

LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR MURRAY ANNOUNCES PRESCRIPTION ADVANTAGE ON-GOING OPEN ENROLLMENT

QUINCY, MA - Prescription Advantage, the Commonwealth's pharmacy assistance program, is opening enrollment to allow seniors to enroll at anytime throughout the year, announced Lieutenant Governor Timothy Murray today at South Shore Elder Services' 15th Annual Picnic. In previous years, Massachusetts residents age 66 or older had to wait for a scheduled open enrollment period. The Lieutenant Governor has also recorded a podcast on Prescription Advantage that will be posted to www.mass.gov/governor on Friday. "By allowing seniors to apply at anytime," Lieutenant Governor Murray said, "Prescription Advantage will be available to people when they need it most. Last year, Prescription Advantage helped more than 12,000 members who reached the Medicare Part D coverage gap or what is commonly referred to as the 'donut-hole.'"

Prescription Advantage lowers drug costs for many seniors and individuals with disabilities by wrapping around their Medicare Part D prescription drug coverage. The program helps pay for co-payments, premiums and the coverage gaps associated with Part D plans. In addition to providing coverage during the donut-hole, other benefits of joining Prescription Advantage include:

- No monthly premium;
- It supplements Medicare prescription benefits by helping to pay co-payments and deductibles;
- It limits the amount of money spent on prescriptions; and
- Individuals with limited income may also be eligible to receive help paying for their Medicare Part D plan premiums.

"Access to affordable prescription drugs is crucial to many elders who are increasingly diagnosed with treatable, chronic medical conditions. Massachusetts seniors will now be able to apply to Prescription Advantage at any time to get assistance paying for their important medications," said Health and Human Services Secretary JudyAnn Bigby. Seniors not eligible for Medicare and those who do not have Medicare Part D, but have prescription drug coverage through an employer or union, can also apply for Prescription Advantage benefits. Becoming a Prescription Advantage member will allow those who are eligible for Part D, but have not yet joined a Part D plan to join one without having to wait for Medicare's open enrollment in November. "It is important for people who were not eligible for Prescription Advantage before, or who did not consider the program, to understand how much Prescription Advantage can help," said Elder Affairs Acting Secretary Eleanor Shea-Delaney.

To obtain a Prescription Advantage enrollment form, visit the Elder Affairs website at www.mass.gov/elders or call toll-free 1-800-AGE-INFO (1-800-243-4636), TTY for the deaf and hard of hearing at 1-877-610-0241, to speak with Prescription Advantage Customer Service or to access a SHINE (Serving the Health Information Needs of Elders) counselor for free health insurance counseling and application support. MassMedLine staff is also available to help with decisions about prescription drug coverage at 1-866-633-1617.