

Overview of Key Implementation Dates for the Medicare Prescription Drug Benefit

Date	Implementation Activity
January 1 – March 31, 2005	Low-income beneficiaries enrolling in Medicare drug discount card program this quarter receive full-year \$600 subsidy for 2005 (subsidy pro-rated for part-year enrollment for remainder of 2005)
January 2005	CMS launches “awareness” phase of message campaign for drug benefit
February 18, 2005	Deadline for “Notice of Intent to Apply” from standalone PDPs, new MA contractors, and regional PPOs
March 2005	CMS issues guidance for employers on retiree creditable coverage
March 1, 2005	Deadline for current MA contractors to submit a request for a special needs plan
March 15, 2005	SSA pilot mailing of low-income subsidy applications to 2,050 beneficiaries in 42 zip codes
March 23, 2005	Deadline for PDPs, MA-PDs, and cost contractors to submit Part D applications
March 23, 2005	Deadline for “Notice of Intent to Apply” from employers or unions directly contracting as a PDP or MA-PD
March 28 – April 18, 2005	CMS accepts CY 2006 formularies from PDPs and MA-PDs
April 2005	Information on low-income subsidy eligibility published on Medicare.gov
April 4, 2005	CMS announces MA capitation rates, MA local area benchmarks and adjustment factors for 2006
April 18, 2005	Deadline for employers to submit PDP or MA-PD applications
April 30, 2005	CMS releases letter with 2006 enrollment and payment instructions and releases instructions to states on how to process state eligibility determinations
May 2005	SSA begins mailing to and accepting applications for low-income subsidy-eligible beneficiaries
May 31, 2005	CMS begins sending mailings to low-income subsidy-eligible beneficiaries and dual eligibles
June 1, 2005	Deadline for CMS to approve PDP plan applications and MA service area expansions
June 6, 2005	Deadline for submitting PDP and MA-PD bids to CMS
June 6, 2005	Deadline for employers to submit formularies to CMS
June 20 – 30, 2005	CMS mails informational letter to dual eligibles regarding transition to Medicare plans
June 30, 2005	CMS distributes CY 2006 summary of benefits instructions to MA contractors
June 31, 2005	Deadline for CMS to pre-qualify bidders from eligible fallback entities for plans starting in 2006
July 2005	CMS launches “discussion” phase of message campaign
July 1, 2005	Medicaid and SSA begin processing applications for low-income subsidies
July 1, 2005	Deadline for CMS to establish requirements and procedures for coordination between Part D plans and SPAPs and other insurers (Medicaid, group health plans, FEHBP, TRICARE)
August 3, 2005	CMS releases national average monthly bid amount and calls for reallocation of rebates for MA-PDs (if needed)
August 3 – September 30, 2005	CMS accepts retiree drug subsidy applications from employers and unions
August 2005	SSA begins sending decisions to those who applied for low-income subsidies
September 14, 2005 (tentative)	CMS approves bids for PDPs and MA-PDs

September 15, 2005	PDP and MA-PD contracts signed
September 16 – November 15, 2005	Medigap issuers send written disclosures to policyholders with drug coverage informing them of their options
September 30, 2005	Deadline for plan sponsors to submit to CMS attestation of actuarial equivalence
September 30, 2005	Deadline for plan sponsors to apply for retiree drug subsidy payment for 2006
October 1, 2005	Approved Part D plans begin marketing
October 1, 2005	Deadline for transfer of Medicare appeals from SSA to DHHS
October 13, 2005	CMS begins disseminating information comparing available Part D coverage to beneficiaries via mail with the <i>Medicare & You</i> handbook, 1-800-MEDICARE, and Plan Comparison Web Tool and Medicare Personal Plan Finder on Medicare.gov
October 15, 2005	Deadline for Secretary to notify states of their annual per capita drug payment amounts (“clawback”) for 2006
October 21, 2005	CMS announces decision on retiree drug subsidy applications
October 27 – November 10, 2005	CMS mails auto-enrollment information to dual eligibles
November 15, 2005 – May 15, 2006	Coordinated election period for 2006 Part D enrollment for all beneficiaries
November 15, 2005 – May 15, 2006	States and entities offering drug coverage provide written disclosure to Part D eligible individuals regarding actuarial equivalence
December 31, 2005	Medicaid drug coverage ends for full benefit dual eligibles
December 31, 2005	Medicare drug discount card program ends
January 1, 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Part D coverage begins for all beneficiaries enrolled in a plan ▪ Dual eligibles’ auto-enrollment takes effect ▪ Low-income subsidies for Part D coverage begin ▪ Medigap insurers prohibited from selling new policies with drug coverage
January 1, 2006 – December 2007	Moratorium on formation of new local Medicare PPOs
January 1 – June 30, 2006	Open enrollment period for MA-eligible individuals (during which they can change plans once)
January 1 – June 30, 2006	CMS launches “urgency” phase of message campaign
February 25, 2006	States begin making monthly “clawback” payments to federal government for dual eligibles
February 28, 2006	Retiree drug subsidy payments begin
March 2006	CMS identifies all beneficiaries not enrolled in a Medicare prescription drug plan
April 2006	CMS mails spring enrollment reminder to beneficiaries
April – May 2006	CMS facilitates enrollment in a prescription drug plan for those determined to be eligible for low-income subsidies but have not yet enrolled in a plan
June 1, 2006	Coverage begins for low-income subsidy eligible beneficiaries who were assigned to a prescription drug plan by CMS
October 15, 2006	Deadline for Secretary to notify states of their annual per capita drug payment amounts (“clawback”) for 2007
November 15, 2006	States and entities offering drug coverage provide written disclosures to Part D eligible individuals regarding actuarial equivalence
November 15 – December 31, 2006	Annual coordinated election period for 2007 Part D enrollment for all beneficiaries

For more information on the MMA, please see the Kaiser Family Foundation’s Medicare resources at:

<http://www.kff.org/medicare/index.cfm>.