


Local

Potential eligible benefit recipients to be notified in GRADD region

 By Austin Ramsey Messenger-Inquirer

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About 2,300 Medicare recipients in the seven-county Green River Area Development District region could be eligible for additional benefits.

The U.S. Social Security Administration is mailing those beneficiaries letters this month informing them of the programs. The GRADD office in Owensboro is encouraging individuals who are contacted by Social Security to reach out to the aging, health and social services department for additional screening that should indicate their eligibility.

Ken Lawson is a National Council on Aging outreach specialist with GRADD. He said Social Security reaches out to people enrolled in Medicare who are likely eligible for but are not receiving the Part D Low-Income Subsidy, or Extra Help Program, and the Medicare Savings Programs. The programs may help beneficiaries get help paying Medicare prescription drug coverage costs and Medicare Part B insurance premiums along with other medical costs.

Some individuals who are contacted may also qualify for Medicare Part A hospital insurance costs.

Either way, state medical assistance officials must verify that annual income and resources fall within the Medicare guidelines.

For the MSP program, annual income must fall below \$15,996 for single beneficiaries and \$21,480 for those who are married and living together. Resources like money in the bank, stocks and bonds can not exceed \$7,160 for single beneficiaries and \$10,750 for those who are married and living together.

For those who qualify for both LIS and MSP, annual income must fall below \$17,505 for single beneficiaries and \$23,595 for those who are married and living together. Resources can not exceed \$13,440 or \$26,860, respectively.

Social Security Administration letters are distributed according to ZIP codes. Most of the Owensboro and Daviess County codes extending west toward Henderson show among the highest concentration of both LIS and MSP letter recipients in western Kentucky, indicating a large number of people who qualify for these programs but are not receiving their benefits. It's using that information that Lawson said he was able to conclude that there are about 2,300 eligible beneficiaries in the region.

"I'm trying to help people find benefits that they deserve," he said. "The money has been set aside by the federal government. These programs have been vetted as good programs they aren't wasteful; they are helping people get by so they can take their medicines, and receive their Medicare benefits. There are no frills here or fluff here. It's nice to find these people so we can help them."

That's what Lawson does, he said. Once individuals receive their letters. They can come to him to verify that they do qualify to receive the benefits and complete their applications. It's a fairly easy process, he said.

More information can be found by visiting medicare.org.

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