

Got Medicaid? Get Medicare Drug Coverage!

By the GWAAR Legal Services Team (for reprint)

Although many people don't realize it, Medicaid and BadgerCare Plus will not pay for prescription medications for a person who is eligible for Medicare but is not enrolled in Medicare drug coverage. Since Medicare Part D was created in 2006, federal law has prohibited state Medicaid programs from paying for any medications that could be covered by Medicare, even if the Medicare beneficiary has not enrolled in Medicare drug coverage. That policy is incorporated into section 38.7 of the BC+ Eligibility Handbook and Topic # 1947 in the Pharmacy Coordination of Benefits section of the ForwardHealth Provider Handbook.

This policy has caused problems for some individuals who expected BadgerCare Plus or Medicaid coverage to be extended through the end of the public health emergency and expected their drug coverage under Medicaid to continue even though they became eligible for Medicare in the meantime. Unfortunately, most people aren't aware of the issue until they learn from a pharmacist that they have no coverage for needed prescriptions. At that point, they may have no option but to rely on stopgap measures such as LINET or manufacturer assistance programs to bridge the gap until they can enroll in a Part D plan or an Advantage Plan with prescription drug coverage.

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