



By Jim Miller

How to Save on Medicare in 2027

Dear Savvy Senior,

I'm on Medicare. What changes are coming in 2027, and how can I make sure I'm not paying too much for my coverage?

Careful Shopper

Dear Careful,

If you have Medicare, now's a good time to make sure you're getting the best coverage for your money. Open enrollment runs through December 7, giving you a chance to switch Medicare Advantage or prescription drug plans for 2027. Since costs, drug coverage and extra benefits can change from year to year, comparing plans now could save you money and headaches later.

Even if you're happy with your current plan, don't assume next year's coverage will be the same. Here's what to look for.

Prescription drug changes: Medicare Part D prescription drug plans are changing, and some enrollees could pay more. In 2027 the maximum annual deductible will rise from $615 to $700, while the annual out-of-pocket limit for covered Part D medications will increase from $2,100 to $2,400.

That limit helps protect people who take expensive medications. Average premiums for stand-alone Part D plans are projected to rise by less than $1 a month, but individual plans can differ considerably. A temporary federal program that helped stabilize premiums is also ending, making it especially important to compare your options.

Your insurer may change its list of covered drugs, called a formulary, or move your medication to a more expensive cost tier. Check that your prescriptions are still covered and what you'll pay for them.

Medicare Advantage changes: If you have Medicare Advantage, the private-insurance alternative to Original Medicare, review your plan carefully. Some insurers are dropping plans or leaving certain markets, while others may change costs or trim extra benefits, such as dental, vision and hearing coverage.

Doctor, specialist and hospital networks can change, too. If your plan is being discontinued, you'll need to choose new coverage. Even if it continues, compare next year's costs, benefits and provider networks before automatically renewing.

Help with weight-loss drugs: A new Medicare GLP-1 Bridge program offers eligible beneficiaries certain medications for weight management for $50 a month through Dec. 31, 2027. Covered drugs include Wegovy, Zepbound (KwikPen only) and Foundayo.

Eligibility is limited. For example, you generally need Medicare drug coverage and must meet specific body mass index and health requirements. The program operates separately from regular Part D coverage, so the $50 monthly payment doesn't count toward your Part D deductible or annual out-of-pocket limit.

Learn more and check eligibility at Medicare.gov/coverage/weight-loss-drugs.

How to shop smart: Here are four ways to find coverage that fits your needs without overpaying.

• ***Read your plan notice:*** Your insurer should send an Annual Notice of Change explaining next year's premiums, deductibles, copayments and



coverage changes. Medicare Advantage members should also check provider networks and extra benefits.

• ***Compare total costs:*** Visit Medicare.gov/plan-compare. Enter your medications and preferred pharmacies to compare plans and estimate annual costs. Don't focus on premiums alone; include deductibles and what you'll pay for prescriptions.

• ***Check your doctors:*** If you're considering Medicare Advantage, contact your doctors and hospitals directly to confirm they'll accept the specific plan in 2027. Online directories can be outdated.

• ***Get free help:*** Your State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) provides free, unbiased Medicare counseling. Find a local counselor at ShipHelp.org or call 877-839-2675.

One important caution: If you're thinking of switching from Medicare Advantage to Original Medicare, check your Medigap options first. In most states, insurers can deny you a Medigap policy or charge higher premiums based on your health history if you don't qualify for guaranteed-issue protections. Make sure you understand your options before dropping your current plan.

Take time to compare plans before December 7. A little homework now could save you money and help you start 2027 with better coverage.

Send your questions or comments to questions@savvysenior.org, or to Savvy Senior, PO Box 5443, Norman, OK 73070.

