

Medicare Minute Script – January 2021 What's New in 2021?

Medicare costs and coverage can change each year. Here is an overview of changes and opportunities in 2021.

Point 1: Understand your Medicare costs in 2021.

Part A costs: Medicare Part A covers inpatient hospital services, skilled nursing facility services, home health care, and hospice. Most people do not owe a premium for Part A. However, if you or your spouse worked less than 10 years, you may owe a monthly premium of either \$259 or \$471 per month in 2021, depending on the number of years worked. If you become a hospital inpatient, you will owe a deductible of \$1,484. If you have multiple hospitalizations, you may owe the deductible more than once. After you meet your deductible, your first 60 days in the hospital cost \$0 per day. If you are hospitalized more than 60 days, you may owe an out-of-pocket cost for continued days as a hospital inpatient. If you are admitted to a skilled nursing facility, you will owe \$185.50 a day for days 21 – 100 in 2021. Contact your SHIP for more details about premiums and when the hospital deductible applies.

Part B costs: Medicare Part B covers outpatient costs, such as doctor visits and outpatient procedures. In 2021, the standard Part B premium is \$148.50 for people with a yearly income equal to or below \$88,000 as a single person or \$176,000 for a married couple. If your income is higher than that, you may pay a higher premium. If you have Original Medicare, you will owe a Part B deductible of \$203 in 2021. You will continue to owe a 20% coinsurance for most services covered by Part B.

Part D costs: Medicare Part D covers outpatient prescription drugs. In 2021, the national base premium for a Part D prescription drug plan is \$33.06 per month. Your other costs vary based on your plan and your prescription drug needs. If your Part D plan has a deductible, it can be no higher than \$445 in 2021. If you and your plan spend \$4,130 for covered drugs for the year, in most plans, you will reach what is called the donut hole. In the donut hole in 2021, you will owe 25% of the cost of your drugs. If you spend \$6,550 on covered drugs in 2021, you will enter what is called catastrophic coverage. Then, you will owe 5% of the cost of each drug, or \$3.70 for generics and \$9.20 for brand-name drugs—whichever is greater—in 2021.

If you have a Medicare Advantage Plan, the amount you owe varies by plan. Contact your plan for more information about your Medicare costs. If your income is limited, you may qualify for help paying health costs you owe. Contact your State Health Insurance Assistance Program, called “SHIP,” to see if you are eligible.

Point 2: Know your opportunities to change coverage in 2021.

You may have the opportunity to change your coverage in 2021, depending on your circumstances. If you have a Medicare Advantage Plan, you have one opportunity from January 1 through March 31 to change your plan or switch back to Original Medicare with or without a prescription drug plan. You might also qualify to return to your Medigap plan, if you had one. If you think a government employee made a mistake while assisting you, contact 1-800-MEDICARE and explain your situation. You may be approved to change your coverage.

If you have Extra Help, an assistance program that helps pay for Part D prescription drug costs, you can make one change per quarter for the first three quarters of the year.

Point 3: Beware of marketing violations that could affect your 2021 coverage.

Medicare Advantage Plans and Part D plans are administered, marketed, and sold by private companies. Plan representatives, agents, and brokers must follow federal guidelines when marketing to you. These guidelines protect you from manipulative and deceptive sales and enrollment tactics. Here are red flags:

- You signed up for a plan after being told by a company that certain services or prescriptions are covered, but after enrolling, you discover they were not covered by the plan.
- A company represented itself as coming from Medicare, Social Security, or Medicaid.
- You received an unsolicited phone call or text from a plan with which you have no prior relationship or have asked not to contact you.
- A plan agent returned uninvited to your residence after missing an earlier appointment.
- An agent began discussing other insurance products, such as life insurance, during a visit or meeting that was scheduled to only discuss a Part D or Medicare Advantage product.

If you enrolled in a plan because of misleading information, you may be able to change your plan by calling 1-800-MEDICARE. You should also report these red flags to your Senior Medicare Patrol.

Take Action:

1. Review and understand your Medicare health costs and coverage, such as by reviewing your *Medicare & You* 2021 handbook, visiting www.medicare.gov, or calling 1-800-MEDICARE. If you have a Medicare Advantage Plan, call your plan to learn more about your costs and coverage.
2. If you are unhappy with your costs or coverage for 2021, find out if you can make changes or if you qualify for programs that help with costs. Contact your State Health Insurance Assistance Program or call 1-800-MEDICARE for more information.
3. Contact your Senior Medicare Patrol, called “SMP,” for help with questions, concerns, or complaints about potential fraud, errors, and abuse.

Local SHIP Contact Information	Local SMP Contact Information
SHIP toll-free phone: 1-877-987-4463	SMP toll-free phone: 1-855-254-1720
SHIP local phone:	SMP local phone:
SHIP website: www.wvship.org	SMP website: www.wvship.org
To find a SHIP in another state:	To find an SMP in another state:
Call 877-839-2675 or visit www.shiptacenter.org .	Call 877-808-2468 or visit www.smpresource.org .

SHIP National Technical Assistance Center: 877-839-2675 | www.shiptacenter.org | info@shiptacenter.org
 SMP National Resource Center: 877-808-2468 | www.smpresource.org | info@smpresource.org
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