

Medicare Part D Open Enrollment Period

Scott Anderson, NCIL Benefits Specialist

There are new changes coming for the Medicare Part D prescription drug plans for 2007. The following are some changes that may affect you:

- Some plans that had no premium may now have a monthly premium.
- Other plans may be discontinued and new plans may be available.
- You could be switched automatically from one plan to another.
- There could be changes to the current plan you are in.

You should have received a letter from your plan regarding your status for 2007. You may have received a letter from Medicare about your status. If you aren't sure what it means, contact North Country or one of the agencies listed below.

The open enrollment period for Medicare Part D Prescription Drug Plans is from November 15th to December 31st. This is the time to change plans if you are experiencing problems with your current plan. If you are not enrolled and would like to enroll, this is the time to do it. Also, if you are low income, you may qualify for a Low Income Subsidy, which would assist with premiums and co-pays. To find out more about the Low Income Subsidy or Medicare Part D open enrollment, you can contact Scott Anderson at North Country Independent Living or any of the following organizations for help:



North Country 715-392-9118, or 1-800-924-1220

Disability Rights Wisconsin 1-800-926-4862

The Prescription Drug Hotline 1-866-456-8211

Medicare 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227)

Update on Long Term Care Redesign

John Nousaine, Director

The most significant change in Long Term Care in NW Wisconsin for our lifetime is happening right now. Northwest Wisconsin Long Term Care Options Consortium (NW-LTCO) is engaged in a complex planning project as part of Wisconsin's Family Care Expansion and Long Term Care reform initiative. The goal is to design a comprehensive plan for providing Long Term Support and health services through a regional Managed Care Organization in Ashland, Bayfield, Burnett, Douglas, Iron, Price, Rusk, Sawyer and Washburn counties.

This is huge folks and you need to know and understand what's happening. The NW-LTCO meets every first Monday in Hayward. The website with the planning grant, meeting minutes, calendar, and resources is www.nw-ltco.org.

The latest big news is the consortium settled on using the family care model. What does that mean? Go to the website and check it out. Learn! Get involved!

The NW-LTCO
meets every first
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**Receive North
Country News via
Email**

**If you would like to
receive North
Country News via
email please
contact Jeri at
[nciljeri@superior-
nfp.org](mailto:nciljeri@superior-nfp.org) or call
800-924-1220v/tty**



Emergency Preparedness

Be Ready: Create a ready kit and a go bag.

In order to plan for an emergency where you may have to leave your home, everyone should create a comprehensive “ready kit” checklist for yourself and your family with the items necessary to self sustain for a period of time. Also decide, which items are most essential and make a “go bag” if you must leave immediately.

Include in your kit: Items on this list can be included in both the ready kit and go bag. It is up to you to decide the most essential items to include for you and your family.

- Three-day supply of non-perishable food and manual can opener.
- Three-day supply of water. Plan for one gallon per person per day, but you may need more; consult with your doctor.
- Medical equipment and assistive devices. Label each with your name and contact information. Be sure to have extra batteries and chargers.
- Medications, including a list of the prescription name, dosage, frequency, doctor and pharmacist.
- List of emergency contact information.
- Originals or copies of important documents (birth certificate, passport, licenses, insurance information, proof of address).
- Flashlight and radio with extra batteries.
- Sanitation and hygiene items.
- Clothes, blanket, pillow.
- White distress flag or cloth, whistle, flashlights and/or glow sticks.
- Basic first aid kit.



Identify your disability-related or health condition needs by writing them down and putting them in your purse/wallet or by wearing medical alert tags or bracelets.

(Adapted from the National Organization on Disability www.nod.org)



Why Do I Receive These Surveys?

Each day, North Country Independent Living receives several information and referral calls from people like you. We try our best to answer your questions as soon as possible or refer you to some other agency that will best be able to meet your needs.

After we receive your call, a follow up survey is sent so that you can evaluate our services. Your comments offer us valuable information that helps us to improve what we do and to let us know if we've been able to help. These surveys are sent each month and you may receive these once, or several times depending on how often you use our services. For example, if you called in both September and October you will likely receive two surveys. We appreciate the time you spend reporting back to us in response to our questions each month you receive a survey.

