

Medicare and Health Insurance Marketplaces

The Health Insurance Marketplaces were created by the Affordable Care Act. It is also known as the ACA. The Marketplaces allow people to buy insurance if they do not have insurance or do not have enough insurance. Some states have their own Marketplaces, and other states use the federal Marketplace. Plans sold through Marketplaces are also known as Qualified Health Plans, or QHPs.

How does the Marketplace affect my Medicare coverage?



If you are currently enrolled in a Marketplace plan, you should most likely disenroll from it and enroll in Medicare when you are first eligible (with two exceptions, listed on the next page).

If you are eligible for Medicare, you should usually not use the Marketplace health and drug coverage. It is illegal for someone to try to sell you a Marketplace plan if they know you are eligible for or enrolled in Medicare. You do not use the Marketplace to buy Medicare plans.

How do I change from a Marketplace plan to Medicare?



If you are enrolled in a plan through the federal Marketplace, contact the Marketplace to disenroll at least 14 days before you want your coverage to end.



If you are enrolled in a plan through your state's Marketplace, contact it directly to learn how and when to disenroll from the plan.






You want your Marketplace plan to cover you up until your Medicare starts. You should avoid any gaps in coverage, so timing is important.



To contact the Federal Marketplace, visit www.healthcare.gov or call 800-318-2596.

Why should I switch to Medicare when I become eligible?

-  If you do not enroll in Medicare when you are first eligible, you may have a late enrollment penalty when you sign up later. You may also experience coverage gaps.
-  Marketplace plans do not work with Medicare. If you keep your Marketplace plan, it may not cover you once you are eligible for Medicare.
-  Once you are eligible for premium-free Medicare Part A, you will no longer be eligible to receive cost assistance for your Marketplace plan. Although you may keep your Marketplace plan after becoming eligible for Medicare, it can be very expensive without cost assistance.

The exceptions:

You can choose to enroll in a Marketplace plan instead of Medicare if either:

- You are eligible for Medicare due to End-Stage Renal Disease.
- You are eligible for Medicare and have to pay a premium for Part A.

Contact your State Health Insurance Assistance Program to learn more about your options. Your local SHIP contact information is on the final page of this document.

What are SHOP plans?

Marketplaces also provide coverage through the Small Business Health Options Program (SHOP). This program lets small businesses provide health insurance to employees. If you have a SHOP plan through a current employer, you may still need to enroll in Medicare. The timing depends on the size of your employer and how you qualify for Medicare. Contact your State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) to learn more. Your local SHIP contact information is on the final page of this document.

Should I use the Marketplace if I have Medicare?



No. You cannot buy a Medicare Advantage Plan, Part D prescription drug plan, or Medigaps through the Marketplace. It is illegal for someone to sell you a Marketplace plan if they know you are eligible for or are enrolled in Medicare. If someone tries to sell you a Marketplace plan, let them know that you have Medicare and cannot enroll in a Marketplace plan.

What is a Medicare billing error?

A Medicare billing error is an honest health care service or product mistake related to billing. While transitioning from the Marketplace to Medicare, your provider could mistakenly bill claims to the wrong insurance plan. A pattern of errors by a physician or provider could be considered a red flag or potential fraud or abuse if it is not corrected.

Read your Explanation of Benefits (EOBs) and Medicare Summary Notices (MSNs) carefully to detect any potential errors. If you see anything incorrect, or receive a suspicious bill, first contact your provider. Sometimes providers may make billing mistakes, which they can correct. If the problem continues, contact your Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP).

Who to contact for more information



State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP): Contact your SHIP if you have questions about Medicare coverage and how to transition from a Marketplace plan. It may be helpful to also contact your SHIP if you are eligible for Medicare due to ESRD and choosing between Medicare and a Marketplace plan (also known as a QHP). Contact information for your local SHIP is on the final page of this document.



Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP): Contact your SMP if you have experienced potential Medicare fraud, errors, or abuse. SMPs can provide you with information to prevent, detect, and report such experiences. Contact information for your local SMP is on the final page of this document.





Marketplace: Contact your health insurance Marketplace to disenroll from your Marketplace plan. If you are enrolled in a plan through the federal Marketplace, you can call 800-318-2596 or visit www.healthcare.gov. If you are enrolled in a plan through your state's Marketplace, contact it directly to learn how to disenroll.



Employer: If you are enrolled in a SHOP plan through your employer, speak to your employer about how your insurance will work once you are enrolled in Medicare. If your employer is unsure, you can reach out to your SHIP.



Social Security Administration (SSA): Enroll in Medicare through SSA. You can visit or call your local Social Security office, call the national SSA number at 800-772-1213, or create your secure my Social Security account at www.ssa.gov to enroll.

Local SHIP contact information	Local SMP contact information
<p>Toll-free phone number: 877-839-2675 (To connect with your SHIP, say “Medicare”)</p>	<p>Toll-free phone number: 877-808-2468 (To connect with your SMP, say “Medicare Fraud”)</p>
<p>Online SHIP Locator: www.shiphelp.org Click: </p>	<p>Online SMP Locator: www.smpresource.org Click: </p>
<p>SHIP National Technical Assistance Center: 877-839-2675 www.shiphelp.org info@shiphelp.org SMP National Resource Center: 877-808-2468 www.smpresource.org info@smpresource.org © 2021 Medicare Rights Center www.medicareinteractive.org </p> <p><i>The Medicare Rights Center is the author of portions of the content in these materials but is not responsible for any content not authored by the Medicare Rights Center. This document was supported, in part, by grant numbers 90SATC0002 and 90MPCRC0002 from the Administration for Community Living (ACL), Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, D.C. 20201. Grantees undertaking projects under government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their findings and conclusions. Points of view or opinions do not, therefore, necessarily represent official Administration for Community Living policy.</i></p>	