

Senior Markets News:

Medicare Annual Election Period (AEP)

With the Medicare Annual Election Period (AEP) fast approaching, Highmark's Senior Markets Producer Certification Training and Testing Program for 2010 is here. This year's process will differ slightly from previous years. To satisfy the Highmark Senior Markets certification requirements for 2010, producers are required to complete two separate training modules:

(1) CMS Agent and Broker Training Module – Provides information on Medicare basics; and

(2) Highmark Senior Markets Agent and Broker Training Module – Provides information on Highmark's benefits and administrative processes for 2010.

You can access the CMS Agent and Broker Training Module beginning September 9, 2009. The Highmark Senior Markets Agent and Broker Training Module will be available shortly. Detailed instructions will be issued separately once this module is available. **The deadline for completion of both modules is October 15, 2009.** The attached document provides additional instructions for accessing and completing the CMS training requirements.

CMS Agent and Broker Training Module

In an effort to standardize producer training, CMS collaborated with select carriers to pilot an online training and testing module for the CY 2010 marketing season. CMS expects the agent and broker testing and certification provided through this pilot program to be recognized by all MAOs and PDP sponsors. While CMS will require all agents selling Medicare Advantage or Medicare Part D plans to complete their standardized training and testing module beginning in 2011, Highmark requires producers to complete this module today.

The CMS training module is divided into five lessons:

- (1) Medicare basics;
- (2) Enrollment and disenrollment;
- (3) Beneficiary protections;
- (4) Marketing regulations and materials for sales agents; and
- (5) Medicare marketing events.

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The deadline for completion is October 15, 2009

Accessing the CMS Agent and Broker Training Module

To access the CMS Agent and Broker Training, you must first register by accessing the registration URL provided below:

<https://hpmstraining.cms.hhs.gov/agentbrokertraining2009/event/registration.html>

Once your registration has been submitted, you will receive an email that contains the URL for accessing the HPMS Agent and Broker Training. Once you have passed all five lessons with a score of 85% or higher, you can access the certification examination and receive a training certificate. Please keep in mind that the examination questions are solely based on the content of these lessons and may not specifically apply to Highmark Senior Markets product offerings.

General Health News:


H1N1 Vaccine (formerly called the Swine Flu vaccine)

At this time, there are still a lot of unknowns regarding distribution and availability of the vaccine, how it will be billed or if even if there will be a cost associated with it. It is very likely that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) will be absorbing the cost of the vaccine and there will be nothing to be billed, or at most an administration fee. It is possible that there will be limited quantities of the vaccine, and that it may be distributed via alternative sources (schools, health departments, etc).

There is a workgroup at Highmark that is responsible for resolving some of the administrative issues and developing a communication plan to explain Highmark's position on the H1N1 vaccine. At this time, groups are being advised that the administration of the H1N1 vaccine will be covered at the same level as the seasonal flu vaccine when billed by a network/participating provider. If the group has the Highmark Preventive Schedule, coverage for flu vaccine is included under adult immunizations.

If you have any questions concerning this issue of Producer News, please contact your Highmark client manager.

Sincerely,



Reginald E. Brown
Director, Producer Affairs, West