

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES  
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services  
Center for Medicare  
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## **MEDICARE PLAN PAYMENT GROUP**

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**Date:** November 21, 2014

**To:** All Part D Plan Sponsors

**From:** Cheri Rice /s/  
Director, Medicare Plan Payment Group

**Subject:** **2015 Resource and Cost-Sharing Limits for Low-Income Subsidy (LIS)**

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) is releasing guidance on the updated resource limits for individuals who apply and qualify for the low-income subsidy (LIS), and announces the maximum co-payments that LIS eligible beneficiaries, including full-benefit dual eligible and partial dual eligible individuals, will pay as enrollees of Medicare prescription drug plans in 2015. By statute, CMS is required to update the Part D resource limits, income standards, and cost-sharing amounts for the low-income subsidies each year. The 2015 resource limits are \$8,780 (\$13,930 if married) for the full low-income subsidy and \$13,640 (\$27,250 if married) for other low-income subsidies. These limits include \$1,500 per person in resources to be used for burial expenses, which is authorized under 20 CFR § 416.1231. The attached notice provides the method that CMS used to update the resource limits and the cost-sharing amounts for 2015.

CMS will release the 2015 income standards for the low-income subsidies in early 2015 after the 2015 Federal poverty lines (FPL) are released.

### **Further Information**

If you have questions about this guidance, please contact Anne Calinger at [anne.calinger@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:anne.calinger@cms.hhs.gov).

## **Resource Limits for the Medicare Part D Low-Income Subsidy: Annual Adjustment for 2015**

To apply and qualify for the Part D low-income subsidy, Medicare beneficiaries must have resources no greater than the resource limits established by the Medicare Modernization Act (MMA). In 2014, to qualify for the full low-income subsidy, Medicare beneficiaries are required to have resources below or equal to \$7,160 (\$10,750 if married). Medicare beneficiaries are required to have resources below or equal to \$11,940 (\$23,860 if married) to qualify for other low-income subsidies. When determining whether a beneficiary qualifies for the Medicare Part D low income subsidy, \$1,500 per person in resources are excluded from consideration if the beneficiary indicates that they expect to use some of their resources for burial expenses as authorized under 20 CFR 416.1231. Therefore, these resource limits are increased by \$1,500 per person if the beneficiary expects to use some of their resources for burial expenses and indicates as such to the Social Security Administration.

The MMA directs CMS to update the resource limits for the low-income subsidy each year. This notice provides: (i) the method for updating the resource limits, (ii) the 2015 low-income subsidy resource limits, and (iii) the 2015 cost-sharing for low-income subsidy eligible enrollees.

### **I. Calculation Methodology**

Section 1860D-14(a)(3)(D) of the Social Security Act (SSA) requires CMS to use the annual percentage increase in the Consumer Price Index, All Urban Consumers (all items, U.S. city average) as of September of the previous year to update the resource limits for the low-income subsidy. CMS used the September 2013 and the September 2014 CPI values from the Bureau of Labor Statistics to calculate the annual percentage increase. The annual percentage increase in CPI for contract year 2015 is calculated as follows:

$$\frac{\text{September 2014 CPI}}{\text{September 2013 CPI}} \text{ or } \frac{238.031}{234.149} = 1.01658$$

(Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Department of Labor)

Therefore, the 2014 increase factor for the low-income subsidy resource limits is 1.66%. Per the statute, the resource limits are increased by 1.66% for 2015 and rounded to nearest multiple of \$10. Therefore, the resource limit required for beneficiaries to qualify for the full low-income subsidy is increased from \$7,160 (\$10,750 if married) to \$7,280 (\$10,930 if married) for 2015. The resource limit required to qualify for partial low-income subsidies is increased from \$11,940 (\$23,860 if married) to \$12,140 (\$24,250 if married) for 2015.

## II. Table of Resource Limits Used to Determine Eligibility for Low-Income Subsidy (LIS)

LIS Level*	Marital Status	2014 LIS Resource Limit**	2015 LIS Resource Limit**
Full Subsidy LIS	Single	\$8,660	\$8,780
	Married	\$13,750	\$13,930
All Other LIS	Single	\$13,440	\$13,640
	Married	\$26,860	\$27,250

\*Section 3304 of the PPACA amends 1860D-14(a)(3)(B) of the SSA by adding a special rule for widows and widowers regarding eligibility for low-income assistance. Effective 1/1/2011, redeterminations of eligibility for an LIS-eligible individual whose spouse has died are extended for one year beyond the date when his/her eligibility would have otherwise ended.

\*\*These resource limits include \$1,500 per person for burial expenses.

## III. Low-Income Subsidy Eligible Beneficiary Cost-sharing

As required by statute, each year the co-payments for low-income subsidy eligible beneficiaries under the basic benefit are indexed to the increase in average total drug expenses of Medicare beneficiaries. The maximum copayments below the out-of-pocket threshold for certain low-income full subsidy eligible enrollees as well as the deductible and the maximum copayments above the out-of-pocket threshold for partial subsidy eligible enrollees are updated by the annual percentage increase in average expenditures for Part D drugs. In addition, the maximum copayments below the out-of-pocket threshold for full benefit dual eligible enrollees with incomes that do not exceed 100% of the Federal poverty line (FPL) are updated by the annual percentage increase in the Consumer Price Index. For additional information on the updating of these Part D benefit parameters, please refer to the April 7, 2014 guidance, titled “Announcement of Calendar Year (CY) 2015 Medicare Advantage Capitation Rates and Medicare Advantage and Part D Payment Policies and Final Call Letter” (2015 Rate Announcement and Call Letter) available on the CMS website at <http://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Health-Plans/MedicareAdvtgSpecRateStats/Announcements-and-Documents.html>. Please see the table below for the updated cost-sharing for low-income subsidy eligible beneficiaries in 2015.

**2015 Maximum LIS Beneficiary Cost-Sharing Table**

<b>Low-income Subsidy Category</b>	<b>Deductible</b>	<b>Copayment up to Out-of-Pocket Threshold*</b>	<b>Copayment above Out-of-pocket Threshold*</b>
Institutionalized Full-Benefit Dual Eligible; or Beneficiaries Receiving Home and Community-Based Services	\$0	\$0	\$0
Full-Benefit Dual Eligible $\leq$ 100% FPL	\$0	\$1.20 generic, \$3.60 brand	\$0
Full-Benefit Dual Eligible $>$ 100% FPL; or Medicare Saving Program Participant (QMB-only, SLMB-only, or QI); or Supplemental Security Income (but not Medicaid) Recipient; or Applicant $<$ 135% FPL with resources $\leq$ \$8,780 (\$13,930 if married)**	\$0	\$2.65 generic, \$6.60 brand	\$0
Applicant $<$ 150% FPL with resources between \$8,780 - \$13,640 (\$13,930 - \$27,250 if married)**	\$66	15%	\$2.65 generic, \$6.60 brand
*Out-of-Pocket Threshold is \$4,700 for 2015. ** Resource limits displayed include \$1,500 per person for burial expenses.			