



**BlueCross BlueShield  
of Illinois**

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## **Producer News**

### **Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage — Question & Answers**

On January 1, 2006 beneficiaries enrolled in Medicare will be eligible to participate in Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage, also known as Part D. This new program is Medicare-approved, but will be offered through private companies.

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Illinois (BCBSIL) expects soon to announce the details of a new Medicare-approved prescription drug program. HCSC Insurance Services Company (HISC), a wholly owned subsidiary of Health Care Service Corporation (HCSC), has submitted an application and a bid to participate in Part D and will be the entity offering this new product. Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Illinois is a division of HCSC.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) recently published regulations containing long-awaited guidance regarding Part D. Below please find a series of frequently asked questions regarding this latest news.

#### **How should Producers prepare for Part D?**

A number of our Producer training sessions will be held beginning in August. These sessions will offer comprehensive information on the plans. Invitations for the initial training sessions will be based on prior Producer productivity. Eligible Producers will learn more about the training in the coming weeks.

#### **Are there any guidelines for marketing Part D?**

Yes. In order to sell Part D, Producers will be required to obtain certification by attending a training session. Because Part D is a federal product aimed at Medicare beneficiaries, CMS has issued strict guidelines regarding the marketing of Part D. Detailed information on these guidelines will be covered at the training sessions.

#### **What are the critical dates for Part D?**

On October 1, 2005 companies with CMS-approved contracts may begin sending educational material and marketing their plans. However, applications cannot be accepted until open enrollment begins on November 15, 2005. The initial enrollment period for Part D is November 15, 2005 through May 15, 2006.