

September, 2005

PART D TIMELINE:

- **October, 2005—** Medicare & You Handbook is mailed to Medicare Beneficiaries.
- **November 15, 2005:** Enrollment in the Part D Benefit begins.
- **December 31, 2005:** Enroll by this date and your coverage begins 1/1/06.
- **May 15, 2006:** Last day to enroll in Part D without penalty.

BEFORE YOU CHOOSE PART D:

Current Medigap Policies *with* Rx Coverage: may not be “creditable”—on average, not as good as Medicare Drug Coverage. If so, you may keep your Medigap policy and enroll in a Medicare Drug Plan.

If you currently have a Medigap Policy *without* Rx Coverage, you may keep your Medigap Policy and enroll in a Drug Plan.

PAAD Recipients: Expect to receive a letter at the end of October regarding your Drug Plan Enrollment Procedure.

If you have **Retiree Benefits** from a former employer or union: PLEASE BE SURE you *compare* Medicare Drug Plans with your current coverage BEFORE you make any changes to your existing policy.

WARNING: *Watch for FRAUD.* Don't give your Soc. Security number or bank account information to callers claiming to offer Medicare drug coverage. *Legitimate plans aren't supposed to require information over the phone.*

Bellevue Drug Co. News

Getting Ready for the Medicare Prescription Drug Benefit—What You Can Do Now.

Last month, our newsletter focused on Medicare's Prescription Drug Benefit (Part D), and we offered some general information about the program with a Timeline of **important dates** concerning enrollment. Bellevue Drug is concerned about the impact the enrollment process will have on Medicare Beneficiaries and we have been doing our best to become educated on the enrollment process in order to provide informa-

tion and support to our customers who may find this overwhelming. The majority of the information supplied in our newsletters has been obtained from the [Medicare website](#) and related publications. This web address is posted in this newsletter along with other **important contacts** (see pg.2).

In October, all Medicare Beneficiaries will receive their 2006 Handbook. It will contain the informa-

tion needed for enrollment into Medicare Part D. Medicare recipients will have *at least* 2 drug plans to choose from. Careful consideration is a must in the plan selection. Plan Options will include a “Basic” plan and “Enhanced Benefit” plans—which generally will come with higher premiums. Each Plan must include both Brand & Generic Drugs and have its' own **FORMULARY—List of Covered drugs.**

October Celebrates “American Pharmacist Month”

The American Pharmacists Assn. has selected October as “American Pharmacist Month”. The theme of this observance: **“Know Your Medicine—Know Your Pharmacist”** is quite timely, as more Americans acute and chronic health conditions are being addressed via medication therapy. Consumers with questions about their medications don't have to worry about where to get infor-

mation. Pharmacists are their best and most accessible medication experts.

A dialogue between the patient and pharmacist about prescription and nonprescription medicines helps achieve maximum health benefits and avoid harmful side effects. This helps patients know their medicine, and it's important for them to know their pharmacist as well. Your

pharmacist knows about interactions with food, medicines, or dietary supplements that can effect how medicines work. Some interactions can be dangerous. When picking up new medicine, ask if it will work safely with other prescription and nonprescription medicines you may be taking. Tell your pharmacist about herbal products that you may be using, as well.

“Our pharmacists are capable of preparing compounded medications to attain better results for patients . . .”

Store Hours:

Mon.–Fri.: 9 am–9 pm

Saturday: 9 am–6 pm

Sunday: 9 am–Noon

(609) 561-0825

Why Ask A Pharmacist?

Following a pharmacist's advice can save money for consumers and help lower the nation's health care bill by ensuring proper medication use. Not following a medicine's instructions or discontinuing its use without consulting your doctor can lead to more expensive treatment, even surgery or hospitalization. Stay informed! Ask a Pharmacist.

How Compounded Drugs Make A Difference.

When someone mentions Compounded Drugs, one may get an image of an early 20th century pharmacist using a mortar and pestle to produce a prescription medication for a patient. Before the age of manufactured drugs, pharmacists would formulate medications from powders and elixirs to achieve the desired dosage and form for a patient. Today, we tend to rely on the mass-produced drugs to obtain the remedies for various conditions, diseases, infections and pain management. However, at Bellevue Drug, our pharmacists are capable of preparing compounded medications to attain better results for patients who require a precise dose of medicine that may not be available commercially.

Our pharmacists have received the necessary training for compounding medications from the Professional Compounding Centers of America (PCCA). The PCCA provides bulk pharmaceuticals,

equipment, devices, flavors and accredited training courses by the American Council on Pharmaceutical Education. Bellevue Drug receives support benefits of the PCCA, which conducts on-going studies and research, such as shelf life and stability of compounded formulas, and the PCCA works with several colleges of pharmacy, as well as, pharmacy associations to develop up to date courses and continuing education for pharmacists.

Our pharmacists are currently compounding medications for several patients. When the specific dosage is not available in the manufactured drug prescribed, a compounded medication is prepared for the patient, with ongoing success in the treatment of the condition. Our pharmacists are also compounding medications for conditions such as, hormone therapy in both men and women. Children, especially, can benefit from compounded drugs,

with custom flavors, dosages and suspensions that are more suited to an infant or small child.

Compounding is also very successful in the treatment of pets. Our own pharmacist, Joe Aumenta, R.Ph. worked closely with his veterinarian to treat his pet for high thyroid levels. They had tried several different anti-thyroid therapies, but did not achieve success until Joe suggested compounding a lower dose of the medication in the form of a transdermal gel, that was applied to the pet's ears. The compounded drug effectively reduced the thyroid levels to near normal levels.

Our pharmacists will be pleased to discuss compounding options with you and your physician. It is vitally important that people thoroughly discuss therapy options with their physician, and successful treatment can be realized through a triad relationship of the patient, physician and pharmacist.

Helpful Contact Information for Medicare Part D

Medicare Toll Free #:
1-800-MEDICARE
(800-633-4227)

Social Security Admin.:
1-800-772-1213

WEBSITE INFO:
www.medicare.gov

www.socialsecurity.gov

NJ Dept. of Health & Senior Services: 1-800-792-8820: Will answer questions about: Medigap policies; Long Term Care Insurance; Medicare Health Plan Choices; Medicare Rights & Protection.

Bellevue Drug Invites You to our Brown Bag Days: Tuesday, Oct. 11th and Tuesday, Oct. 18th, 10:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. for American Pharmacist Month

Bellevue Drug will celebrate American Pharmacist Month with a “Brown Bag” Medicine Review. We have selected the 2nd and 3rd Tuesdays in October: 10/11/05 and 10/18/05 from 10:30 a.m.–2:30 p.m. Members of our community may bring in all their medicines—both prescription and

nonprescription—for a check-up. Our Pharmacists will be available from 10:30 a.m.–2:30 p.m. on Tuesday, 10/11 and Tuesday, 10/18 for a personal consultation to ensure that the individual is not taking or storing expired medications and is not taking medications that, when taken

together, could cause adverse effects. By understanding your medication therapy, you can achieve optimum results which will lead to improved health. If you are not able to come in on our scheduled Brown Bag Days, please call our pharmacists to schedule an appointment.