

**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
OFFICE OF DIRECTOR**

ACTION REFERRAL

TO <i>Jacobs</i>	DATE <i>2-18-09</i>
---------------------	------------------------

DIRECTOR'S USE ONLY	ACTION REQUESTED
1. LOC NUMBER <i>100454</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Prepare reply for the Director's signature DATE DUE _____
2. DATE SIGNED BY DIRECTOR <i>Claudia 2/27/09, letter attached.</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Prepare reply for appropriate signature DATE DUE <i>2-27-09</i>
	<input type="checkbox"/> FOIA DATE DUE _____
	<input type="checkbox"/> Necessary Action

APPROVALS (Only when prepared for director's signature)	APPROVE	* DISAPPROVE (Note reason for disapproval and return to preparer.)	COMMENT
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			



RECEIVED

FEB 18 2009

House of Representatives

State of South Carolina

Department of Health & Human Services
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

Jimmy C. Bales, Ed.D.
District No. 80 - Richland County
1515 Crossing Creek Road
Eastover, SC 29044

432-C Blatt Building
Columbia, SC 29211

Committee:

February 17, 2009

Labor, Commerce and Industry

Tel. (803) 734-3058
Tel. (803) 776-7355
Beeper (803) 304-0464

Ms. Emma Forkner, Executive Director
SC Dept. of Health and Human Services
PO Box 8206
Columbia, SC 29202-8206

Dear Director Forkner:

It disturbs me greatly that our elderly population has to choose between, food, housing or the ability to secure their necessary prescription medicines.

Our constituent, Kathrynne Blair of Hopkins, falls into this category. Evidently, the SC Gap Assistance Pharmacy Program (GAPS) is reducing her benefits from 95 percent to 10 percent. This is a substantial reduction that she is forced to deal with.

Her monthly income stands at \$1158 which is reduced by \$96.40 for Medicare Part B, \$33.60 for Medicare Part D and \$215.30 for Medicare Supplemental which leaves her with roughly \$813 to live on. We all know how expensive it is now to purchase groceries; utility rates are constantly rising, all of the basics of living cost more. How is she supposed to purchase her medications?

Is there another program or additional prescription drug assistance that could possibly help her with these costs? I am afraid many senior citizens will fall victim to the reduction of the GAPS. Please review her situation to see if anything can be done for her.

Sincerely,

Jimmy C. Bales

JCB/vhr/2009feb17-8

cc: Representative Dan Cooper, Chairman, Ways & Means
Senator Hugh K. Leatherman, Sr., Chairman, Senate Finance



Rite Aid #11587 -
 RITE AID STORE # 11587
 COLUMBIA, SC 29209-1603
 (803) 695-6015

PATIENT HISTORY REPORT

01/01/2009 To 01/22/2009

BLAIR KATHRYNE
 331 KA HA ALDA TRL
 HOPKINS, SC 29061-9177
 (803) 776-4981
 DOB: 04/20/1934

Date: 01/22/2009

Page: 1 of 1

With us, it's personal.

Rx #	STORE	CF	RF	DATE	NDC	RPH	MEDICATION	CLM REF #	QTY	DSP	DAYS	SPLY	RETAIL PRICE	PAY AMT
INSTRUCTION							PRESCRIBER							
18946	11587	N	5	01/22/2009	00310020130	TBD	ARIMIDEX 1 MG TABLET	0902256686030089	30		30		\$477.99	\$41.00
take 1 tablet by mouth once daily							BUTLER, WILLIAM M							
36476	11587	N	1	01/22/2009	00143125401	TBD	HYDROCORTISONE 20 MG TABLET	0902256715100369	15		30		\$10.99	\$4.06
TAKE 1/2 TABLET BY MOUTH ONCE DAILY							WILLIAMS, EDDIE M							
34261	11587	N	3	01/19/2009	00378615093	MC1	OMEPRAZOLE 20 MG CAPSULE	0901963376170389	120		30		\$307.99	\$8.00
take 2 capsules twice a day							WILLIAMS, EDDIE M							
20406	11587	N	5	01/14/2009	00781207401	LFK	TRIAMTERENE-HCTZ 37.5-25 MG CP	0901431836240319	30		30		\$14.99	\$5.48
Take 1 capsule every day							WILLIAMS, EDDIE M							
												TOTAL AMOUNT :	\$811.96	\$58.54

I certify that these medications were dispensed to the above by order of their personal physician.

Pharmacist's Signature: *[Signature]*
 Date: 1/22/09

*****THIS REPORT CONTAINS PATIENT HEALTH INFORMATION WHICH IS LEGALLY PROTECTED UNDER HIPAA LEGISLATION.*****
 *****THIS INFORMATION MUST BE USED AND STORED IN ACCORDANCE WITH RITE AID PRIVACY POLICIES.*****

***** END OF REPORT *****



State of South Carolina
Department of Health and Human Services

Mark Sanford
Governor

Emma Forkner
Director

December 11, 2008

Dear GAPS Beneficiary:

According to our records, you are enrolled in the South Carolina Gap Assistance Pharmacy Program for Seniors (GAPS). This program provides assistance to help with your Medicare Part D drug coverage.

Most people who join a Medicare Prescription Drug Plan, after paying a monthly premium, are responsible for 100% of their drug costs after total prescription costs reach a dollar amount determined by Medicare. For calendar year 2009 this amount is defined as \$2,700 to \$6,153.75. This gap in Medicare drug coverage is referred to as the "doughnut hole." The GAPS program provides assistance to help pay your drug costs when you reach the "doughnut hole". With the GAPS program, you were paying 5% of your prescription costs during this gap in Medicare drug coverage and the State of SC, under the GAPS program, was covering 95% of your costs.

