



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Seniors Urged To Apply Online for *Illinois Cares Rx* ***CORRECTION: Applicants who waited after Dec 17 will experience a break in coverage***

Visit www.cbrx.il.gov or call Senior HelpLine at 1-800-252-8966

SPRINGFIELD – December 20, 2010. Illinois Department on Aging Director Charles D. Johnson is reminding Illinois seniors about their Illinois Cares Rx coverage. He is urging seniors and persons with disabilities to apply online because it is the fastest way to get approved. Illinois Cares Rx is the state's prescription drug assistance program that provides wrap-around prescription drug coverage to fill in the gaps created under Medicare Part D. People who have waited until the end of the year to apply will experience a break in coverage. Paper applications take longer, but people who apply online today through the end of the year can expect their coverage to resume in early February.

"Seniors who have access to the Internet may apply for Illinois Cares Rx online so that you can get your benefits faster," said Director Johnson. "For those without computer access, reach out to family members who do own computers, visit local Area Agencies on Aging or senior centers, or contact a volunteer with the Senior Health Insurance Program in your community. And remember, if you have any questions, you can always call the Illinois Department on Aging's Senior HelpLine at 1-800-252-8966."

To assist those who may need extra help to apply, the Illinois Department of Insurance's Senior Health Insurance Program (SHIP) offers free, one-on-one counseling services and in communities across the state to assist Medicare-eligible individuals during the open enrollment period. For a list of SHIP volunteers, visit the website at <http://insurance.illinois.gov/ship/> or call SHIP toll-free at 1-800-548-9034.

"No one should be denied access to medications that could help keep them healthy," said Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services Director Julie Hamos. "Illinois Cares Rx offers many seniors and people with disabilities prescription drug assistance, and I believe that everyone who is eligible should take advantage of this program."

In addition to reminding seniors and people with disabilities to reapply now to avoid a break in coverage, the state is also noting that income for 2011 will remain the same as the current year:

\$27,610 – for a household size of one

\$36,635 – for a household size of two

\$45,657 – for a household size of three or more

So far, in 2010, there have been 277,915 online applications filed for Illinois Cares Rx, as compared to:

- In *2009 260,770 applied online for IL Cares Rx
- In *2008 235,236 applied online
- In *2007 158,888 applied online
- In *2006 75,288 applied online (2006 - first year the application was available online.)

Before logging on to the Internet, individuals should have the following information available: Social Security number(s), amount of property taxes paid in 2009, amount of rent paid in 2009, and a copy of 2009 federal tax returns.

For more information about Illinois Cares Rx, log on to www.cbrx.il.gov or call the Illinois Department on Aging's Senior HelpLine at 1-800-252-8966.

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