

**Big Sky Rx**

**&**

**CHIP Handouts**

## Big Sky Rx Program

Big Sky Rx is a State of Montana program to assist with Medicare Prescription drug premiums for eligible Montana citizens enrolled in a prescription drug plan under Medicare Rx. The program was created by the 2005 Legislature and is funded from the Tobacco tax (I-149 Funds).

**To qualify, the applicant must meet the following requirements:**

- ◆ Be a Montana resident, and
- ◆ Have a family income of 200% or below the Federal Poverty Level (FPL).

**To be enrolled, the qualified applicant must provide the following information:**

- ◆ Medicare prescription drug plan enrollment information, and
- ◆ If income is at or below 150% of the FPL and the applicant has limited assets, a determination from Social Security Extra Help must be provided.

**The maximum premium payment** for the Big Sky Rx program is \$33.11 per month. For applicants who also receive assistance from Social Security Extra Help, they will not receive more than \$33.11 per month total in premium assistance between both programs. Applicants are responsible for any monthly premium above \$33.11.

**Contact Information:** Please contact us with questions or to request a Big Sky Rx application at:

|                              |                     |
|------------------------------|---------------------|
| Toll Free (In State)         | 1-866-369-1233      |
| Out of state and Helena area | 1-406-444-1233      |
| Email                        | bigskyrx@mt.gov     |
| Big Sky Rx Website           | www.bigskyrx.mt.gov |

**Program Update:**

As of January 20<sup>th</sup>, the program has received <sup>2187</sup>~~1849~~ applications. From those applications, we have:

|      |     |  |
|------|-----|--|
| 362  | 185 | People enrolled into the Big Sky Rx program (eligible for the February premium payment)  |
| 345  | 284 | Ineligible for the Big Sky Rx program (over income or eligible for 100% federal premium assistance)  |
| 349  |     | Pending Applications (missing application demographic information, income, PDP and possibly LIS information. We cannot determine if they are qualified for the program until we have received their completed income information.) |
| 1031 |     | Qualified (passed the income and MT resident requirements, but we still need PDP and/or LIS information)   |

We are receiving an average of 50 calls per day and around 60 new applications per day. About half of our callers are very knowledgeable about the Medicare Rx process and know how all of the pieces fit together (including Social Security Extra Help). The other callers are confused about the programs. We are referring these people to the statewide SHIP counselors who can help them better understand the Medicare Rx program.

We have 264 applications that have not yet been entered. We are entering applications that we received on January 10th.

CHIP Monthly Enrollment SFY 06

| Month        | Previous month total | Disenrolled |              | Continuing enrollment | New enrollment | Waiting list | Total enrolled |
|--------------|----------------------|-------------|--------------|-----------------------|----------------|--------------|----------------|
|              | 10,908               |             |              |                       |                |              |                |
| July         | 10,908               | 431         | July         | 10,477                | 797            | 0            | 11,274         |
| August       | 11,274               | 432         | August       | 10,842                | 508            | 0            | 11,350         |
| September    | 11,350               | 476         | September    | 10,874                | 626            | 0            | 11,500         |
| October      | 11,500               | 565         | October      | 10,935                | 610            | 0            | 11,545         |
| November     | 11,545               | 437         | November     | 11,108                | 700            | 0            | 11,808         |
| December     | 11,808               | 483         | December     | 11,325                | 618            | 0            | 11,943         |
| January 2006 | 11,943               | 459         | January 2006 | 11,484                | 433            | 0            | 11,917         |
| February     | 11,917               |             | February     | -                     |                |              |                |
| March        | -                    |             | March        | -                     |                |              |                |
| April        | -                    |             | April        | -                     |                |              |                |
| May          | -                    |             | May          | -                     |                |              |                |
| June         | -                    |             | June         | -                     |                |              |                |

- Notes:
- 1) The total number of children enrolled is based on premiums paid to BCBS for monthly enrollment. Number may vary slightly from actual enrollment if adjustments (payments for previous months) were made.
  - 2) Waiting list number as of 1st of the month.

