

The Westchester Crusader

With The Tenacity
Of A Terrier



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Medicare Prescription Drug Deadline Approaches

Thirteen days. That's the amount of time New Yorkers have left to sign up for the new federal prescription drug coverage program without penalty. Seniors and New Yorkers with disabilities who are eligible for Medicare Part D have until May 15 to register. Many who miss the deadline won't have another chance until Nov. 15 and will pay a one percent penalty per month on their premiums.

"If you know someone who hasn't enrolled, take their hand and show them how," said Bernard A. Krooks, New York chapter president of the National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys and founding partner of Littman Krooks LLP.

According to statistics released by the federal government, approximately 2.8 million New Yorkers are enrolled in Medicare but only 64 percent of those have

either signed up for Part D prescription coverage or have coverage elsewhere. The million New Yorkers not enrolled could think the program is either too confusing or may have written it off because they don't take medicine.

"Both groups should reconsider," Krooks said. "Ask for help if you're confused, and even those who don't need prescriptions now should plan for later," he said.

Medicare Part D, which started in January, offers various prescription drug insurance plans to anyone eligible for Medicare, which is seniors 65 or older, and those with disabilities who receive Social Security Disability Insurance. Cost to the recipients varies depending on the plan.

For information on how to sign up, New Yorkers can visit www.medicare.gov or www.elderlawnewyork.com