Over the last year, 180 of you responded to our survey and we would like to share some of the data we collected. 126 (86%) people reported that our staff responded to your contact within 2 business days or sooner. 145 (99%) people reported they felt they were treated with respect by the staff. 83 people reported they were a person with a disability and when asked if the services received from North Country Independent Living helped increase your independence, 77 (93%) of the responses indicated a positive response.

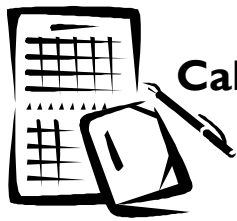
Thank you so much to all of you who have offered us this feedback. If you receive a survey and need assistance in completing it, please contact Jeri at 392-9118 v/tty or 1-800-924-1220 v/tty.

New Assistive Technology at North Country



North Country Independent Living has received several new pieces of assistive technology for the WisTech Device Loan and Device Demonstration Program. Several of the new pieces of technology will assist individuals with daily living activities such as cooking, personal care, and dressing. For children, switch activated toys such as Toby the Totbot and the Hook and Ladder Fire Engine have been added. Several types of magnifiers and lights are now available for those with visual disabilities. The Device Demonstration Program now has the ability to demonstrate the voice recognition software program Dragon Naturally Speaking and the Palm Z22 which could help with organization. If you are interested in learning more about our new equipment or any of the equipment in the program, please contact North Country Independent Living at 1-800-924-1220 v/tty.

This program is part of the Wistech network of Device Loan and Device Demonstration programs. Wistech is funded through a federal grant, administered by the Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services.



Calendar of Events

All phone numbers are in area code 715 unless otherwise noted.

The Americans with Disabilities Act, (ADA) and Employment, January 8, 7 p.m. at Genesis 1990, 220 4th Ave. West, Ashland or phone 685-0232.

Twin Ports Flyers Wheel Chair Basketball, January 10 through March 21, 5:30 to 7 p.m. Lincoln Park School Gym, Duluth. No charge. Call Eric at Courage, Duluth at 218-726-4762.

North Country Independent Living Board of Directors, Tuesday, January 16, 9:30 to 1:30, Conference Room, 422 West Third St. Ashland office of NCIL. Call John Nousaine, Director for more information at 1-800-924-1220 v/tty.

Are You a Leader or Want to Be? Volunteers and community leaders are invited to this event sponsored by New Horizons North, 514 West Main Street, Ashland on **January 17** at 7 p.m. The goal is to connect people to people and provide support to our caregivers. It will be a fun-filled evening. Call Dea or Maureen at 682-7171.

Avalanche, Down Hill Ski training for people with disabilities, Saturday, **February 24,** Granite Peak Ski Area, Wausau. Call J.R. Wynne at 1-800-382-8484 voice/TTY or 715-344-4210, Ext 11.

Aging & Disability Resource Centers, an Overview

Long Term Care is being redesigned in Northwest Wisconsin. If this redesign is to be successful and improve the lives of consumers, an Aging and Disability Resource Center will be playing an important part.

While it hasn't been decided what an ADRC will look like yet exactly, here are some things that an ADRC should do:

- Serve a broad population of elderly persons and individuals with disabilities and their families as well as those who are potential enrollees in the managed care program.
- It is essential that the ADRC have in place necessary protocols and procedures to facilitate financial eligibility determinations, and
- conduct functional eligibility determinations

Key responsibilities of an ADRC include providing information and assistance, prevention, benefit specialist services, long term care options counseling, and access to a wide array of public and private programs and services, including publicly-funded long term care.

Watch for county community meetings for future public information and input.

2007 Social Security Changes

Scott Anderson, NCIL Benefits Specialist

Social Security has announced the Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) for 2007 will be 3.3%. This means that Social Security and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) beneficiaries will receive a 3.3 percent increase in their monthly benefit check for 2007. Other important 2007 Social Security information is as follows:

Social Security Disability Thresholds:	2006	2007
Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA)		
Non-Blind	\$ 860/mo.	\$ 900/mo.
Blind	\$1,450/mo.	\$1,500/mo.
Trial Work Period (TWP)	\$ 620/mo.	\$ 640/mo.
SSI Federal Payment Standard:		
Individual	\$603/mo.	\$623/mo.
Couple	\$904/mo.	\$934/mo.
SSI Resources Limits:		
Individual	\$2,000	\$2,000
Couple	\$3,000	\$3,000
SSI Student Exclusion:		
Monthly limit	\$1,460	\$1,510
Annual limit	\$5,910	\$6,100
Medicare Part B: (Medical Insurance) Premium		
	\$88.50	\$93.50

Social Security E-Mail Scam

More and more of our consumers are using computers these days. They can be helpful in getting a lot of information on almost any topic we might want. Computers can be fun too.

