afternoon of discussion, planning and progress. The next meeting will be held Thursday, November 10 at 1:30. The location is Goodwill Industries on Grand River in Detroit. For more information please contact Kenneth Pape at (313) 456-1678.

New Brochure for HIV/AIDS Advocacy Services: We have new informational brochures available for distribution. Please contact Kenneth Pape at (313) 456-1678 or e-mail at papek@michigan.gov to request copies.

AIDS Partnership Michigan (APM): "Knowledge is Power" bracelets can now be purchased for a suggested donation of \$2.00 each. All proceeds will benefit the programs of APM. Please visit www.aidspartnership.org for ordering information.

Do you have announcements?

E-mail them to Ben Hayes, intern (bth@umich.edu) or Kenneth Pape, Office Coordinator (papek@michigan.gov) by the first Monday of the month.



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Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement, and Modernization Act of 2003

(sources: *The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, 2005, www.kff.org; Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, 2005, www.cms.hhs.gov/)*

Starting January 1, 2006 prescription drug coverage will be made available to all people with Medicare. People with Medicare can join the drug plan beginning November 15, 2005.

According to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), those people who already have retiree prescription drug coverage from a former employer or union may not want to join a Medicare drug plan, especially if it would affect the retiree prescription drug coverage.

There is a call to discuss these new drug coverage plans with family and friends the day after Thanksgiving. A guide to talk about Medicare's drug coverage with family and friends is available in the September 25 edition of *Parade* magazine. Additionally, in early October, a handbook titled *Medicare & You 2006* will be mailed to every Medicare household.

These changes are a result of the Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement, and Modernization Act of 2003 (MMA). Beginning in January, 2006 there will be a voluntary Part D program that will provide Medicare outpatients with prescription drug benefits. This Part D program will give recipients of Medicare the option of a) enrolling in a new prescription drug plan (PDP) and get all other benefits from the traditional fee-for-service (FFS) program that works with traditional Medicare or b) enrolling in plans called Medicare Advantage (MA), such as HMOs or regional PPOs, "that provide drug coverage with additional benefits," according to CMS. Although plans must meet Medicare's requirements for providing medically necessary drugs, including formulary standards, it seems, unfortunately, that the drug plans do not include all drugs for HIV/AIDS.

In a review performed by PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP at the request of The Alliance to Improve Medicare (AIM) and the Medicare Today partnership, the estimated effects of the MMA will significantly benefit low-income beneficiaries. In Michigan 97% of low-income beneficiaries will have prescription drug coverage after MMA goes into effect, as opposed to only 65% before MMA. On average, low-income beneficiaries should have their out-of-pocket expenses reduced by \$1,918 to \$1,597 depending on eligibility for other federal prescription assistance programs (CHAMPUS/DoD, VA, Medicaid, etc.).

www.medicaretoday.org/clientuploads/directory/toolbox_resources/MT%20PWC%20study.pdf

For more information visit www.medicare.gov or call its 24-hour toll-free number: 1-800-MEDICARE (633-4227). Local assistance: 1-800-803-7174



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**11th Annual STD & HIV Conference:
A NEW DECADE OF PROMISE AND PARTNERSHIP
November 3-4, 2005, Ypsilanti Marriott at Eagle Crest**

Convened by The Michigan Department of Community Health, this conference, now in its 11th year, will include:

- Keynote address on *Health Disparities and Social Justice* by Adewale, Troutman, MD, MPH, President/CEO The Troutman Group
- Talk on *Examining the Down Low: Implications for HIV Prevention in the Black Community* by David J. Malebranche, MD, MPH, Assistant Professor of Medicine at Emory University
- Two days of workshops on relevant topics, such as *Health Disparities in Michigan: How are We Doing?, Outreach in Public Sex Venues, STDs and Treatment, HIV Adherence and Resistance: What Can You Do?, Alternatives to Incarceration for Substance Abusers* and more...

Applications for scholarships for persons living with HIV/AIDS and to nominate people for awards had been available, but the deadline was October 3.

October 11: deadline to make hotel reservation with reduced rate

October 17: deadline for early registration

Visit www.mihivnews.com/conferences.htm for more information on registration and full schedule of workshops and speakers. For more information on scholarships contact Kris Judd at 313-456-4426 or juddk@michigan.gov. For information on the awards call 517-663-5147