

State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP)

www.medicareabcd.org

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Senior Savings Guide: How to Lower Your Prescription Drug Costs

ANNUAL PLAN REVIEW

Each year Medicare Part D Prescription Drug and Medicare Advantage plans with prescription drug coverage may change.

Each Medicare drug plan design their coverage based on:

1. Network pharmacies
2. Prescriptions covered on formulary
3. Coverage rules

IMPORTANT! : Annually compare plan formularies to understand if your prescriptions are covered and which pharmacies the plans preferred to ensure you have the lowest cost, greatest coverage in the plan you choose.

AVOID ENROLLMENT PENALTIES

1. Enroll when you are eligible
2. Make sure you have creditable prescription drug coverage (employer and marketplace plans send this to you in writing annually)
3. Don't let your prescription drug coverage lapse more than 63 days or face penalties.



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Made possible with a grant from the U.S. Administration for Community Living through the State of Maryland

Are you enrolled in a prescription drug plan but cannot afford your prescriptions?
A number of strategies may help you lower your drug costs.

ASK YOUR DOCTOR:

Are generic drugs available?

Some “preferred pharmacies” or those in the plan network may offer year-round discounts on generics.

Are samples available?

While the quantity may be limited, this can provide a short-term solution while you explore other options.

ASK YOUR PHARMACY:

What pharmacies are in your plan’s network?

- Annually, check to make sure your pharmacy is in your plan’s network.

Will the pharmacy waive your co-pay?

- If your pharmacy is within your plan’s network, they may waive co-pays on a case-by-case basis. *Tell your pharmacist:* “I cannot afford the co-pay and request that the copay is waived.”
- *Ask your pharmacist,* “If the prescription is waived, will it count toward my out-of-pocket limit?”

Ask for a promotional price.

- Your in-network pharmacy may have limited -time offers to sell prescriptions within the plan’s formulary at a reduced cost.
- *Tell your pharmacist:* “Please refill my prescription without using your Medicare drug coverage,” to take advantage of specials that are only available to you during your deductible or coverage gap. REMEMBER: you must submit receipts to have it count toward your out-of-pocket costs.

Pay for the drug directly (not using your Medicare Part D or Medicare Advantage coverage).

- *Ask your pharmacist* for the drug manufacturers discount card or coupon.
- *Ask the pharmacist* if they can offer the drug at a lower price or if they have a low-cost drug program.
- Download a discount card for generics from a website such as www.RXassist.org to save up to 85% on generic medications.
- **See local prices and compare:** download the app: www.goodRx.com
Walmart for example, has insulin available at discounted rates!

If your plan sends you a written notice informing you that a drug will no longer be covered:

- Ask your pharmacy for a refill with a 60-day supply under the same plan

ASK FOR ASSISTANCE:

Extra Help (Low income subsidy) and the Senior Prescription Drug Assistance Program are available to help pay for Medicare costs, but you have to apply.

State and Federal Programs to Help Pay for Medicare ELIGIBILITY STANDARDS for 2019

		Monthly Income*	Annual Income	Assets**
LIS*** Low Income Subsidy	Single	\$1,581	\$18,975	\$14,390
	Couple	\$2,134	\$25,605	\$28,720
SPDAP Senior Prescription Drug Assistance Program	Single	\$3,123	\$37,470	No Asset Limit
	Couple	\$4,227	\$50,730	No Asset Limit

Ask the prescription drug company if it can help pay for drugs.

What other resources are available to help?

- **The Partnership for Prescription Assistance** (website <https://www.pparx.org/>)
Contact each foundation for grant eligibility and application information.
- **The Patient Access Network Foundation** (<https://panfoundation.org/index.php/en/>) is a charity that helps cover out-of-pocket drug costs.
- **The Patient Advocate Foundation** (<https://www.patientadvocate.org/>) offers a co-pay relief program.
- **The HealthWell Foundation** (<https://www.healthwellfoundation.org/>) has 60 different disease funds.
- **Needy Meds** a national non-profit organization (<https://www.needy meds.org/>) lists low cost drug programs. Call the Needy Meds helpline: 800-503-6897.

ASK YOUR MEDICARE PART D OR MEDICARE ADVANTAGE PLAN:

Are mail order prescriptions available?

Your mail-order prescriptions may be available for a lower cost, 90-day supply.

For a tiering exception.

Your medication may be on a higher tier. A tiering exception may lower your cost sharing.

For a formulary exception. In 2019, some plans may remove brand-name drugs from the formulary and replace them with generics, or change the cost or coverage of brand name drugs when adding generics to their formulary. To ask for a coverage determination, (including a formulary exception) submit your doctor's supporting statement that explains the medical reason for the request and ask for an expedited response.

Medicare Part A (Hospital) Prescription Drug Coverage

- Generally, prescriptions taken in an out-patient setting like an emergency room, observation unit, surgical center, or pain clinic are not covered.
- You must submit a claim for reimbursement of out-of-pocket costs.



Medicare Part B (Medical) Prescription Drug Coverage

- Part B covers injections in a doctor's office like oral cancer drugs, drugs used with equipment like a nebulizer.
- Part B pays for flu and pneumococcal shots.
- Part B generally does not pay for prescriptions obtained from a pharmacy.



Questions? Contact the Montgomery County State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP)

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Updated: 4.18.19