

Medicare Changes in 2024

'Tis the season for choosing next year's health insurance plan! Lots of changes are happening next year, and you are going to want to know about them!

The biggest changes coming in 2024 will affect Medicare beneficiaries. If you have a Medicare Advantage plan, you know the Annual Election Period (AEP), which is the time of year to decide if you'd like to keep your current plan or switch to another one, started on October 15th and ends December 7th. Most years, changes are few and often for the better. This is not the case for 2024. This year, it's important to review the Annual Notice of Change and check out the changes to your plan for 2024.

AEP is "hunting time" for marketing groups that advertise Medicare 800 numbers on TV. The folks at the other end of the line have one agenda, and that is to get permission to collect your personal information and persuade you to change your Advantage plan. All plans are changing next year, they vary a great deal, and these folks will find a plan with features that positively compare against the plan you have. What they don't tell you is what you may be giving up for their suggested switch. Since they only make money by either selling you a new plan, or your personal information to third parties, they can be very persuasive.

My suggestion is to reach out to your local broker rather than an 800 number and schedule a phone or in-office appointment prior to December 7th. If for some reason you miss this deadline, there is an Open Enrollment Period that starts January 1st and runs until the end of March.

So, what's changing? The most impactful change for seniors will be how prescription drugs are covered in 2024. The changes affect everyone in some way, and they are too complex to break down here, but the following summary will give you an idea:

First, there will be 11.5% fewer stand-alone Medicare Part D plans to choose from in 2024, and the average premium will increase by 21%! Additionally, 85% of all stand-alone Medicare PDPs will now have a deductible as high as \$545. The good news, if you can call it that, is the catastrophic coverage phase will be eliminated. So those who have high drug costs won't pay more once they enter this stage.

If you're on an individual plan through the exchange, Open Enrollment started November 1st. Your carrier should have notified you by now of any changes coming to your plan in 2024. If you still like your plan, you don't have to do anything and it will be automatically renewed with the new premium January 1st. We can help if you'd like to make a change.

Sifting through health insurance options gets confusing! When you use a local broker, you're working with someone experienced and personally connected to your community. Plus, our services are free to you. Give us a call!