



**STATE HEALTH INSURANCE  
ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SHIP) (301) 255 – 4250  
[www.medicareabcd.org](http://www.medicareabcd.org)**

**Health Insurance Options for  
Disabled under 65 Years of Age**

**Who is eligible?**

- People under the age of 65 can get premium-free Medicare **Part A** (Hospital Insurance) benefits if they have been receiving Social Security for 24 months. They may be eligible to purchase **Part B** (Medical Insurance). The standard monthly Part B premium in 2018 is \$134.00
- Medicare coverage may begin the 25<sup>th</sup> month of disability.
- People with End-Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) permanent kidney failure requiring dialysis or a transplant.

**What does Medicare pay for?**

Medicare is a health insurance program that provides a basic foundation of benefits, but it does not pay 100% of all medical bills. People with Medicare are responsible for premiums, deductibles, and co-pays. Because these costs can be significant, most beneficiaries need some kind of plan or program to fill in the gaps.

**What are the options for the costs not covered by Medicare?**

**Medigap Insurance (Medicare Supplement Plans)** – A Medigap policy is a health insurance plan sold by private insurance companies to help pay some of the co-pays and deductibles not covered under original Medicare. There are 10 standardized plans lettered A-N and a high deductible Plan F. Each standardized Medigap policy must offer the same basic benefits, no matter which insurance company sells it. Cost is usually the only difference between Medigap policies with the same letter sold by different insurance companies. Which co-pays and deductibles are paid for depends upon which plan letter you purchase. With original Medicare and a Medigap Plan, you may go to any medical provider who participates with Medicare.

**Maryland Law mandates that any company selling Medigap Plans A or C must guarantee to issue such plans to persons who are under age 65 and eligible for Medicare due to disability during the first six months of Medicare Part B enrollment.**

**Medicare Advantage Plans (HMOs), (PPOs), Special Needs Plans (SNP)** Medicare Advantage plans are health plans that are approved by Medicare and run by private companies. These plans provide care under contract to Medicare. The Plans must provide all medically necessary treatment covered by Medicare. If Medicare managed care plans are open for membership, they must enroll the disabled under the age of 65 unless the applicant has End Stage Renal Disease (ESRD). There are no waiting periods for pre-existing conditions. Some Medicare Advantage Plans do cover Prescription Drugs. All plans have premiums and co-pays and a network of providers. (The monthly premiums may be low, but there could be high co-pays for medical services).

## **What assistance is there to help with Medicare costs?**

There are several state and federal programs to help people with limited income and assets to pay their Medicare costs.

- **QMB (Qualified Medicare Beneficiary) Program**

This program pays the monthly Medicare Part B premium (\$134.00 in 2018) and all the deductibles and co-pays. To be eligible, the income must be at or below \$12,300 a year (\$1025 monthly) for a single person; \$16,488 a year (\$1,374 monthly) for a couple. **Income can be higher if you are working and a portion of your income is from earned wages.** There is also an asset test of \$8,890 or less for a single person and \$14,090 or less for a couple. Assets do not include your home, your car or your household belongings. The assets include a \$1,500 burial allowance for individuals and a \$3,000 burial allowance for a couple. QMB eligible beneficiaries must go to medical providers who accept Medicare and the QMB program.

- **SLMB (Specified Low–Income Medicare Beneficiary)**

This program pays **only** the monthly Medicare Part B premium (\$134.00 in 2018) for people whose income is slightly more than the QMB criteria. To be eligible, the income must be at or below \$14,712 a year (\$1,226 monthly) for a single person; \$19,728 a year (\$1,644 monthly) for a couple. **Income can be higher if you are working and a portion of your income is from earned wages.** There is also an asset test of \$8,890 or less for a single person and \$14,090 or less for a couple. Assets do not include your home, your car, or your household belongings. The assets include a \$1,500 burial allowance for an individual and a \$3,000 burial allowance for a couple. **SLMB does not pay Medicare’s co-payments and deductibles.**

- **Medicare Part D Prescription Drug Program – Low Income Subsidy (LIS) “Extra Help”**

The Federal Government’s Low Income Subsidy (LIS) also Called “Extra Help”, is a program administered by Social Security. If you qualify, you get help paying for your Medicare Part D plan’s monthly premium, deductible and some of the cost of your prescriptions. You also have the option to change your Rx Part D plan every month. To be eligible for LIS, income must be at or below \$18,330 a year (\$1,528 monthly) for a single person; \$24,600 a year (\$2,050 monthly) for a couple. Income can be higher if you are working and a portion of your income is from earned wages. There is also an asset test of \$14,100 or less for a single person and \$28,150 or less for a couple. The assets include a \$1,500 burial allowance for an individual and a \$3,000 burial allowance for a couple. (These amounts are for partial LIS; thresholds are lower for full LIS.)

- **Maryland Senior Prescription Drug Assistance Program (SPDAP)**

Provides eligible Medicare Beneficiaries help to pay the premium and cost sharing for the Medicare Part D Prescription Drug Program. SPDAP will pay up to \$40 each month toward the premium in any Part D Drug Plan or Medicare Advantage Plan with drug coverage in Maryland. If you are eligible for SPDAP, you may have one more time during the year to change your Medicare Part D Plan. You may be eligible for SPDAP, if your income is at or below \$36,180 annual income (\$3,015 monthly) for a single person or \$48,720 annual income (\$4,060 monthly) for a couple with higher amounts if the number of people in the household is more than 2. There is NO regard for your assets with the SPDAP program.

## **Maryland Residents with Disabilities Can Work And Qualify for Medicaid Benefits**

- **Employed Individuals with Disabilities (EID): Medical Assistance for Workers**

The Employed Individuals with Disabilities (EID) Program offers Medical Assistance (Medicaid) coverage to people with disabilities who work for pay and who meet certain eligibility requirements. The EID program provides full fee for services, Medical Assistance coverage, and wrap around services for those with other health insurance or Medicare.

### **Who is eligible?**

- Marylanders, with disabilities that meet Social Security's medical standards, who are age 18 – 64 years old and are employed or self-employed. Income limits in 2018 can be as high as \$71,052 a year if single, as high as \$95,388 a year if married with asset limits of \$10,000 for an individual and

\$15,000 if married. Your home, your car and certain retirement accounts do not count as assets.

### **Employed Individuals with Disabilities (EID) continued...**

- The premiums to enroll are based on income and range from \$0 to \$55 per month. The only other costs for covered services are small co-payments for prescriptions (\$1.00 for generic drugs, \$3.00 for brand name drugs). You pay nothing for other covered services as long as your provider accepts Medical Assistance.
- You can continue in the EID Program until your 65<sup>th</sup> birthday, if you stay eligible. You will need to reapply every six months. To enroll in the EID Program contact Victor Murrana at Independence Now (240) 898-2185.

**Veterans' Benefits** – People who have served in the military and have a DD214 (honorable discharge) may be eligible for medical and prescription benefits through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs 1(877) 222-8387.

### **What Happens When a Person with Medicare Due to Disability Reaches Age 65?**

People enrolled in Medicare, prior to age 65 because of a disability, have the right to purchase any of the available Medigap plans when they become age 65. Insurance companies cannot refuse to sell a Medigap plan due to disability or other health conditions during the first six months of becoming age 65.

If you have any questions or need assistance, please call the

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