



**MEDICARE PRESCRIPTION DRUG COVERAGE FOR MEDICARE-ELIGIBLE
RETIREES (OR COVERED MEDICARE-ELIGIBLE DEPENDENTS)
OF COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY**

**Creditable Coverage Disclosure Notice for Retirees of Columbia University
as of April 1, 2011**

Please read this notice carefully and keep it where you can find it. This notice has information about your current prescription drug coverage with Columbia University and about your options under Medicare's prescription drug coverage. This information can help you decide whether or not you want to join a Medicare prescription drug plan. If you are considering joining, you should compare your current coverage, including which drugs are covered at what cost, with the coverage and costs of the plans offering Medicare prescription drug coverage in your area. Information about where you can get help to make decisions about your prescription drug coverage is at the end of this notice.

WHAT THIS MEANS TO YOU AS A RETIREE OF COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

As a retiree of Columbia University (or covered dependent) eligible for Medicare, you should keep the following points in mind as you consider whether to enroll in a Medicare Prescription Drug Plan:

Medicare prescription drug coverage was designed primarily for those who do not have access to employer-sponsored prescription drug coverage.

Medicare prescription drug coverage became available in 2006 to everyone with Medicare. You can get this coverage if you join a Medicare Prescription Drug Plan or join a Medicare Advantage Plan (like an HMO or PPO) that offers prescription drug coverage. All Medicare drug plans provide at least a standard level of coverage set by Medicare. Some plans may also offer more coverage for a higher monthly premium.

If you are enrolled in a Columbia University Medical Plan, you are already covered by prescription drug coverage that is, on average for all plan participants, expected to pay out as much as standard Medicare prescription drug coverage pays and is therefore considered *Creditable Coverage*. Because your existing coverage is *Creditable Coverage*, you can keep this coverage and not pay a higher premium (a penalty) if you later decide to join a Medicare Prescription Drug Plan.

SHOULD YOU HAVE COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY PRESCRIPTION DRUG COVERAGE AND MEDICARE PRESCRIPTION DRUG COVERAGE?

In most circumstances, there is no advantage to “doubling up” on coverage. If you join a Medicare Prescription Drug Plan, you will continue to receive your medical and prescription benefits through Columbia University. However, the amount you pay for your Columbia University coverage, where applicable, will not be reduced, and you may pay a separate premium for Medicare prescription drug coverage. **Your benefits under the Columbia University retiree medical plan will be secondary to Medicare and your Columbia University Medical Plan prescription drug benefits will be reduced by benefits paid under the Medicare Prescription Drug Plan.**

WHEN CAN YOU JOIN A MEDICARE PRESCRIPTION DRUG COVERAGE PLAN?

You can join a Medicare Prescription Drug Plan when you first become eligible for Medicare and each year from October 15th through December 7th. You may also enroll when you first become Medicare eligible or after separating employment with the University if you are age 65 or older.

However, if you lose your current creditable prescription drug coverage, through no fault of your own, you will also be eligible for a two (2) month Special Enrollment Period (SEP) to join a Medicare drug plan.

WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU TERMINATE YOUR COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY HEALTH COVERAGE OR EMPLOYMENT

If you drop or lose your Columbia University health coverage (for example, you do not pay a required premium) and you do not join a Medicare Prescription Drug Plan within 63 continuous days after your current coverage ends, you may pay a higher premium (a penalty) to join a Medicare prescription drug plan in the future.

If you go 63 continuous days or longer without creditable prescription drug coverage, your monthly premium may go up by at least 1% of the Medicare base beneficiary premium per month for every month that you did not have that coverage. For example, if you go nineteen months without creditable coverage, your premium may consistently be at least 19% higher than the Medicare base beneficiary premium. You may have to pay this higher premium (a penalty) as long as you have Medicare prescription drug coverage. In addition, you may have to wait until the following November to join.

If you choose to drop your University-sponsored health coverage in order to enroll in a Medicare prescription drug plan, you will not be able to re-enroll in a Columbia University Medical Plan until the next Open Enrollment period, unless you have a qualified life status change.

For More Information about Medicare's Prescription Drug Coverage:

- Visit www.medicare.gov for personalized help
- Call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227; TTY users should call 1-877-486-2048)

Remember: Please keep this Creditable Coverage notice. If you decide to join one of the Medicare drug plans, you may be required to provide a copy of this notice when you join to show whether or not you have maintained creditable coverage and, therefore, whether or not you are required to pay a higher premium (a penalty).

ABOUT THIS NOTICE

This notice, as required by Law, contains important details about how your prescription drug coverage through the Columbia University Retiree Medical and Life Insurance Benefits Plan compares to Medicare prescription drug coverage available in 2009. Please read this notice carefully and keep it for future reference.

You may need to refer to this information in the future. If you enrolled in a Medicare Prescription Drug Plan after May 15, 2006, you may need to provide a copy of this notice to show that you do not have to pay a higher premium for Medicare prescription drug coverage. You are not required to pay more since you have had *Creditable Coverage* (or coverage that is at least as good as the standard Medicare prescription drug benefit) through a Columbia University Medical Plan.

You may receive information about creditable coverage through Columbia University at other times in the future, such as the next period you can enroll in Medicare prescription drug coverage and/or if your Columbia University prescription drug coverage changes. You may also request another copy of this information by calling the Columbia Benefits Service Center at **(212) 851-7000** or via email at hr-retirement@columbia.edu.

Columbia University reserves the right to change, amend, or terminate any benefit plan as it deems appropriate. This notice in no way guarantees or implies that Columbia University's retiree medical plans will continue into the future nor does it guarantee or imply that the coverage and/or costs will remain the same in the future.