

limits for Extra Help are countable income of **\$1,615/** month (**\$2,175** for couples); and countable resources in the amount of **\$14,610** (**\$29,160** for couples). Because the rules for counting income and resources under Extra Help are more generous than those for Medicare Savings Program eligibility, you may be eligible for some level of help even if you are not eligible for a MSP.

If you qualify for Extra Help you're able to switch drug plans on a quarterly basis (formerly, monthly). This should be done *only* to obtain better coverage of the drugs you need.

How Do You Apply For These Benefits?

Applications for a **Medicare Savings Program** are made online, by mail, or in person, with state Income Support Division Offices. Applications for **Extra Help** are made with Social Security, online (www.socialsecurity.gov); in person at your local Social Security office; or by phone at 1-800-772-1213. You may also get help with applications from agencies including the NM Aging & Disability Resource Center (1-800-432-2080) and the Benefits Connection Center (1-844-266-2236).

Questions about Health Benefits?

**Call SCLO at (505) 265-2300 or
The Aging & Disability Resource Center**

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This information is not intended as a substitute for specific legal advice.



Got Medicare? Get Help With Costs



(Updated Effective 4/1/20)

The Problem of Out of Pocket Costs for Medicare Beneficiaries

Medicare is a critically important source of health care coverage for seniors, but beneficiaries are charged for both the coverage itself (in the form of monthly premiums), and for part of the costs of most care they receive. When they obtain services they usually have "cost-sharing" charges -- deductibles, co-pays, and coinsurance." The total amount of all these charges can be very high.

What Type of Help is Available?

Some individuals have other health coverage that helps

cover some of their Medicare out-of-pocket costs. This flyer highlights *two* types of *public benefits* that provide such help for lower income individuals: the “**Medicare Savings Programs**” (“MSPs”) and “**Extra Help**” (a/k/a “LIS,” the “Low Income Subsidy”).

What Are the Medicare Savings Programs?

There are four “*Medicare Savings Programs*,” three of which -- commonly referred to by their initials – are the most widely used: “**QMB**,” “**SLMB**,” and “**QI**.” *These are special, limited, types of Medicaid coverage that cover all or part of your Medicare premiums and cost sharing, (but not other services).* QMB covers *all* your Medicare premiums and cost-sharing; SLMB and QI pay *only* for your Medicare “Part B” premiums. However, *eligibility for any of these Medicare Savings Programs automatically qualifies you for the “Extra Help” benefit discussed later in this flyer.*

The countable income and resource limits for these **Medicaid** programs are:

	INCOME*	RESOURCES
QMB		
Individual	\$1,083/month	\$7,860
Couple	\$1,457/month	\$11,800
SLMB		
Individual	\$1,296/month	\$7,860
Couple	\$1,744/month	\$11,800
QI		
Individual	\$1,456/month	\$7,860
Couple	\$1,960/month	\$11,800

* The first \$20/month of total income is disregarded (not counted). These figures *include* the \$20 disregard. **The income amounts increase each April.**

Are All of Your Income and Resources Counted in Determining Eligibility?

No, several types of income and resources are not counted. **Income** that is disregarded *includes*: the first \$20 per month; \$65 plus ½ of monthly earnings; and certain types of income received by Native Americans. On the other hand, if other people help you with your food or housing costs, that help can actually be counted as income to you. *Examples of resources that are not counted include*: your home; a motor vehicle; personal items (e.g., jewelry and household goods); a burial space; and up to \$1,500 per person for funeral expenses.

You must also meet all other Medicaid eligibility requirements. If you think you might be eligible, *apply as soon as possible* (see below); don’t wait until you are sick or get hurt. One reason is that *QMB* coverage doesn’t start until the month *after* your application is approved.

What is “Extra Help”?

Extra Help, also known as the Low Income Subsidy (LIS), provides financial help with your Medicare prescription drug plan costs (Medicare’s drug coverage is available only from private plans). There are different levels of help. Depending on the amount of your countable income and resources, it will cover all or part of your plan’s premium, deductible, “donut hole,” and co-pay costs. .

If you qualify for one of the Medicare Savings Programs, you automatically qualify for Extra Help, with a high level of help. If your countable income or resources are too high to qualify for a Medicare Savings Program, you may still qualify for Extra Help, but with a lesser amount of help. The *maximum* financial eligibility