Medicare Part B deadline approaching

By W. Dale de Haan - Social Security District Manager (Sunday, February 12, 2012)

If you didn’t sign up for Medicare Part B medical insurance when you first became eligible for Medicare, you now have an opportunity to apply — but time is running out. The deadline for applying for the general enrollment period is March 31. If you miss the deadline, you may have to wait until 2013 to apply.

Medicare Part B covers some medical expenses not covered by Medicare Part A (hospital insurance), such as doctor fees, outpatient hospital visits, and other medical supplies and services.

When you first become eligible for Medicare Part B, you have a seven-month period in which to sign up for medical insurance (Part B). After that, you may have to pay a higher premium — unless you were covered through your employer’s group health plan or a group health plan based on your spouse’s current employment. You are given another opportunity to enroll in Part B during the general enrollment period, from January 1 to March 31 of each year. But each 12-month period that you are eligible for Medicare Part B and do not sign up, the amount of your monthly premium increases by 10 percent.

There are special situations in which you can apply for Medicare Part B outside the general enrollment period. For example, you should contact Social Security about applying for Medicare if:

• you are a disabled widow or widower between age 50 and age 65, but have not yet received disability benefits because you are still getting Social Security benefits; or
• you worked long enough in a government job where Medicare was paid and you meet the requirements of the Social Security disability program and became disabled before age 65.

You can learn more about Medicare by reading our electronic brochure, Medicare at www.socialsecurity.gov/pubs/10030.pdf.

For more information on CRP visit www.fsa.usda.gov or talk to your local FSA service center gate or office—1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227), TTY 1-877-486-2046.

USDA announces CRP general sign-up

Landowners and producers will have a four week window beginning in March to enroll

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) State Executive Director, John W. McCauley, announced that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will conduct a four-week Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) general sign-up. This CRP signup will begin on March 12, 2012 and end on April 2, 2012.

This is an educational experience that the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Farm Service Agency (FSA) State Executive Director, John W. McCauley, announced that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will conduct a four-week Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) general sign-up. This CRP signup will begin on March 12, 2012 and end on April 2, 2012.

The Academy will be held at the Fire Rescue Training Center located at 383 Old Greensboro Road in Campbellsville. Applications can be obtained by contacting the Kentucky State Police, Post 15 at 270-546-4964 or by visiting http://www.kentuckystatepolice.org/post15.htm. Applications may also be emailed to william.gregory@ky.gov.

Classes will meet from 7:00 PM to 9:30 PM EDT where they will learn about the many facets of the Kentucky State Police. Class topics will include criminal patrol, criminal investigations, and drug interdiction. Participants will also take part in simulated traffic stops, crime scene scenarios and evidence collection.

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) is a voluntary program available to agricultural producers to help them use environmentally sensitive land for environmental benefits. Producers enrolled in CRP plant long-term, resource-conserving covers to improve the quality of water, control soil erosion and develop wildlife habitat. In return, USDA provides participants with payment and cost-share assistance. Contract duration is between 10 and 15 years. Producers with environmentally sensitive land are encouraged to evaluate their options under CRP. Producers also are encouraged to seek out an independent experienced appraiser to look into the cost of the land offered. Each eligible offer is ranked in comparison to all other offers and selections made from the ranking. FSA uses the following EBI factors to rank the offers:

• Wildlife habitat benefits resulting from covers on contract
• On-farm benefits from reduced wind and erosion, and
• Water quality benefits from reduced runoff, erosion and leaching.

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