



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**State announces early application date
for Illinois Cares Rx and Circuit Breaker for seniors
and people with disabilities**

***Beginning January 15, apply online at www.cbrx.il.gov for faster processing
or call the Senior Helpline at 1-800-252-8966 or
Circuit Breaker at 1-800-624-2459 for more information***

CHICAGO – The Illinois Department on Aging (IDoA) is pleased to announce that older adults and people with disabilities may apply online beginning January 15 for Illinois Cares Rx and Circuit Breaker. This application process is available one month earlier than previous years so that recipients receive their benefits faster and to avoid a possible break in coverage.

“I am pleased that seniors and people with disabilities can get the prescription drugs and benefits that they are entitled to at a low cost. And by having the same convenient online application process available one month earlier than previous years, people have extra time to sign up for these benefits,” said IDoA Director Charles D. Johnson.

IDoA is encouraging individuals to use the online application at www.cbrx.il.gov because it is the fastest way to get approved for the state’s prescription drug assistance program, Circuit Breaker property tax grants and \$54.00 license plate discount.

The state’s pharmaceutical assistance program, Illinois Cares Rx, provides wrap-around prescription drug coverage to fill in the gaps created by Medicare Part D and offers drug coverage for people who do not have Medicare. Individuals eligible for the Illinois Cares Rx program may also be eligible for additional benefits from the State’s Circuit Breaker program.

The Circuit Breaker program may provide a property tax relief grant for individuals who pay property tax on their residence or rent or nursing home charges on a residence that is subject to property tax. In addition, the program provides an annual \$54.00 discount on the license plate fee for one vehicle. These benefits, including Illinois Cares Rx, can be accessed by applying on one application.

In 2008 more than 235,000 applied online, compared to 190,976 in 2007 and 75,288 in 2006, the first year the Illinois Department on Aging (IDoA) had made the Illinois Cares Rx and Circuit Breaker application available online.

IDoA sent booklets to those who submitted Illinois Cares Rx and Circuit Breaker applications in the mail last year. Those who filed an application for Circuit Breaker and Illinois Cares Rx via the Internet will receive yellow postcards in the mail as a reminder to re-apply online.

To assist those who may need extra help to apply, the Department on Aging staff held training sessions in coordination with Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation (IDFPR), Division of Insurance, Senior Health Insurance Program (SHIP). Training was to explain changes in this upcoming year to providers in the Aging Network. SHIP, which provides free individual counseling services at local sites throughout Illinois, is dedicated to educating people with their Medicare and their caregivers about available insurance options. For seniors who don't have access to a computer, they are encouraged to visit a local senior center, public library, community center, Area Agency on Aging or Senior Health Assistance Program site to access the web based application.

Those eligible for Illinois Cares Rx fall into one of the following groups whether or not they have Medicare:

1. Illinois Cares Rx Plus

- **Who can enroll?** If you are 65 years of age or older, a citizen or qualified non-citizen and have an annual income of no more than \$23,903; for a household of two with an annual income limit of \$32,177.
- **What's covered?** Almost all prescription drugs are covered.

2. Illinois Cares Rx Basic

- **Who can enroll?** Seniors or persons with disabilities with income less than \$25,532 for a single person, \$33,877 for a household of two, and \$42,220 for a household of three or more people.
- **What's covered?** Prescription drugs for the treatment of Alzheimer's disease, arthritis, cancer, diabetes, glaucoma, cardiovascular disease, lung disease and smoking-related illnesses, osteoporosis, Parkinson's disease, multiple sclerosis, and HIV/AIDS (if you have Medicare).

For more information or assistance, please call the Senior HelpLine at 1-800-252-8966 (888-206-1327 TTY) or Circuit Breaker at 1-800-624-2459 or visit www.cbrx.il.gov.

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