

L. G. Goldstein & Associates, Inc.

**MEDICARE ADVANTAGE
PLANS**

What is a Medicare Advantage Plan?

- Medicare Advantage Plans are health plan options approved by Medicare and offered by private companies, see Medicare & You Handbook pages 70 - 81:
 - Medicare pays a fixed amount for your care every month to the companies offering Medicare Advantage Plans.
 - Must cover at least all of the services that Original Medicare covers.
 - Can charge different out-of-pocket cost, copayments, coinsurance, and deductibles.
 - May offer extra coverage, such as vision, hearing, dental, and/or health and wellness programs.
 - Most include Medicare prescription drug coverage (usually at an extra cost).
 - Most have provider networks, check with current doctor to see if they accept the plan.

Who can join a MA plan?

- ❑ Must have Medicare Parts A & B.
- ❑ Must live in the service area.
- ❑ Must not have End-Stage Renal Disease (ESRD). Except as explained on page 74 of Medicare & You Handbook.
- ❑ Must be within an open enrollment window.

More about MA Plans

- ❑ Still have Medicare rights and protections, right to appeal
- ❑ Check with plan before you get a service to find out if they will cover the service and what your costs may be.
- ❑ Must follow plan rules: referrals to see specialists or getting prior approval for certain procedures.
- ❑ May join an MA plan if you have preexisting condition, except ESRD.
- ❑ Check each time you visit a doctor to see if they still participate in the plan.
- ❑ Cannot be sold a Medigap policy unless you drop MA plan.

Out-of-Pocket Costs depend on the following:

- ❑ Whether the plan charges a monthly premium in addition to Part B premium.
- ❑ Whether the plan pays any of the monthly Part B premium.
- ❑ Whether the plan has a yearly deductible or any additional deductibles.
- ❑ How much you pay for each visit or service.
- ❑ The type of health care services you need and how often you use them.
- ❑ Whether you follow the plan's rules, like using network providers
- ❑ Whether you need extra coverage and what the plan charges for it.

More important facts:

- If you drop your Medigap policy, in most cases, you won't be able to get it back. However, in some cases you can if:
 - This is the first time you joined a MA plan or other Medicare health plan.
 - This is the first time you bought a Medicare SELECT policy (basically a network Medigap plan).
- May be able join a Medicare Prescription Drug Plan if you join a MA plan and leave it within the first year.

End-Stage Renal Disease (ESRD)

- ❑ If you have Original Medicare, you may join a Medicare Prescription Drug Plan
- ❑ If already on a MA plan and develop ESRD, you may stay on the plan or in some instances, join another plan with the same company
- ❑ May be able to join a MA plan if your employer offers a MA plan.
- ❑ If you have had a successful kidney transplant, you may be able to join a MA plan.

When Can I Join, Switch, or Drop Medicare Advantage Plans?

- ❑ Three months before your 65th birthday month, until three months after your birth month
- ❑ Between October 15 and December 7 of each year, coverage to begin January 01.
- ❑ Between January 1 and March 31 to switch from a Medicare Advantage to Original Medicare and a Medicare PDP.
- ❑ If you move out of service area.
- ❑ If you have both Medicare and Medicaid
- ❑ Qualify for extra help
- ❑ Live in an institution (nursing home, etc.)

How can I join a Medicare Advantage Plan?

- ▣ Have Medicare Parts A & B
- ▣ Be in an open enrollment window or meet one of the change requirements.
- ▣ Contact us at L. G. Goldstein at:
 - info@lggoldstein.com
 - Local: (803)771-4311
 - Toll Free: (800)951-4377
 - Fax: (803)799-1869