



November 2005

Pharmacy Bulletin
05-008

**ATTENTION
EQUALITYCARE
PHARMACY PROVIDERS
IMPORTANT MEDICARE INFORMATION**

On **January 1, 2006** the federal prescription drug benefit through Medicare will begin. Effective January 1st, EqualityCare (Medicaid) will no longer pay for prescription drugs for those Medicaid clients who are eligible for Medicare. These dual eligible patients will begin receiving their prescription drug benefits through Medicare Part D beginning **January 1, 2006**.

The EqualityCare Office of Pharmacy Services will be covering *only* those drugs that are exempt from coverage by Medicare Part D prescription drug plans. These drugs include **benzodiazepines, barbiturates, and limited Over-the-Counter (OTC) products**. Medicaid will NOT cover drugs that are excluded from a prescription drug plan's formulary.

Nursing Home patients will only receive coverage of benzodiazepines and barbiturates through Medicaid starting January 1, 2006. **OTC products are required to be covered by the nursing home for these patients.** Medicaid will **NOT** cover drugs that are excluded from a prescription drug plan's formulary, so any issues concerning a nursing home patient's drug coverage need to be directed to the client's Medicare prescription drug plan.

Pharmacies will bill Medicaid for benzodiazepines, barbiturates, and covered OTC products in the same way they bill for non-dual Medicaid clients. That is through point-of-sale with the clients **MEDICAID** identification number.

Clients in the Prescription Drug Assistance Program (PDAP) have until **May 15, 2006** to enroll in a Medicare Part D prescription drug plan. Therefore, claims may be submitted with their Equality Care identification number up until May 15, 2006 or until they have enrolled in a Medicare prescription drug plan. It is highly recommended that you encourage your PDAP clients to enroll in a Medicare prescription drug plan. The coverage under Medicare is more comprehensive and at a lower cost than that which is offered by the PDAP plan.

If you have any questions related to **MediCAID** coverage for dual eligible clients, please contact ACS at 1-800-251-1268. For questions regarding **MediCARE** coverage, please contact Medicare at 1-800-633-4227.