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Bulletin 05-2

From: Merle Scheiber, Director

Date: October 13, 2005

Re: Insurance Producer Licensing for Medicare Advantage and Medicare Part D plans

Effective October 1, 2005, marketing activity for the new Medicare prescription drug benefit, Medicare Part D, has been permissible. According to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), only state-licensed insurance producers may engage in marketing activity. Thus, state law and regulatory provisions regarding producer activity apply to the marketing of Medicare Part D.

CMS has received complaints about alleged misconduct by licensed producers with regard to Medicare Part D marketing. CMS will refer complaints it receives about producers licensed in this state to the South Dakota Division of Insurance. This bulletin reminds licensed producers that they are subject to all laws and regulations of this state, including those relating to the duty of good faith and fair dealing, the suitability of sale, and the prohibitions against misrepresentation, churning, and high pressure sales tactics.

We view with a high degree of skepticism the use of a lead relating to Part D marketing activity to cross-sell other insurance products of any type. The new Part D benefit is fundamentally confusing for the Medicare beneficiary. It would be unwise for the producer to take advantage of the Part D lead to sell other insurance products to a Medicare beneficiary for which he or she may not be suited.

Allegations of misconduct related to Part D marketing will be thoroughly investigated by this office. Any proven misconduct will be prosecuted under the laws of this state relating to producer licensing.

In addition, anyone selling, soliciting or negotiating Medicare Advantage plans in this state must be licensed as an insurance producer.