

FACT SHEET: Medicare Savings Programs (MSPs)

The Medicare Savings Programs (MSPs) help qualified Medicare recipients pay for their Medicare Part A and Part B health care costs, such as premiums, deductibles and coinsurance. There are different levels of assistance through Medicare Savings Programs. Even if you don't qualify for full assistance (Full Medicaid), you might be eligible for coverage of some of your medical expenses.

Full Medicaid, also known as Medicare Qualified Beneficiary (MQB-Q); Qualified Medicare Beneficiary (QMB); or as "Dual Eligible" provides a wide range of health services and coverage assistance, including:

- Payments for Medicare premiums
- Coverage for Parts A and B deductibles and coinsurance
- Automatic enrollment in the Extra Help, or Low-Income Subsidy (LIS), for prescription drug cost assistance

Eligibility guidelines are more complex than for other types of Medicare assistance, but the income limit is based on 100 percent of the Federal Poverty Level (\$11,670 for an individual and \$15,730 for two people in a household).

Medicare Qualified Beneficiary (MQB-B), also known as Specified Low-Income Medicare Beneficiary (SLMB) assistance, provides:

- Payments for Medicare Part B premiums
- Automatic enrollment in the Extra Help, or Low-Income Subsidy (LIS), for prescription drug cost assistance

Eligibility guidelines are based on income and assets, and they change from year to year. The 2014 eligibility guidelines for this type of assistance are:

Limits for an individual
Income – \$1,167 / month
Assets – \$8,660

Limits for a married couple
Income – \$1,573 / month
Assets – \$13,750

Assets that are NOT counted in determining eligibility are your home, car and burial assets of up to \$1,500 in value per person. Resource and income levels may change annually.

How to apply:

Contact your local Department of Social Services (DSS) office. You can also contact your local SHIP office for assistance in completing the application.



1-800-443-9354
www.ncshiiip.com
N.C. Department of Insurance
Wayne Goodwin, Commissioner

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What are Medicare Savings Programs (MSPs)?

Medicare Savings Programs help Medicare beneficiaries pay for Part A or B premiums, deductibles and cost-sharing amounts. Even if beneficiaries don't qualify for full assistance, partial assistance can make a big difference in helping beneficiaries financially.

Who can apply for MSPs?

Any person who is enrolled in Medicare, either because of age or disability, and living in North Carolina with limited income and assets can apply for MSPs.

I own a home. Will that count as an asset or resource?

No. Your primary home and property, furniture, personal items, one licensed vehicle and some burial assets (up to \$1,500 per person) will not count as resources. Some of the assets that are taken into consideration during the application process, include additional properties (such as rental properties, vacation homes or other properties that are not your primary residence), cash, money in your bank accounts, certificates of deposit, stocks, bonds, trust funds and the cash value of some life insurance policies.

Will MSPs pay for my Medicare Part D prescription drug costs?

No. However, if you qualify for an MSP, you will be automatically enrolled in Extra Help, or the Low-Income Subsidy (LIS) program. Depending on the level of assistance for which you qualify, the Extra Help program may help lower your copay and cover Part D premiums and the Part D deductible; and any level of Extra Help assistance eliminates the Part D coverage gap, or "donut hole."

How do I apply for an MSP?

You must apply for an MSP through your local Department of Social Services (DSS). The number for each county's DSS can be found in your telephone book under the local government section. You may also contact the SHIIP office for assistance completing the application. Also, if you apply through SHIIP for the Extra Help / LIS program to assist with Medicare prescription drug coverage, you can ask to begin the application process for MSP assistance as well.

How will I know if I am approved for a Medicare Savings Program?

DSS processes the applications and will notify you as to whether you qualify for assistance. It may take several weeks before you receive notification.

How do I contact SHIIP for more information or help with applications?

Call SHIIP's toll-free call center in Raleigh at **1-800-443-9354**, Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., to talk to a specialist who can answer your Medicare-related questions. SHIIP also has trained volunteer counselors who can provide free one-on-one assistance in all 100 counties in North Carolina. Learn more at www.ncshiiip.com.