

FACT SHEET 04-03 Medicare Prescription Drug Discount Card and CHAMPVA

I am over age 65 and have both Medicare and CHAMPVA. If I obtain the Medicare drug discount card, will it impact my coverage under CHAMPVA?

No. The Medicare-approved drug discount card is not considered other health insurance.

If I obtain a Medicare prescription drug discount card, how much will I save on my medications?

- If you obtain your maintenance medications through the CHAMPVA Meds by Mail program and do not routinely use a local pharmacy, you will continue to have those prescriptions provided to you cost free. As a result, you may find that the Medicare drug discount card is not necessary to help meet your prescription needs.
- If you obtain medications at local pharmacies and they are available at a discount when you use a Medicare prescription drug discount card, your savings are expected to be 10% - 25%. If the cost of the medication is reduced, then your cost share under CHAMPVA (25% of the cost of the drug) will also be less than you currently pay.

How do I decide if a Medicare prescription drug discount card is right for me or which drug discount card I should choose?

CHAMPVA does not require you to purchase a Medicare drug discount card. It may be, depending on your circumstances (such as using CHAMPVA Meds by Mail program), that the discount card will not provide significant overall savings. In making the decision, Medicare has provided the following resources for you.

- Check Medicare's website, www.medicare.gov/assistanceprograms
- Call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227).

When will the Medicare prescription drug discount cards be available?

You can enroll for the card beginning May 2004 and begin using the card June 1, 2004. The cards will be available from June 1, 2004, until the program ends on December 31, 2005. The new Medicare prescription drug benefit (Part D) will begin on January 1, 2006.

I heard that there is an annual credit for low-income Medicare beneficiaries. If I have CHAMPVA, will I be able to obtain that credit too?

No. The \$600 annual credit available to eligible low-income beneficiaries (income of \$12,569 per year or \$16,862 per year for married couples) is not available to beneficiaries who have other health insurance with outpatient prescription drug coverage. Outpatient prescription drug coverage is a benefit under CHAMPVA, so you will not qualify for the Medicare drug coverage credit.

How do I get more information about CHAMPVA prescription coverage?

- Check the Pharmacy Programs link at our website at www.va.gov/hac
- E-mail us at hac.inq@med.va.gov
- Write us at P.O. Box 65023 Denver, CO 80206-9023
- Call us at 1-800-733-8387 Monday - Friday 8:15 a.m. 7:00 p.m. Eastern