However, there are a lot of people out there on the Internet trying to get as much personal information from you as they can. For example, Social Security has sent out a warning about a new e-mail scam. They have received several reports of an e-mail that is asking consumers

You should never provide your Social security number or other personal information over the Internet or

for personal information. This e-mail mentions the cost of living increase for 2007 and contains the following note: "We now need you to update your personal information." A deadline is given to provide this information or else, "we will be forced to suspend your account indefinitely." The reader is then directed to a website that looks like the Social Security website. Once at this site, the person is asked to provide personal information such as their social security number, bank account information, and credit card information.

You should never provide your social security number or other personal information over the Internet or by telephone. If you receive this false e-mail, call the Office of the Inspector General at 1-800-269-0271. The TTY number is 1-866-501-2101.

Technology Corner

WANTED: 05-06 Four Winds motor home Model Windsport 35W or Infinity 35W or any motorhome built for accessibility with side aisles and lift. Contact Will at 715-832-1111.

FOR SALE or TRADE: Brown electric lift chair, works fine and is in reasonable shape. \$50.00 or trade. Contact Jerry 715-392-5171.

WANTED: Invacare Reliant Battery-Powered Stand-Up Lift. I need it to help me stand and exercise as well as a transfer device to save on my caregiver's back. Call Don at 715-635-7870.

FOR SALE: 93 Ford lift equipped van. Nice, clean. Asking \$1750. Call Jim at 715-399-8413

TELEWORK The Wisconsin Telework Program is a state-wide, alternative loan program that allows Wisconsin residents with disabilities to purchase computers and other equipment needed to work from home or from other remote sites away from the office, such as work on the road or at a telework center. Telework is made possible through a grant from the Rehabilitation Services Administration. The Department of Workforce Development and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation received the grant and provide program and fiscal oversight.

North Country Independent Living staff are able to answer questions you may have. Call 800-924-1220 v/tty.

Input Needed for Study of Brain Injury

Baylor College of Medicine is developing educational materials for people with brain injury and their family members. They have completed interviews with adults in an earlier study and now would like to interview children who have parents with brain injury. The child needs to be between age 13 and 18 years. Participants will receive \$20 for a phone interview of about an hour in length. Baylor is interested in finding out what helped you or your family member or friend after a brain injury.

When you contact Baylor University, a packet of information will be sent to the family, including release of information forms that need to be signed and returned. If you are interested in participating, contact Terri Hudler-Hull at 1-800-734-8590 or e-mail: Terri.hudler-hull@memorialhermann.org.

Self Management Group for Women with Depression

If you are feeling sad and blue most days, or having difficulties concentrating, sleeping, or eating, etc., and if you would like to help other women like yourself, North Country will be starting a self-management group for women with depression.

This group will be meeting at the Superior Office of North Country Independent Living once per week for 6 – 8 weeks and would require a commitment in order for the group to be successful. The cost of attending and all materials are free.

If you are a women 19 years or older and would like to receive more information on this group, please contact Gloria at 800-924-1220 v/tty. An appointment to fill out an enrollment questionnaire will need to be completed to be accepted into the group.

Materials for the group are based on a research project by Baylor College of Medicine.



Superior MS Support Group meets the second Tuesday of each month from 6-8 p.m. at the Superior Public Library. For more information, contact Pam at 394-6958.
Ashland MS Support Group meets the third Wednesday of the month in the Stockton Island Room at Memorial Medical Center. Contact Peggy at 682-6506 for more information.

Support Groups

All phone numbers are in area code 715 unless otherwise noted.

