

Subject: FW: Subject: A New "Twist" in the Medicare Law makes it easier to save on your prescription drug costs

TTAG and MMPC Members:

Under a new law, more Medicare beneficiaries could qualify for Extra Help with their Medicare prescription drug plan costs because some things no longer count as income and resources. The Extra Help is estimated to be worth an average of \$3,900 per year. To qualify for the Extra Help, a person must be on Medicare, have limited income and resources, and reside in one of the 50 states or the District of Columbia.



[SOCIAL SECURITY](#)

Dear Colleague:

Today, Michael J. Astrue, Commissioner of Social Security, and rock and roll legend Chubby Checker, best known for his hit recording "The Twist," launched a new campaign to promote recent changes in Medicare law. This new "twist" makes it easier to qualify for *Extra Help* with Medicare prescription drug plan costs, and will streamline the application process for state-based Medicare Savings Programs.

Additional details on the changes are discussed in our [press release](#). We ask that you share information about the *Extra Help* program, as well as the [new video](#) featuring Chubby Checker, with your members, colleagues, and other interested parties. For your convenience, we have attached an image that can be placed on your website or homepage to link to www.socialsecurity.gov/extrahelp.

Thank you in advance for your help in promoting this important program with the American public.


Sincerely,

Aviva Sufian
Acting Associate Commissioner
for External Affairs

If you would rather not receive future communications from Social Security Administration, let us know by clicking [here](#).
Social Security Administration, 3409 Annex 6401 Security Boulevard, Baltimore, MD 21235 United States



Social Security

A man with dark hair, wearing a blue denim jacket over a white shirt and blue jeans, is smiling and pointing towards the viewer. He is standing on a black and white checkered floor. The background is white.

A new “twist” in
the law makes it
easier than ever
to save on your
prescription
costs

APPLY NOW!

CHUBBY CHECKER

www.socialsecurity.gov

Changes in the Law Starting January 2010 Make it Easier to Save on Medicare Drug Plan Costs

Why will it be easier to qualify for savings?

Under a new law, more Medicare beneficiaries could qualify for Extra Help with their Medicare prescription drug plan costs because some things no longer count as income and resources.

Who can get Extra Help?

Anyone who has Medicare can get Medicare Part D prescription drug coverage. Some people with limited income and resources are eligible for Extra Help to pay for the costs—monthly premiums, annual deductibles, and prescription co-payments—related to a Medicare prescription drug plan.

To qualify for Extra Help:

- You must reside in one of the 50 states or the District of Columbia.
- Your resources must be limited to \$12,510 for an individual or \$25,010 for a married couple living together. Resources include such things as bank accounts, stocks, and bonds. We **do not** count your house and car as resources; **and**

- Your annual income must be limited to \$16,245 for an individual or \$21,855 for a married couple living together. Even if your annual income is higher, you still may be able to get some help. Some examples where your income may be higher are if you or your spouse:
 - Support other family members who live with you;
 - Have earnings from work; or
 - Live in Alaska or Hawaii.

How does the new law change what is counted as income and resources?

Beginning January 1, 2010, when determining your eligibility for Extra Help:

- We will no longer count as a **resource** any life insurance policy; **and**
- We will no longer count as **income** the help you receive regularly from someone else to pay your household expenses—food, mortgage, rent, heating fuel or gas, electricity, water, and property taxes.

What else should I know about the new law?

If you already receive Extra Help, you will not need to reapply in 2010. Social Security will see if you are entitled to any additional Extra Help because we no longer count your life insurance or help with household expenses.

Beginning January 1, 2010, when you file your application for Extra Help, you also can start your application process for the Medicare Savings Programs—state programs that provide help with other Medicare costs. Social Security will send information to your state unless you tell us not to on the Extra Help application. Your state will contact you to help you apply for a Medicare Savings Program. These Medicare Savings Programs help people with limited income and resources pay for their Medicare expenses. The Medicare Savings Programs help pay for your Medicare Part B (medical insurance) premiums. For some people, the Medicare Savings Programs also may pay for Medicare Part A (hospital insurance) premiums, if any, and Part A and B deductibles and co-payments.

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How do I apply for Extra Help?

It is easy to apply for Extra Help. Just complete Social Security's *Application for Extra Help with Medicare Prescription Drug Plan Costs* (SSA-1020). Here's how:

- You can apply online at **www.socialsecurity.gov**;
- Call Social Security at **1-800-772-1213** (TTY **1-800-325-0778**) to apply over the phone or to request an application; or
- Apply at your local Social Security office.

After you apply, Social Security will review your application and send you a letter to let you know if you qualify for the Extra Help. Once you qualify, you can choose a Medicare prescription drug plan. If you do not select a plan, the *Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services* (CMS) will do it for you. The sooner you join a plan the sooner you begin receiving benefits.

Why should I apply for Extra Help online?

Our online application is secure and offers several advantages. It takes you through the process, step by step, with a series of self-help screens. The screens will tell you what information you need to complete the application and will guide you in answering the questions fully. You can apply from any computer at your own pace. You can start and stop at any time during the process, so you can leave the application and go

back later to update or complete any of the required information. We are careful to protect your personal information.

How can I get more information?

For more information about getting Extra Help with your Medicare prescription drug plan costs, visit **www.socialsecurity.gov** or call Social Security at **1-800-772-1213** (TTY **1-800-325-0778**). Social Security representatives are available to help you complete your application.

If you need information about Medicare Savings Programs, Medicare prescription drug plans, how to enroll in a plan, or to request a copy of the *Medicare & You* handbook, please visit **www.medicare.gov** or call **1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227; TTY, 1-877-486-2048)**. When you call, you also can request information about how to contact your State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP). In addition, you can find your local SHIP contact information on the back of your Medicare handbook or obtain the information online at **www.medicare.gov/contacts/staticpages/ships.aspx**.



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