



## Medicare Savings Plan for Seniors

I'm very excited that a bill I've been working on for two years was passed in this year's legislative session, expanding eligibility for the Medicare Savings Plan, so that it will be open to people on ConnPACE. The Department of Social Services is now implementing this, and will be sending notices out over the next few months.

We all bring what talents we have to the legislature and I am thrilled that my background in Medicare, Medicaid, insurance, and healthcare enabled me to draft a bill that actually saves the state money while improving benefits for seniors and disabled folks. This new "ConnPACE Plus" program is a clear win-win for both seniors and taxpayers.

In this newsletter there is information about how to sign up for the Medicare Savings Plan program and what the benefits are. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me or the program contacts listed in the newsletter.

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# LINDA SCHOFIELD

**State Representative | 16<sup>th</sup> District**

Representing Simsbury

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# State Representative **LINDA SCHOFIELD**

Rep. Schofield was given AARP's award for legislative achievement for spearheading the legislation to create this new program.



## **New Savings for Seniors: Important Health Benefit Information**

ConnPACE is a CT state program that provides prescription drug benefits to seniors and disabled people who have income below \$31,900 for married couples and \$23,700 for singles. *People on ConnPACE have an opportunity to see their Social Security checks grow by almost \$100/month and to see their copays drop significantly for drugs and potentially for other medical services.* Under this new initiative, lower-income Medicare beneficiaries who are on or eligible for ConnPACE are eligible for new benefits; if they enroll in the Medicare Savings Program (MSP).

- Their Medicare Part B premiums will be paid for, saving them \$96.40/month, \$1,156.80/year;
- Their prescription copays will be lowered from the ConnPACE copay of \$16.25 to \$2.40 for generics and \$6.00 for brand name drugs;
- Some people with very low income will get other Medicare cost sharing covered, such as the deductibles and copays for physician and hospital services.

This new program saves the state money, because we take advantage of federal funds to substitute for current state costs under ConnPACE. Since this new program will put roughly \$45 million more in the hands of low income seniors and disabled persons, it will not only help them, but also the Connecticut economy as they spend these federal funds on food, utilities, clothes and other consumer goods.

### **An Example:**

Mrs. P. is on ConnPACE and takes 14 medications for her various health problems, so the copays on ConnPACE cost her \$227.50 a month. That's \$2,730 a year. Under this new program, her copays would drop to \$576 a year. So, she would save \$2,154 on drug copays. In addition, Mrs. P's Part B premiums would be paid for, so her social security check would be \$96.40 more each month. Between the savings on copays and on Part B premiums, Mrs. P would be \$3,310.80 better off each year.

Making sure our families get good quality healthcare is a paramount issue of our time. The battle will be won with solid incremental steps like this, and I am very grateful that you have given me a chance to work on this issue.

### **Application Information**

The Department of Social Services will be sending application forms to ConnPACE enrollees in the coming months. You can also apply directly for the Medicare Savings Program, without enrolling in ConnPACE.

I urge you to take advantage of the program.

To get an application or more information, call Infoline (dial 2-1-1) and ask about the expanded Medicare Savings Programs.

### **To Apply using the Internet:**

Go to [www.ct.gov/dss](http://www.ct.gov/dss) then click on Medicare Savings Programs.