Ashland Area Brain Injury/ Stroke Support Group meets the third Wednesday of the month in the Twin Island Meeting Room of Memorial Medical Center, Ashland. For more information, contact Stewart at 682-5676 v/tty or 1-800-499-5676 v/tty.

Women's Peer Support Group NEW TIMES meets the third Tuesday of each month, 10:30 - noon and 6 - 7pm at North Country Independent Living, Superior. Contact Gloria for more information, 392-9118 v/tty or 1-800-924-1220 v/tty.

NEW! The Women's Peer Support Group

is now offering both day and evening sessions!

The group will continue to meet at North Country Independent Living in Superior on the third Tuesday of each month.
 10:30 - noon
 6 - 7:30pm

Chronic Pain Support Group meets the first and third Wednesdays from 1– 2:30 p.m. at the Goslin Court main building on Summit Street, Spooner. Contact Sharon at 635-9722 or Sue at 635-9138 for more information.

Youth Leadership Club If you are in high school, grade 10 - 12, you may be interested in joining our club. Meetings are held in the Superior Office at North Country Independent Living. Contact Gloria for more information, 392-9118 v/tty or



Transportation Update

Bob Olsgard, Transportation Coordinator

North Country to Launch Transportation Voucher Program

It's been a struggle to secure funding for voucher-based transportation in our area. But thanks to support from the Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation, North Country Independent Living is set to launch our long-awaited transportation voucher program.

The vouchers—which will be available soon—operate like a check that riders can use to pay transportation providers for rides. Eligible riders may either use them to ride with existing transportation providers or to arrange for a ride with a friend or neighbor. Whether the ride is with a private individual or a transit agency, the next step is the same. Transportation providers send the voucher they've received to North Country for payment.

People with disabilities who live in rural Douglas and Bayfield counties with inadequate transportation service receive top priority for this voucher program. Because of funding limitations, this program will provide vouchers only for people with disabilities who reside in Douglas and Bayfield Counties. In the future, we hope to expand the voucher program to other counties.

If you or a family member resides in the target area and would like to find out about our transportation voucher program please contact Transportation Coordinator Bob Olsgard at North Country by phone toll free: 800-924-1220 or by email: ncilbob@superior-nfp.org.

Site Name	No. 00001
Site Street Address	Date _____
City, State, Zip	
Site phone number	
Pay to	
the order of _____	<input type="text"/> miles
Number of one-way rides: _____	
For (circle one): WORK MEDICAL SOCIAL/RELIGIOUS SCHOOL SHOPPING	
SUBMIT FOR PAYMENT WITHIN 90 DAYS	_____
	Signature

Looks like a check. Works like a ticket. At Left; sample transportation voucher of the type planned for North Country's new program. Sample voucher illustration provided courtesy of the Association for Programs on Rural Independent Living. (Design subject to change)

Youth Leadership Forum Taking Applications

Are you, or do you know a youth with a disability who may be interested in leadership training and learning about careers and having fun next summer?

Students with disabilities who are active in their school and community, are sophomores, juniors, or seniors and are Wisconsin residents are invited to attend. The forum will be held at UW-Whitewater from June 24 to 29, 2007.

Wisconsin Youth Leadership Forum will provide training in leadership, self-advocacy skills, and career awareness to 30 students with disabilities in Wisconsin.

This training is free. Food, lodging and materials are covered. These costs are covered through donations and sponsors. Travel costs can be reimbursed by making arrangements with the YLF Director. If you need personal care, you can bring your own attendant or use an agency. Your attendant's expenses will be paid for by the Youth Leadership Forum.

Applications are available at your school or you can request one by contacting Jenny Neugard, the YLF Director at 608-266-8778 or at neugaiw@dhfs.state.wi.us.

Applications are due March 2, 2007. If you are selected, you will be notified by April, 2007.

Youth Leadership
Forum
UW-Whitewater
June 24—29, 2007
Applications Due:
March 2, 2007

Genesis 1990 Receives Grant to Become Recovery Center

Genesis 1990 in Ashland is receiving a \$25,000 grant to become a recovery center for consumers with mental illness. Two services will be the centerpiece of this new grant:

- * Respite Care through Ashland County Health and Human Services.
- * A Warm Line for consumers who need ongoing support but who are not in a crisis situation.

