



**MEDICARE ENROLLMENT & APPEALS GROUP**

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**DATE:** May 6, 2014

**TO:** Medicare Advantage Organizations and Prescription Drug Plan Sponsors  
with Service Areas in Nebraska

**FROM:** Arrah Tabe-Bedward  
Director, Medicare Enrollment & Appeals Group

**SUBJECT:** Special Election Period for Medicare Beneficiaries in Nebraska Who Are Losing  
High Risk Pool Supplemental Coverage

The purpose of this memorandum is to inform Medicare Advantage (MA) organizations and prescription drug plan (PDP) sponsors with service areas in Nebraska of a Special Election Period (SEP) that will be available to a small group of Medicare beneficiaries who are enrolled in Original Medicare and currently have supplemental coverage through Nebraska's high risk pool (Nebraska Comprehensive Health Insurance Pool (NECHIP)).

**Background:**

Nebraska is one of several states currently providing supplemental high risk pool coverage to approximately 6,000 Medicare beneficiaries under age 65. This group includes both disabled individuals and those with end stage renal disease (ESRD). These states allowed beneficiaries enrolled in Original Medicare to buy high risk pool plans to supplement their Medicare coverage. NECHIP coverage is scheduled to end June 30, 2014. CMS has established an SEP to allow affected beneficiaries who are otherwise eligible an opportunity to enroll in an MA organization or PDP.

**Parameters of the SEP:**

The following guidelines apply to the SEP:

- The one-time SEP will end on August 31, 2014, two months following the termination of NECHIP coverage.
- The effective date will be the first day of the month following the date the organization receives the enrollment request.
- This SEP will be available only to individuals who are losing NECHIP coverage. MA organizations and PDP sponsors are not required to collect proof that a beneficiary making an election falls into this population. However, in addition to determining eligibility for enrollment following existing policies outlined in CMS enrollment

guidance, plans must request attestations from beneficiaries stating that they were enrolled in NECHIP.

- For individuals who contact 1-800-MEDICARE to take advantage of this SEP, organizations may receive enrollments with the “OTH” code and will have accompanying text in the “CMS use only” field that says “high risk pools.”

For individuals enrolled in a state’s high risk pool, prescription drug coverage is considered creditable for the purposes of determining any number of uncovered months based on the new enrollment into the Medicare Prescription Drug plan. Organizations are expected to follow all requirements outlined in Chapter 4 of the Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage Manual for determining numbers of uncovered months and processing any applicable Part D late enrollment penalties.

Beneficiaries have been given a number of resources to contact for additional information, including 1-800-MEDICARE, Medicare.gov, and the NECHIP customer service team, but may contact organizations/sponsors for additional information or to initiate an election.

### **Questions:**

For questions concerning this SEP, please send an email to [pdpenrollment@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:pdpenrollment@cms.hhs.gov) and copy your CMS Account Manager.