

**Employers:** You are required to provide this notice to all employees prior to their enrollment in the North Carolina Bar Association Health Plans 10 & 20

## **Important Notice From The NC Bar Association Health Benefit Trust About Your Prescription Drug Coverage and Medicare**

Please read this notice carefully and keep it where you can find it. This notice has information about your current prescription drug coverage with the NC Bar Association Health Benefit Trust and prescription drug coverage available for people with Medicare. It also explains the options you have under Medicare prescription drug coverage, and can help you decide whether or not you want to enroll. At the end of this notice is information about where you can get help to make decisions about your prescription drug coverage.

1. Medicare prescription drug coverage became available to everyone with Medicare through Medicare prescription drug plans and Medicare Advantage Plans that offer prescription drug coverage in 2006. All Medicare prescription drug plans provide at least a standard level of coverage set by Medicare. Some plans may also offer more coverage for a higher monthly premium.
2. The NC Bar Association Health Benefit Trust has determined that the prescription drug coverage offered is, on average for all plan participants, NOT expected to pay out as much as the standard Medicare prescription drug coverage will pay and is considered Non-Creditable Coverage. This is important, because for most people enrolled in NC Bar Association Health Benefit Trust's plan, enrolling in Medicare prescription drug coverage means you will get more assistance with drug costs than if you had prescription drug coverage exclusively through NC Bar Association Health Benefit Trust's Plan.
3. You have decisions to make about Medicare prescription drug coverage that may affect how much you pay for that coverage, depending on if and when you enroll. Read this notice carefully - it explains your options.

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### **Consider enrolling in Medicare prescription drug coverage.**

Because the coverage you have is, on average for all plan participants, NOT expected to pay as much as the standard Medicare prescription drug coverage will pay, consider enrolling in a Medicare prescription drug plan. Individuals can enroll in a Medicare prescription drug plan when they first become eligible for Medicare and each year from November 15<sup>th</sup> through December 31<sup>st</sup>. Beneficiaries leaving employer/union coverage may be eligible for a Special Enrollment Period to sign up for a Medicare prescription drug plan.

This may mean that you will have to wait to enroll in Medicare prescription drug coverage and that you may pay a higher premium (a penalty) if you join later and you will pay that higher premium as long as you have Medicare prescription drug coverage.

If you go 63 days or longer without prescription drug coverage that is at least as good as Medicare's prescription drug coverage, your premium will go up at least 1% per month for every month after May 15, 2006, that you did not have that coverage. You will have to pay this higher premium as long as you have Medicare prescription drug coverage. For example, if you go nineteen months without coverage, your premium will always be at least 19% higher than what many other people pay.

**You need to make a decision.**

When you make your decision, you should also compare your current coverage, including which drugs are covered, with the coverage and cost of the plans offering Medicare prescription drug coverage in your area.

**For more information about this notice or your current prescription drug coverage...**

For further information **contact the NC Bar Association Health Benefit Trust at 800-662-8843.** NOTE: You will receive this notice annually and at other times in the future such as before the next period you can enroll in Medicare prescription drug coverage, and if this coverage through the **NC Bar Association Health Benefit Trust** changes. You also may request a copy.

**For more information about your options under Medicare prescription drug coverage...**

More detailed information about Medicare plans that offer prescription drug coverage is in the "Medicare & You" handbook from Medicare. You'll get a copy of the handbook in the mail every year from Medicare. You may also be contacted directly by Medicare-approved prescription drug plans. For more information about Medicare prescription drug plans:

- Visit [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov)
- Call your State Health Insurance Assistance Program (see your copy of the Medicare & You handbook for their telephone number) for personalized help,
- Call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227). TTY users should call 1-877-486-2048.

For people with limited income and resources, extra help paying for Medicare prescription drug coverage is available. Information about this extra help is available from the Social Security Administration (SSA) online at [www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov), or you call them at 1-800-772-1213 (TTY 1-800-325-0778).

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