Unfortunately, as a result of the South Carolina Budget Reduction Bill, the GAPS program must now limit these services. This letter is to inform you that beginning January 1, 2009, the part of your prescription costs covered through the GAPS program is being reduced from 95% to 10%.

How does this affect you?

This means that starting in January, if your prescription drug costs cause you to reach the Medicare Part D "doughnut hole", the GAPS program will pay 10% of your drug costs while you are experiencing the coverage gap.

For example: Once your drug costs reach the gap in your Medicare drug coverage, you currently pay \$5 (or 5%) for a prescription costing \$100. Beginning January 1, 2009, you will pay \$90 (or 90%) for a prescription costing \$100 once you reach the gap in your Medicare drug coverage.

How can I reduce my overall prescription drug costs?

Choosing generic drugs is an excellent way to save money. Nearly 65% of all prescriptions are filled using generic alternatives. The next time your doctor writes you a prescription, ask if a generic version is available to help you save money. When you take your prescription to the drugstore, tell your pharmacist you would like a generic drug. Remember, when you use a generic drug, you get the same quality as the brand-name drug at a lower cost.

Additional information

It is important that you contact your drug plan to find out if they will continue to participate in GAPS in 2009. In order to benefit from GAPS, you must be enrolled in a plan that coordinates with the state's GAPS Program. If you need to change plans, call the new plan of your choice to enroll. If you need to find a new plan, call 1-888-549-0820 Monday – Friday between 7:00AM and 7:00 PM.

We regret any problems this change may cause you. If you have further questions or believe this letter was sent to you in error, please call 1-888-549-0820.

Copy 12-22-08
YES MEDBLURRY DOES PARTICIPATE



Log # 0454

State of South Carolina
Department of Health and Human Services

Mark Sanford
Governor

Emma Forkner
Director

February 27, 2009

The Honorable Jimmy C. Bales
United States House of Representatives
432-C Blatt Building
Columbia, South Carolina 29851

Dear Representative Bales:

Thank you for contacting our agency on behalf of Kathrynne Blair regarding the recent changes in the Gap Assistance Pharmacy Program for Seniors (GAPS).

Determining which programs and services to reduce during such difficult times is always challenging. We deeply regret the recent changes to Medicaid and apologize for any stress or inconvenience these changes may have caused your constituent. A member of my staff has been in direct contact with Ms. Blair to address her concerns.

We informed Ms. Blair of Medicare's *Extra Help* low-income prescription drug program. If eligible, this program would cover the cost of her drug care premium, deductibles and leave only a small co-pay per prescription. Medicare's *Extra Help* program provides more coverage than GAPS. The Social Security Administration administers the *Extra Help* program and we provided Ms. Blair with their contact information to determine if she may be eligible.

We mailed her an application for the Qualified Individual (QI) program, which, if eligible, would pay her Medicare Part B monthly premium of \$96.40. The QI program is available on a first-come first-serve basis, so it is important that Ms. Blair return her application as soon as possible to be considered for the program. In South Carolina, QI beneficiaries are only eligible from January through December and must re-apply each year. In October each year, individuals currently eligible for the QI program will receive communication from our agency letting them know to reapply for this benefit in the next calendar year.

Thank you for your continued interest and support of the South Carolina Medicaid program. If I may be of further assistance on this or any other matter, please let me know.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Emma Forkner".

Emma Forkner
Director

EF/jcl



State of South Carolina
Department of Health and Human Services

Mark Sanford
Governor

Erma Forkner
Director

February 27, 2009

Ms. Kathryn M. Blair
341 Kaha Aloa Trail
Hopkins, South Carolina 29061

Dear Ms. Blair:

Representative Jimmy Bales contacted our agency on your behalf regarding the recent change in the Gap Assistance Pharmacy Program for Seniors (GAPS).

Determining which programs and services to reduce during such difficult times is always challenging. We deeply regret this change and apologize for any stress or inconvenience this change may cause you and your family.

Choosing generic drugs is an excellent way to save money. The next time your doctor writes a prescription, ask if a generic version is available and ask the pharmacist to use the generic version. Generic drugs offer the same quality as brand-name drugs at a lower cost.

We understand that sometimes, generic drugs are not available or able to be substituted for brand-name drugs. Enclosed is a list of pharmaceutical drug companies that offer discounts on brand-name prescriptions to Medicare-enrolled individuals who meet certain eligibility guidelines and income limits. Please call the program contact number provided for additional information.

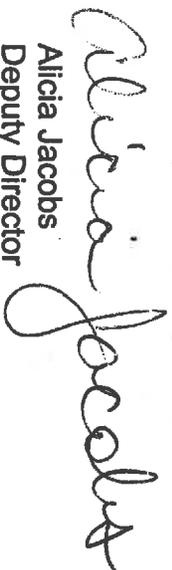
You may be eligible for additional assistance through Medicare's *Extra Help* low-income prescription drug program. This program covers the cost of your drug care premium, deductibles and leaves only a small co-pay per prescription. Medicare's *Extra Help* program provides more coverage than GAPS. To find out if you qualify, please call the Social Security Administration at 1-800-772-1213.

Kathryne Blair
Page 2

Enclosed is an application for the Qualified Individual (QI) program, which, if eligible, would pay your Medicare Part B monthly premium of \$96.40. The QI program is available on a first-come first-serve basis, so it is important that you return the application as soon as possible to be considered for the program. In South Carolina, QI beneficiaries are only eligible from January through December and must re-apply each year. In October each year, individuals currently eligible for the QI program will receive communication from our agency letting them know to reapply for this benefit in the next calendar year.

If you have additional questions regarding Medicaid, please contact Jennifer Lynch in Constituent Services at (803) 898-3965, and she will be happy to assist you.

Sincerely,



Alicia Jacobs
Deputy Director

AJ/cl
Enclosures