



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS MEDICARE DRUG DEMONSTRATION PROJECT

Q: What is the Medicare Drug Demonstration?

A: The Medicare Drug Demonstration was authorized by Section 641 of the Medicare Modernization Act and provides Medicare beneficiaries with certain diseases coverage for certain drugs.

The cancer patients and drugs that will be covered by the Drug Demonstration are listed below:

Cutaneous T-cell lymphoma	Bexarotene (Targretin)
Non-small cell lung cancer	Gefitinib (Iressa)
Epithelial ovarian cancer	Altretamine (Hexalen)
Multiple myeloma	Thalidomide (Thalomid)
GI stromal tumor	Imatinib Mesylate (Gleevec)
Chronic myelogenous leukemia	Imatinib Mesylate (Gleevec)
Breast cancer (stages 2-4)	Letrozole (Femara)
	Exemastane (Aromasin)
	Anastrozole (Arimidex)
	Tamoxifen (Nolvadex)
	Toremifene (Fareston)

In addition, CMS recently announced that it will also cover oral mesna (Mesnex) tablets (2nd & 3rd doses only) for the prevention of ifosfamide-induced hemorrhagic cystitis.

Drugs for rheumatoid arthritis, multiple sclerosis, and other conditions are also included in the program.

Q: Who is eligible for the Drug Demonstration?

A: Medicare beneficiaries are eligible for the Drug Demonstration if they meet the following criteria: 1) they have Medicare Part A and Part B; 2) Medicare is their primary health insurance; and 3) they live in one of the 50 states or D.C.

Q: Are there any other limits on participation in the Drug Demonstration?

A: According to the statute authorizing the program, no more than 50,000 Medicare beneficiaries may be chosen to participate in the program, and no more than \$500 million may be spent on benefits. In addition, the demonstration project terminates on December 31, 2005.

Q: Why are other oral anti-cancer agents not included in the Drug Demonstration?

A: The section of MMA that authorizes the Drug Demonstration states that the program will cover only those drugs that are replacements for drugs currently covered under Medicare Part B. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) developed criteria that candidate drugs and biologicals had to meet to be included in the Drug Demonstration and then evaluated each candidate drug according to those standards. The drugs listed above were determined by CMS to meet the criteria.

Q: How will I be asked to participate in the Drug Demonstration?

A: You will probably get requests from your patients that you complete a physician certification form that is part of the application for the program.

You may also hear about the program from patient service organizations, advocacy groups, and pharmaceutical companies whose drugs are included in the Drug Demonstration. Each of these organizations may have different introductory or explanatory materials, but the application form and basic materials about the program have been prepared by CMS and are available at <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/researchers/demos/drugcoveredemo.asp> or may be obtained by calling 1-866-563-5386.

Q: What information will I be asked to provide on the physician certification form?

A: You will be asked to provide basic demographic information about the patient, as well as information about the drug that is being prescribed, the condition treated, and the disease stage. Please see the form at <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/researchers/demo/drugcoveredemo.asp>.

You will also be asked to answer the question, “Will this medication replace an existing Part B covered drug the patient is or has taken?” If the answer is yes, you will be asked to identify the drug that is replaced. You may answer in the alternative, “No. This prescription does not replace a Medicare Part B covered medication this patient is taking or has taken.”

Eligibility for this demonstration is not contingent upon whether a beneficiary is currently taking any specific drug, but only that the beneficiary has a condition for which their physician has prescribed or plans to prescribe (if the patient is selected to participate in the demonstration) a drug that is covered under the demonstration for that condition.

Q: If a patient properly fills out and submits the application form and I complete the physician certification, will he or she be assured of Drug Demonstration benefits?

A: No. The law authorizing this demonstration placed a limit on the number of beneficiaries that can be enrolled (50,000) and the amount of money that can be spent (\$500 million). If CMS receives more applicants than can be served by the “application deadline” of September 30, 2004, then applicants will be chosen randomly among those

who submit completed applications by this date. However, if there are sufficient enrollment slots/funds to enroll everyone who applies, then all eligible applicants will be enrolled and CMS will continue to accept applications after September 30, 2004 on a rolling basis until all slots/funds have been used.

Those beneficiaries who file their applications by August 16, 2004, are eligible for an early selection process, with benefits available on September 1. Beneficiaries who are not chosen at that time will still be eligible for selection at the end of September. Beneficiaries selected at that time will have coverage starting mid-October.

Q: Will low-income beneficiaries be eligible for special assistance?

A: Yes. The Drug Demonstration will be administered according to the terms of the new Part D Medicare drug benefit, including the provisions related to low-income assistance. Beneficiaries are encouraged to look at the income eligibility form to determine if they should complete the low-income assistance form.

Drug Demonstration benefits will not be targeted to low-income beneficiaries. An individual's eligibility for low-income assistance will not be a factor in selecting participants. If a beneficiary is chosen for the Drug Demonstration, he or she will receive low-income assistance if eligible.

Q: If Medicare beneficiaries or my staff have questions about the application forms or general process, will assistance be available from CMS?

A: CMS has contracted with Trailblazer Health Enterprises, LLC to provide implementation support for the demonstration. . Trailblazer will hire and train 59 customer service representatives for the Drug Demonstration. They anticipate that the customer service staff will be able to help beneficiaries with the application, including helping beneficiaries determine their eligibility for financial assistance and complete the financial assistance application.