

Low-Income Seniors No Longer Automatically Covered For Extra \$ Under Part D

Thousands of low-income Medicare members who received extra financial help with their Medicare Part D prescription drug benefit last year are not going to receive that extra help in 2007, which may cause some disappointment when the second year of the plan starts on January 1.

Senior Spotlight

By John Toscano

In a letter sent to these beneficiaries from the Social Security Administration recently, they were informed that starting January 1, they will no longer qualify automatically for the extra help. Some may be able to continue getting the aid, but they must apply to a federal or state agency. Reportedly, not many have done so.

As a result, when these seniors go to their pharmacies after January 1 expecting to pay little or nothing for their drugs and find they have to lay out cash, the griping and hollering will start. They'll be asked to pay \$25 or \$50 or more for drugs that have cost them only \$3 or \$5 until now.

Low-income seniors who will be reassigned to new plans chosen at random by the federal government will also find that some of the drugs they must have are not covered in their new plan. Even people con-

tinuing in the same plan may be surprised to find that some drugs are no longer covered.

Individual plans can change the list of preferred (brand name) or generic drugs that are covered from one year to the next, dropping some and adding others, officials said.

Reminder: There are only 11 days left to choose a new Medicare Part D plan if you want to change from your present one.

HOLIDAY FUN EVENTS: The Ridgewood Older Adult Center and Services at 59-14 70th Ave., Ridgewood has a full menu of year-end holiday parties scheduled. Starting the festivities, events took place last Thursday and this past Monday.

Upcoming is Holiday Cookies and Eggnog Under the Tree this Friday morning. There'll be Christmas music, eggnog, and fresh baked cookies. This will be followed by a special luncheon.

Then next Thursday, December 28, the annual birthday party for December babies will be held in the morning. Everyone 60-plus is welcome. For more information, call 718-456-2000.

At the Middle Village Adult Center, 69-10 75th St., Middle Village, 718-894-3441, anyone who missed the Christmas party yesterday is still in time for the Chanukkah party tomorrow, December 21 at noon. There'll be klezmer music, bingo and Hungarian-style stuffed cabbage is featured on the luncheon menu.

Also, the center will be open on both Christmas and New Year's Day at 9 a.m.

Lunch will be served. Another big event is the New Year's Eve party and fundraiser for the center's 32nd anniversary on January 7 from 9:15 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Director Rabbi Richard Levy tells us.

LIU'S HEAP SESSION: City Councilmember John Liu (D-Flushing) will hold a meeting tomorrow from 3 to 7 p.m. in his office at 135-27 38th Ave., Suite 388, to assist individuals with their Home Energy Assistance (HEAP) applications. Assistance in completing applications will be offered in English, Spanish, Chinese and

Korean.

Liu said, "HEAP is a federal program that provides money for low-income households to help pay for heat and energy during the winter. It's an important program that everyone who needs assistance or may need assistance should know about.

"This is the third year we've encouraged those who are eligible to apply, and it certainly won't be the last. We want to do everything we can to keep families warm inside their homes during the winter months."

Gianaris Honors Dellamonica Employee



At a recent reception at the Peter J. Dellamonica Senior Center, Assembly member Michael Gianaris (D-Astoria) presented a New York State Assembly Citation to Barbara Rushforth, who was honored for her 25 years of service as a cook at the senior center. Rushforth was accompanied by her grandniece in accepting the citation.

From All of Us to All of You A Healthy and Happy Holiday Season

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