

James and his wife live on a modest income. As they get older, they deal with new ailments and new medications - both of which can be costly. James learned about the Maryland Senior Prescription Drug Assistance Program (SPDAP) from his local senior center and enrolled. The program pays \$25.00 of his monthly premium leaving him a manageable balance of \$16.25. He relies on his local senior center for information about prescription drug plan options and to reapply yearly for the SPDAP program. He says it helps to have knowledgeable people explain his options, answer questions and help enroll him and his wife into a plan that fits their needs. James has been enrolled in SPDAP for three years. The extra money means a lot to this couple. It means that he and his wife “don’t do without something” they need.

James takes seven different medications daily—and all are equally important. His doctor discontinued two medications, which decreased his monthly prescription costs even more. He says medicine can be costly so he appreciates the extra assistance - especially at a time when things are tight for everyone.

*James and his wife are able to stay healthy without worrying about unmanageable costs.*

His wife started receiving the assistance, which has been a double blessing. They’re happy with the prescription drug program and shop around to get the cheapest medication prices. They order their

medicine through the mail and the shipping is free. Between SPDAP and mail order medications, James and his wife are able to stay healthy without worrying about unmanageable costs.

Louis is 78 years old and has been enrolled in the Maryland Senior Drug Assistance Program (SPDAP) for about one year. The program helps Louis pay for his monthly prescription plan premium. Also, if he falls into the Medicare Part D “donut hole”—the gap in Medicare drug coverage that leaves Louis responsible for the full costs of his prescriptions—SPDAP will offer payment relief. Without SPDAP’s assistance, it would be more difficult for Louis to afford the prescription drugs he needs.

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Louis and his wife, Pat, learned about the program through an informational mailer that advertised local educational meetings. The meetings had multiple dates, times and locations around the Baltimore area. Initially, the couple didn’t think Louis would qualify for the program since they own their own home and past programs considered home ownership a disqualifier for program eligibility. Living on a limited income, they knew they could use the help, so they decided to attend a meeting. The couple was thrilled to learn that the program only looked at income and that Louis was, indeed, eligible.

Pat said they went to the meeting with the necessary paperwork to apply and that the application was easy to complete. Two weeks later, Louis received his letter of approval and his eligibility started January 1, 2010.

Louis has not previously entered the “donut hole,” but since he’s now on more medication, they estimate that he’ll hit it by August 2010, although it could happen earlier. Louis currently takes 10 prescriptions, compared with the five or six he had last year. The new medications are mainly for the pacemaker and defibrillator he had implanted last fall. He’s also a diabetic and has high blood pressure, so it’s important he maintain his prescription regimen.

The couple says the program has helped them tremendously with costs for the prescription plan premium, and they see a significant difference in the amount they’re paying. Before SPDAP, Louis would go without some medications due to the costs. They say if something happened to the program, Louis would have to discontinue some prescriptions or reduce the recommended dosage amounts. Pat says she’s noticed a positive change in her husband since he’s been taking his medication as prescribed—something invaluable for any couple.