



Southern Senior Care Newsletter

Inside This Issue

Medicare Part D

- Cost cutting tips
- U.S. Customs Policy
- O' Canada

Dental & Vision

- New Plans Available

Company News

- One
- Two
- Three

Personal News

- One
- Two
- Three

Contact Us

Mail:

Southern Senior Care, Inc.
2081 Furlong Run
Lawrenceville, GA 30043

Phone:

770-573-1712 (office)
877- (toll free)
404-429-4805 (mobile)

Email:

doug@southernSeniorcare.com

Prescription Drug Plan

Cost Saving Tips on your Prescription Drugs

Based on our research and your feedback, the majority of U.S. citizens believe that the Medicare Part D "Drug Plan" worked well and did reduce out of pocket costs for Prescription medicines in 2006. We have spoken with a few clients whose experiences were not so positive.

This month's main story will focus on a number of cost cutting strategies which could help you save money on your prescription drugs. We'll start off with some simple, straightforward methods and finish up with a few of the lesser known strategies.

I. Plain 'Ol Generics

The first line of defense in cutting prescription costs is to use a lower "Tier" drug. Most Part-D plans divide drugs into three Tiers. Tier-1 is made up of mostly generic drugs. The co-pay on Tier-1 drugs are about \$5. The next level is Tier-2. The co-pay on Tier-2 drugs is usually about \$20. The most expensive drugs are Tier-3. The co-pay for Tier-3 drugs is usually about \$60. So, if you can get a generic replacement for a Tier-3 drug, you would save about \$55/month or \$660/year. If you are taking any Tier-3 drugs, it is definitely worth the time to check with your doctor or pharmacist to see if you can switch to a generic

II. Breaking up is Hard to Do

Q: Why do most pills have those little grooves in them?

A: So you can cut your costs, er pills, in half.

See if your doctor will write you a prescription for double dosage. Instead of 10mg, get 20mg and cut them in two. Your thirty-day supply is now a sixty-day supply, and you've cut your costs in half.

We have been told that this is getting harder to do, but it doesn't hurt to try.

III. Doctors Samples

Another way to save money is by using samples. This is especially helpful if you have to try a new Tier-3 drug and don't know if it is going to work yet. Ask your doctor if he/she can get you some samples. If it does not work, you haven't wasted a \$60 tier-3 co-pay. And, just as importantly, you haven't added an expensive tier-3 drug to your annual prescription costs, which determine when you enter the "Donut Hole." We'll talk more about this "donut hole" in the next section.

What is the Donut Hole?

All Part-D plans include something called the Donut Hole – a cute name for something not-so-cute. Starting on January 1st of each year, the total cost of your prescriptions is added up. When this total reaches \$2,400, most plans stop paying their part of the costs. You pay 100% of your prescription costs, until your total out of pocket expenses reach \$3,850, at which time the plan starts paying again.

For example, if your prescriptions cost \$600/month (not your co-pay, but the actual cost of your prescriptions), you would enter the donut hole at the beginning of May. The cost of your drugs will have reached \$2,400 at this time (\$600/month for four months (Jan, Feb, Mar, Apr) which is \$2,400.

Your total out-of-pocket costs (TOOP) at this point is probably a few hundred dollars – whatever your co-pays have been. You now have to pay the full \$600/month until your TOOP costs reach \$3,850. At \$600/month, your TOOP will reach \$3,850 around December. Which means you will be getting out of the Donut Hole right at the end of the year. And everything starts over at \$0 again January 1st.

There are really three scenarios:

1. Your total prescription costs are less than \$200/month, and you never enter the Donut hole.
2. Your total prescription costs are between \$200 and \$600/month, in which case you will certainly enter the donut hole, but chances are, you won't get out before the end of the year because your TOOP costs will not exceed \$3,850.
3. Your total prescription costs are over \$600/month, in which case you will definitely enter the donut hole, and probably exit the donut hole. Exactly when you exit depends on your total monthly prescription costs.