Respite care will be available starting in January of 07 and the Warm Line will be available by spring of 2008. Genesis is one of only five centers receiving a grant of this type. The grant is provided through the Grassroots Empowerment Project in Madison.

Two staff from Genesis will be receiving training on operating the Warm Line in the near future. Eight agencies, including North Country provided a letter of collaboration to help make this grant possible.

Genesis is open seven days a week from 8 am to 9 pm as a drop in center for people with mental illness. Lunch is served each day. One of Genesis newest activities is bringing in a speaker the first Monday of each month to provide information about employment, work incentives, and other benefits for people with mental illness. Scott Anderson, the Benefit Specialist at North Country is conducting many of these sessions. If you would like to find out more about what Genesis 1990 has to offer, call them at 715-685-0232.



AVALANCHE Down Hill Ski Training for persons with disabilities

Sponsored by: Midstate Independent Living Consultants

Saturday, February 24, 2007 · Granite Peak Ski Area · Wausau, WI

Volunteers needed for event please call for more information (free lift ticket)

Contact J.R. Wynne at 1-800-382-8484 voice/TTY or 715-344-4210, Ext. 11



WISLOAN

WisLoan is a statewide, low interest loan program that allows a Wisconsin resident with a disability to purchase assistive technology or make home modifications so that he or she can live more independently or productively. **Contact North Country for more information.**

WisLoan is a federally-funded project of the National Institute for Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR) and the U.S Dept. of Education.

Donation for North Country Independent Living

North Country welcomes your support in fulfilling its mission of empowering people with disabilities. Your contribution is tax deductible. North Country Independent Living is a non-profit agency with 501(c)(3) status.

Enclosed is my donation of \$ _____

Name _____

Organization/Company _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Mail to:
 North Country Independent Living
 2231 Catlin Ave. Suite 16
 Superior, WI 54880

I would like to volunteer at North Country

Board of Directors

Gayle Wahner, Superior
Tom Draghi, Hayward
Ben Barrett, Trego
Paul Zahurance, Saron
Johnilee Nyberg, Minong
Mary Jane Grande, Ashland
Justin Nicoletti, Superior
Bill Gallik, Superior
Karen Secor, Montreal

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**Superior Main Office**

2231 Catlin Avenue, Suite 16  
Superior, WI 54880  
(715) 392-9118 Voice  
(715) 392-9271 TTY  
1-800-924-1220 V/TTY  
TTY Message Line (ext. 23)  
Visit us on the web at  
**www.northcountryil.com**  
**Email: [ncil@superior-nfp.org](mailto:ncil@superior-nfp.org)**

**John Nousaine**

Director  
[nciljohn@superior-nfp.org](mailto:nciljohn@superior-nfp.org)

**Dee Truhn**

Assistant Director  
[ncildee@superior-nfp.org](mailto:ncildee@superior-nfp.org)

**Nickoel Anderson**

Accountant  
[ncilnick@superior-nfp.org](mailto:ncilnick@superior-nfp.org)

**Jeri Collier**

Office Assistant, Web Master  
[nciljeri@superior-nfp.org](mailto:nciljeri@superior-nfp.org)

**Gloria Hakkila-Johnson**

Independent Living Specialist  
[ncilgloria@superior-nfp.org](mailto:ncilgloria@superior-nfp.org)

**Gail Pearson**

Independent Living Specialist  
[ncilgail@superior-nfp.org](mailto:ncilgail@superior-nfp.org)

**Scott Anderson**

Benefits Specialist  
[ncilscott@superior-nfp.org](mailto:ncilscott@superior-nfp.org)

**Bob Olsgard**

Transportation Coordinator  
[ncilbob@superior-nfp.org](mailto:ncilbob@superior-nfp.org)

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Ashland Branch Office

422 West Third Street, Suite 114
Ashland, WI 54806
(715) 682-5676 V/TTY
1-800-499-5676 V/TTY

John R. Nedden-Durst

Disability Navigator
nciljnd@superior-nfp.org

Stewart Holman

Independent Living Specialist
ncilstew@charterinternet.com

ALTERNATE FORMATS AVAILABLE

If you require any of this information in an alternate format, please contact us.