Known numbers = previous month total and new enrollees and total enrolled (and waiting list, if necessary)  
 Need to solve first for continuing and then for disenrolled  
 Continuing = total enrolled - new enrollment  
 Disenrolled = previous month total - continuing

# EXAMPLE

January 23, 2006

Senator Trudi Schmidt  
4029 6th Ave S  
Great Falls MT 59405

Dear Senator Schmidt,

On February 7, 2006, the Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) will facilitate a meeting in Helena for all parties interested in exploring options of how the State can best serve the greatest number of children under the Children's Health Insurance Plan (CHIP).

Currently CHIP is administered through a fully insured product purchased by the state. Language in SB 256 (2005 Legislative Session) provides DPHHS the flexibility to continue the current practice or to provide the CHIP health insurance in one of a number of alternative ways, e.g. self-administered by the state, self-administered using a third party administrator to process claims, etc. The purpose of the February 7<sup>th</sup> meeting is to explore these alternatives.

We hope to have participation from CHIP families, insurance representatives, advocates, legislators, and other interested parties so that we might gather a wide variety of perspectives. The group will be asked to consider and provide feedback on the benefits and challenges of each alternative and perhaps provide solutions to some of the challenges.

A formal agenda will be posted in the "News and Events" section of the DPHHS website ([www.dphhs.mt.gov](http://www.dphhs.mt.gov)) on or before February 1<sup>st</sup>. Please share this information with others who might be interested in attending the meeting. If there are topics you would like to have addressed at this meeting, please e-mail your thoughts to Jackie Forba ([jforba@mt.gov](mailto:jforba@mt.gov)) prior to that date.

**The meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 7 from 10:00 until 3:00 in the Old Supreme Court Chambers, Room 303 at the Capitol.**

We look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,



Joan Miles  
Director

## **Children's Health Insurance Plan - Community Outreach Activities**

### **January 2006**

#### **CHIP Media Campaign**

**"Health Insurance for Kids - Peace of Mind for Parents."**

- CHIP will launch a statewide media campaign in February 2006, including television, radio, and print advertising. All campaign materials are being developed internally by CHIP and Department staff. The Department is working directly with media outlets to avoid advertising agency fees and commissions.
- Two 30-second television commercials, one of which will feature Governor Schweitzer and Nancy Schweitzer, will begin airing statewide on broadcast and cable stations in mid-February and run for four weeks.
- Three to five 30-second radio commercials will begin airing in early February and will also run for four weeks.
- The campaign will utilize print advertising in select markets, focusing on rural, weekly newspapers and tribal newspapers, beginning in mid-February.
- CHIP will evaluate results in March – April 2006 and follow-up with additional media placements, if necessary.

#### **Health Care Provider Partnerships**

- In November 2005, CHIP began partnering with various health care associations and related agencies to increase enrollment by distributing CHIP materials at their locations. To date, 63 new distribution points have been established across the state.
- Current partners include: MHA... An Association of Montana Health Care Providers; Montana Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics; Montana Primary Care Association; LIEAP Offices; and Family Planning Clinics.
- Partnerships in development: Montana Pharmacy Association; Montana Dental Association; and American Academy of Family Physicians, Montana Chapter.

#### **Other Recent Outreach Activities**

- Statewide Press Release announcing increased enrollment issued in early December covered by several major Montana newspapers, including the Billings Gazette, Great Falls Tribune, Montana Standard, and the Helena Independent Record.
- Incorporated printed application into brochure to create a single, easy-to-distribute, marketing tool.
- Developed web-based interactive application allowing parents to complete application on their computer.

### **Future Outreach Activities**

- Follow-up with individuals and organizations contacted during the “Back to School Campaign” in Fall 2005. Provide CHIP brochures and applications, as needed.
- Issue press releases on a regular basis to report on CHIP enrollment and program activities.
- Evaluate the cost effectiveness of contracting with community-based and tribal organizations to distribute CHIP information and assist with the completion of applications.