



NATIONAL HEMOPHILIA FOUNDATION
for all bleeding and clotting disorders

FACT SHEET
INCREASED ACCESS TO MEDIGAP POLICIES

Senate Request: Introduce and support companion legislation to H.R. 1282, Medigap Access Improvement Act, which expands access to Medigap insurance plans, by making open enrollment periods available to everyone on Medicare. H.R. 1282 was introduced in the House of Representatives by Phil English (R-PA) and Bobby Rush (D-IL) on March 1, 2007, and has 48 co-sponsors.

The House bill expands Medigap open enrollment to include beneficiaries in all 50 states who qualify as disabled and are younger than 65 years old. This legislation will help these beneficiaries afford the high costs of their life-saving therapies without placing a significant financial or administrative burden on the Medicare program. Most importantly, this change will provide the same opportunity to purchase the Medigap policies offered to beneficiaries over 65 years old.

Facts about Medigap

- Medigap policies are private insurance policies that Medicare beneficiaries can purchase to receive reimbursement for costs not covered by Medicare. This includes the 20% co-payment for clotting factor and other treatments for hemophilia covered under Medicare Part B.
- Medicare beneficiaries over 65 years old can purchase Medigap policies in all states during a federally mandated open enrollment period. During this period, a plan cannot deny the beneficiary a Medigap policy, delay coverage or charge more for a policy because of health problems.
- There is no federally mandated open enrollment period for Medicare beneficiaries with disabilities under 65 years old. These beneficiaries are subject to a patchwork of state laws, which may or may not require insurance companies to offer Medigap policies. Currently, beneficiaries are denied the opportunity to purchase Medigap policies in 26 states; a list of states may be found on the reverse side of this factsheet.

Facts about Hemophilia

- Hemophilia is a rare chronic bleeding disorder affecting about 20,000 people in the United States. People with hemophilia require life-long treatment with high-cost clotting factor medications.
- Some hemophilia patients qualify for Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) as a result of complications of their bleeding disorder and are therefore eligible for Medicare. There are approximately 1,100 Medicare beneficiaries with hemophilia.
- Beneficiaries with hemophilia who do not have secondary insurance coverage such as Medigap policies face daunting co-payments. The cost of clotting factor often ranges between \$150,000 and \$250,000 per year per person, and sometimes much higher. A patient with an annual cost of \$200,000 would have co-payments of \$40,000 for clotting factor alone.

Please Introduce and Support the Medigap Access Improvement Act!