

Medicare

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tice of Change (ANOC) disclosure from your current plan.

Please take a few minutes to review this document as it will clearly show you what changes are occurring in your plan starting Jan. 1, 2024.

You also should check for any changes to the network and confirm your doctor is still contracted. If you are happy with your plan and there are no significant takeaways, you may just want to continue. Your plan will normally auto renew for Jan. 1, 2024.

Things to know

- Medicare Advantage Plans are plans run by insurance or non-profit companies. You assign your Medicare benefits to these entities and they become your provider of Medicare services. You no longer can use your Medicare card separately for services. Los Angeles County has more than 100 plans, most of which are HMOs. Most of these plans are Medicare Advantage with Prescription Drug coverage (MAPD).

Many of these plans have no monthly premium. Plan availability varies by county. Other states and counties have a very different assortment of plans. These plans are required to provide coverage



SHUTTERSTOCK IMAGE

New limits on drug costs are expected to trigger increases in Medicare Part D plan premiums. Those on Medicare should carefully review their Annual Notice of Change document for changes beginning Jan. 1, 2024.

at least as good as original Medicare. Plan designs vary dramatically. Many extras are included, such as dental and vision.

- Part D Prescription Drug Plans:** These plans are sold by insurance companies and are available on a standalone basis. There are 26 Part D plans available in California.

If you have very expensive drugs, you will likely experience a share of cost for those drugs.

- Medicare Supplement Plans:** Also known as Medi-gap plans. These plans allow you to obtain Medicare covered services from any Medicare contracted provider

nationwide (other than those under exclusive contracts).

There are presently nine different plans available nationwide for those who turned 65 after Jan. 1, 2020. If you are older than that, you have access to three additional plans — C, F and F. These plans have monthly premiums that vary by age and zip code. But the benefits are standardized and identical nationwide.

- Retiree health plans:** These are becoming rarer. Many companies are trying to divest themselves of this expense. If you're paying more than \$300 monthly for the plan, you should probably

explore other alternatives. You have guarantee issue options.

- Medi-Cal, low income subsidy or extra help:** If you are challenged in paying the cost for your prescriptions, be sure to check with Social Security or Medi-Cal, the California's healthcare assistance program, to see if you qualify for assistance.

Annual enrollment options

During the annual open enrollment period, you have the greatest flexibility to make changes including:

- You can enroll in a Medicare Advantage plan (if you have Medicare Parts A and B). There are no health questions.

- You can drop out of a Medicare Advantage plan and return to original Medicare. In doing this, you would usually add a Part D drug plan, and you can apply for a Medicare Supplement plan.

- You can change from one Medicare Advantage Plan to another plan from the same company or with a different company.

- You can enroll in a Prescription Drug Plan (PDP) if you have Medicare Part A or B.

- You can drop your Part D drug plan (not recommended).

Enrollment restrictions and exceptions

During the annual open enrollment period, you normally do

not have a guaranteed enrollment into a Medicare Supplement Plan. You usually must answer health history questions.

However, there are some special enrollment periods or circumstances that might alter that including:

- If you have moved out of the service area of your Medicare Advantage Plan,

- If you are losing group health coverage,

- If you lose Medi-Cal coverage,
- If your Medicare Advantage plan reduced benefits,

- If your previously selected medical group is no longer in the network of your plan, and

- If a carrier is offering an "underwriting holiday," and

- If you are turning 65 or are new to Medicare, you can enroll in any plan you wish on a guaranteed basis.

Paul Davis, Paul Davis Insurance Services 0M47932, is an independent agent representing the major carriers for Medicare supplement, Medicare Advantage and Part D plans. Reach him at 818-888-0880, or by email at paul@pdinsure.com "We do not offer every plan available in your area. Any information we provide is limited to those plans we do offer in your area. Please contact Medicare.gov or 1-800-MEDICARE to get information on all of your options."