

CMS Special Open Door Forum:

Monday, February 14th
12:30- 2:30 PM (Eastern Time)

The Medicare Prescription Drug Benefit: Options for Employer- and Union-Sponsored Retiree Drug Benefit Plans

The Medicare prescription drug benefit and the new retiree drug subsidy represent additional funding sources to help employers and unions continue to provide high quality prescription drug coverage for their retirees. In addition to the retiree drug subsidy, other plan sponsor options are also available under the statute. These new options offer many positive benefits which are important for the quality and security of drug coverage for retirees.

Employers and unions are likely to choose the options that are most advantageous to both the sponsor and their retirees. All of the options available to employers and unions under Part D reduce the costs associated with providing prescription drug coverage.

We plan to issue additional guidance on a wide range of issues where additional direction would be helpful for sponsors. For example, we plan to provide guidance on the actuarial equivalence standard, the subsidy application process, and the streamlined approach CMS plans to use in implementing the employer waivers. We respect plan sponsors' needs to have the guidance as soon as possible due to the complexity and timing of the process.

The goal of this Special Open Door Forum is to discuss the different options available to employer and union plan sponsors. Senior CMS policy staff will hold an open dialogue, answering questions and listening to comments, about the requirements for applying for the retiree drug subsidy and for taking advantage of the other options available to employers and unions in continuing to provide assistance with their Medicare-eligible retirees' drug costs.

Open Door Participation Instructions:

There are 2 ways to participate, by phone or "in-person".

1. To participate by phone:

Dial: **1-800-837-1935** & Reference Conference ID: **3686236**

Persons participating by phone do not need to RSVP.

Note: TTY Communications Relay Services are available for the Hearing Impaired. For TTY services dial 7-1-1 or 1-800-855-2880 and for Internet Relay services click here <http://www.consumer.att.com/relay/which/index.html>.

A Relay Communications Assistant will help

2. To participate in-person:

If you intend to participate in person, **RSVP is required:**

Please send a reply to this email by close of business Thursday, February 10th to SpecialODF@cms.hhs.gov.

Please include “**Employee Options**” in the subject line of your message, and send us the following information:

- a) Your full name
- b) Your organization or representation
- c) Your contact information (phone and email)
- d) Special needs information

Location information:

ADDRESS:

CMS Single Site Building
Auditorium
7500 Security Boulevard
Baltimore, MD 21244

Map & Directions: <http://cmsnet.cms.hhs.gov/hpages/ocsq/cmsdirections-north.htm>

ENCORE: 1-800-642-1687

"Encore" is a recording of this call that can be accessed by dialing 1-800-642-1687 and entering the Conf. ID # **3686236**.

The recording is scheduled to begin two hours after the call ends, and expires after 4 business days.

For automatic emails of Open Door Forum schedule updates (Listserv registration) and to view Frequently Asked Questions please visit our website at:

www.cms.hhs.gov/opendoor