So now what?

If you are in category 1, that is great. Stay as healthy as you can, and do your best to stay on inexpensive (i.e. generic) prescription drugs.

If you are in category 2, then use all of the strategies in this newsletter to reduce the cost of your prescriptions. Try to enter the donut hole as late in the year as possible.

If you are in category 3, you should also try to reduce the costs of your prescriptions every way you can, but it might not be possible. You may have to use expensive brand-name prescriptions.

If you are in category 2 or 3, you may want to consider getting some of your more expensive prescriptions via mail-order from our neighbors north of the border.

IV. Oh Canada

Before we get into details on how to order your prescriptions from Canada, let me give you a little background information.

According to the Associated Press, on October 4, 2006 an email was sent from the Department of Homeland Security to congressional staff explaining a change in policy. Relevant contents follow.

Associated Press - October 4, 2006 - By Stephen Majors

U.S. Customs and Border Protection will stop seizing prescription medications mailed from Canada for personal use in small amounts, Sen. Bill Nelson said Tuesday.

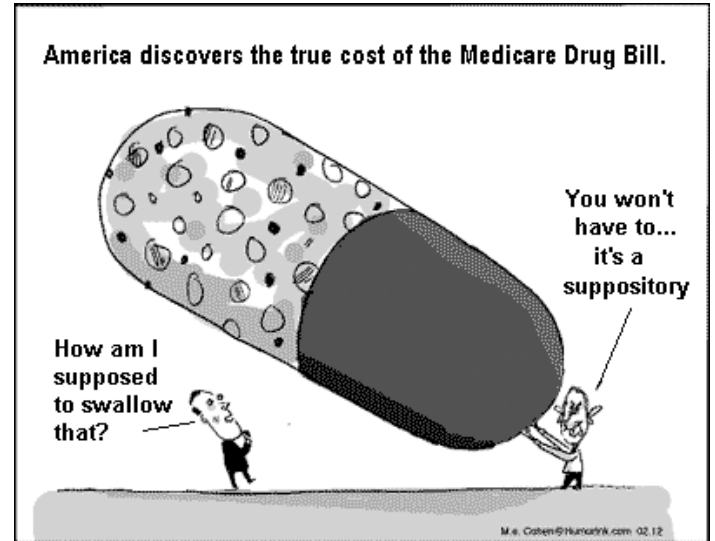
Since Nov. 2005, authorities have seized the prescription drug shipments of 40,000 Americans who bought prescriptions from Canada, where prices are lower, Nelson said.

The new policy goes into effect on Oct. 9. It was announced in an e-mail from the Department of Homeland Security sent Monday to congressional staff, Nelson said.

In plain language, this means that you can now get your prescriptions filled through Canadian pharmacies and mailed directly to your home. The process is fairly straight forward and many people are reporting savings of up to 50% over the costs of having their prescriptions filled here in the U.S.

Prescription drugs are significantly cheaper in Canada because its national health-care system negotiates lower prices for its citizens. The U.S., by contrast, is one of the only markets in the world where the government doesn't exercise control

over drug prices. One couple we talked to said they paid \$624.77 for a three-month supply of drugs at an online Vancouver registered pharmacy. These same drugs cost us \$1,208.04 buying at Walgreen's, Target, and Kmart.



A number of our clients have spoken to us about their positive experiences ordering prescriptions from Canada. If you decide to try it out, let us know how it works out for you.

The two Canadian Pharmacies listed below seem to be the most popular.

1. Canada Drugs - Phone: 1-866.444.3784;
Website: <http://www.canadadrugs.com>

2. Canada Pharmacy - Phone: 1-800.891.0844;
Website: <http://www.canadapharmacy.com>

For an extensive list of Canadian Pharmacies visit the following website:

<http://www.suddenlysenior.com/canadiandrugstores.html>