



Getting Medicare right

EPIC and Part D

EPIC is New York's State Pharmaceutical Assistance Program (SPAP).

It's for people age 65 or older who live in New York and have yearly incomes below \$35,000 for a single person and \$50,000 for couples.

EPIC works with Medicare drug coverage, called Part D, to lower your drug costs. It helps pay the monthly fee you must pay for Part D, called a premium. It also lowers how much you pay for your drugs at the pharmacy.

Most people with EPIC must also have a Medicare Part D plan. There are a few exceptions to this. For example, EPIC won't make you get a Part D plan if doing so would cause you to lose your retiree health coverage.

If you don't have a Part D plan, you can enroll in a plan or EPIC will enroll you in a Part D plan that works with your health coverage. Review the plan. Make sure that it works with your health coverage and covers your drugs. If you don't like the Part D plan EPIC chose for you, call EPIC (800-332-3742) or Medicare (800-633-4227) to switch plans.

EPIC helps pay for your Part D coverage. There are two EPIC plans.

- The EPIC **fee plan** is for people with lower incomes (\$20,000 a year or less for individuals; \$26,000 a year or less for married couples).
 - ♦ EPIC pays part of the cost of your drugs. It also pays your Part D plan premium up to the average cost of a basic Part D plan.
 - ♦ You pay the annual EPIC fee (waived if you have full Extra Help). The fee depends on your income. You pay a small copay for each prescription you fill.
- The EPIC **deductible plan** is for people with higher incomes (\$20,000-\$35,000 a year for individuals; \$26,000-\$50,000 a year for married couples).
 - ♦ EPIC pays part of the cost of your drugs. It also pays part of your EPIC deductible. The deductible is what you must spend on drugs each year before EPIC starts paying any of the cost. The amount of your deductible depends on your income.
 - ♦ You pay the Part D plan premium. You pay part of the EPIC deductible (EPIC lowers the deductible to help you pay your Part D premium). You also pay a small copay for each prescription you fill.

EPIC applies for Extra Help for you. Extra Help is a federal government program. It helps pay most of the cost of Part D drug coverage for people with low incomes. If you have EPIC and your income is below \$1,361 per month (\$1,839 for couples) in 2011, you'll get a Request for Additional Information (RAI) form in the mail. EPIC will apply for Extra Help for you if you return this form. Extra Help is free for people who qualify. Having Part D, Extra Help and EPIC saves you money at the pharmacy.

How EPIC and Part D Work Together

If you have EPIC and Part D, your Part D plan pays first for drugs it covers. However, it only pays part of the cost. You must pay the rest, called a coinsurance. EPIC then pays part of your coinsurance for you. EPIC usually only pays after your Part D plan pays.

If you have EPIC and Part D, there are **four** ways your drugs may be covered:

Drug cost	What you pay with EPIC
Up to \$15	\$3
\$15.01- \$35	\$7
\$35.01- \$55	\$15
Over \$55	\$20

- 1. When Part D pays:** If your Part D plan pays for your drug, then EPIC will pay most of your Part D coinsurance. For example, if your coinsurance is \$25 after your Part D plan pays, then you pay a reduced copay of \$7. (See chart.)
- 2. When you're in the Part D deductible phase:** If your Part D plan won't pay for your drug because you haven't met your deductible, then you pay the EPIC copay based on the total cost of the drug. For example, if the full cost of the drug is \$100 and Part D pays nothing, you only pay \$20. (See chart above.) Keep in mind that if you're in the EPIC deductible plan, you must meet your EPIC deductible before EPIC will pay anything.
- 3. Excluded drugs:** Some drugs are excluded from Part D coverage by law (like benzodiazepines and barbiturates). These are called excluded drugs. EPIC covers excluded drugs even though your Part D plan won't. Your pharmacist should be able to tell you if you're taking an excluded drug.
- 4. Drugs that aren't on your Part D plan's formulary or that have restrictions on them:** Your Part D plan only covers drugs on its formulary, which is its list of covered drugs. In addition, some drugs on the formulary have restrictions on them, which are special rules you must follow to get coverage. Common restrictions are prior authorization, quantity limits and step therapy. If your Part D plan won't cover your drug because it isn't on the formulary or it has restrictions on it, EPIC won't cover the drug until you appeal to your Part D plan. (Remember, this doesn't apply to drugs that aren't on the formulary because they're excluded drugs. EPIC pays for excluded drugs, and you don't have to appeal.) An appeal is a formal request to your Part D plan to cover a drug. Your doctor should help you appeal. When your Part D plan won't cover a drug:
 - Your pharmacist will get a notice that EPIC won't pay for your drug until you appeal to your Part D plan.
 - Your pharmacist should first find out whether the drug should be billed to Medicare Part B, which covers drugs in certain situations. If so, the pharmacist should send the claim to Part B. If not, the pharmacist should contact your doctor to see if your doctor can switch you to a drug your Part D plan covers.
 - ♦ If the pharmacist can't reach your doctor, the pharmacist should call EPIC and ask for a 3-day temporary refill.
 - ♦ If your doctor says that no covered drug will work for you, he should call EPIC and say that he's helping you appeal. The doctor can also ask EPIC for a 90-day temporary refill.
 - If you appeal and the plan agrees to cover your drug, Part D and EPIC will cover your drug. You only pay the EPIC copay.
 - If you appeal and the plan still won't cover the drug, send your appeal to the next level. The next level is the Independent Review Entity (also called Maximus). After you've done this, EPIC will cover your drug even if your plan won't.

EPIC can answer your questions about this process. Call 800-332-3742.