

ARE YOU, OR A FAMILY MEMBER, MEDICARE ELIGIBLE (OR ABOUT TO BECOME MEDICARE ELIGIBLE)? IF SO, PLEASE READ AND KEEP FOR YOUR RECORDS!

Notice of Creditable Coverage

Your prescription drug coverage provided under Southwest Community Health System is expected to pay out, on average, the same or more than what the standard Medicare prescription drug coverage will pay. This is known as “creditable coverage”.

Why This is Important

This information is to help you decide whether or not you want to join a Medicare drug plan. It is important for those eligible for both Medicare and a group health plan to look ahead and weigh the costs, benefits, and participation terms of the various options on a regular, if not annual, basis. Based on individual facts and circumstances some choose to elect Medicare only, some choose to elect coverage under the group health plan only, while some choose to enroll in both coverages. When both are elected, benefits coordinate according to the Medicare Secondary Payer Rules. That is, one plan or the other would *reduce payment* in order to prevent you from being reimbursed the full amount from both sources. Your age, the reason for your Medicare eligibility and other factors determine which plan is primary (pays first, generally without reductions) versus secondary (pays second, generally with reductions).

There are two important things you need to know about your current coverage and Medicare’s prescription drug coverage:

1. Medicare prescription drug coverage became available in 2006 to everyone with Medicare. You can get this coverage if you join a Medicare Prescription Drug Plan or join a Medicare Advantage Plan (like an HMO or PPO) that offers prescription drug coverage. All Medicare drug plans provide at least a standard level of coverage set by Medicare. Some plans may also offer more coverage for a higher monthly premium.
2. Southwest Community Health System has determined that the prescription drug coverage offered by the Southwest Benefit Plan (**Medflex Select, Basic PPO, and High PPO**) is, on average for all plan participants, expected to pay out as much as standard Medicare prescription drug coverage pays and is therefore considered Creditable Coverage. Because your existing coverage is Creditable Coverage, you can keep this coverage and not pay a higher premium (a penalty) if you later decide to join a Medicare drug plan.

When May You Join A Medicare Drug Plan?

Eligible individuals may join a Medicare drug plan when you first become eligible for Medicare and each year from October 15th through December 7th. However, if you lose your current creditable coverage, through no fault of your own, you will also be eligible for a two (2) month Special Enrollment Period (SEP) to join a Medicare Drug plan.

What Happens To Your Current Coverage If You Decide to Join A Medicare Drug Plan?

If you decide to join a Medicare drug plan, your current Southwest General coverage may or may not be affected as well as dependent coverage. Additional guidance is available at <https://www.cms.gov/medicare/prescription-drug-coverage/creditablecoverage?redirect=/creditablecoverage/> which outlines the prescription drug plan provisions/options that Medicare eligible individuals may have available to them when they become eligible for Medicare Part D.

When Will You Pay A Higher Premium (Penalty) To Join A Medicare Drug Plan?

You should also know that if you drop or lose your current coverage with Southwest General and don't join a Medicare drug plan within 63 continuous days after your current coverage ends, you may pay a higher premium (a penalty) to join a Medicare drug plan later. If you go 63 continuous days or longer without creditable prescription drug coverage, your monthly premium may go up by at least 1% of the Medicare base beneficiary premium per month for every month that you did not have that coverage. For example, if you go nineteen months without creditable coverage, your premium may consistently be at least 19% higher than the Medicare base beneficiary premium. You may have to pay this higher premium (a penalty) as long as you have Medicare prescription drug coverage. In addition, you may have to wait until the following October to join.

For More Information About This Notice Or Your Current Prescription Drug Coverage

Contact the person listed below for further information **NOTE:** You'll get this notice each year. You will also get it before the next period you can join a Medicare drug plan, and if this coverage through Southwest General changes. You also may request a copy of this notice at any time.

Contact--Position/Office: Human Resources Department
Address: 18697 Bagley Road, Middleburg Heights, OH 44130
Phone Number: 440-816-8025

For More Information Regarding Your Options Under Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage

More detailed information about Medicare plans that offer prescription drug coverage is in the "Medicare & You" handbook. You'll get a copy of the handbook in the mail every year from Medicare. You may also be contacted directly by Medicare drug plans.

For more information about Medicare prescription drug coverage:

1. Visit www.medicare.gov
2. Call your State Health Insurance Assistance Program (see the inside back cover of your copy of the "Medicare & You" handbook for their telephone number) for personalized help
3. Call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227). TTY users should call 1-877-486-2048.

If you have limited income and resources, extra help paying for Medicare prescription drug coverage is available. For information about this extra help, visit Social Security on the web at www.socialsecurity.gov, or call them at 1-800-772-1213 (TTY 1-800-325-0778).

Remember: Keep this Creditable Coverage notice. If you decide to join one of the Medicare drug plans, you may be required to provide a copy of this notice when you join to show whether or not you have maintained creditable coverage and, therefore, whether or not you are required to pay a higher premium (a penalty).