

# Health-line Benefits of Medicare

Medicare is a government-administered health insurance program in the United States, covering those aged 65 or above. Citizens younger than age 65 can qualify for Medicare, including those with disabilities and those suffering from permanent kidney failure and Lou Gehrig's disease.

While helpful, Original Medicare is not entirely comprehensive. If you opt to have Original Part A and Part B Medicare coverage, you can buy a Medicare Supplement Insurance policy, also known as a Medigap policy, from a private insurer.

This policy helps with healthcare costs but does not cover all medical expenses or most long-term care. You do have the choice to opt-out of Medicare coverage if you or your spouse is actively working and have group health insurance coverage that is your primary insurance.

## Medicare Coverage Breakdown

- Medicare Part A assists pay for inpatient care in a hospital or limited time at a skilled nursing facility. It also supports some home health care and hospice care facilities.
- Medicare Part B helps pay for doctors and other health care providers, outpatient care, home health care, durable medical equipment, and some preventive services.
- Medicare Advantage Plan, known as Part C, includes all benefits and services covered under Part A and Part B, as well as some prescription drugs and additional benefits such as vision, hearing, and dental.
- Medicare Part D helps cover the cost expense of all approved prescription drugs.

## Convenient Coverage Options

There are two primary types of coverage options, hospital and medical insurance. If you want additional coverage, you will need to purchase [Medicare Part D](#) for prescription drug coverage and a [Medigap](#) policy for additional supplemental coverage. You could also get a comprehensive Medicare Advantage plan that covers all of your coverage needs.

Medicare Advantage plans are Medicare plans by private insurance companies that combine original Medicare coverage and additional benefits in one convenient policy. Most Medicare Advantage plans offer the following services:

- Hospitalization
- [Home healthcare services](#)
- [Hospice care](#)
- Doctor visits
- [Prescription drug coverage](#)
- Preventive care

- [Dental](#)
- [Vision](#)
- [Hearing](#)
- SilverSneakers fitness memberships

## What Are The Benefits Of A Medicare Advantage Plan?

### Save On Medicare Costs Each Month

Generally, Medicare-enrolled citizens qualify for free Part A coverage but must pay a small monthly premium for Part B. The average monthly premium amount is \$144.60 [each month](#) or more, based on your income. Compared to the [out-of-pocket cost](#) of operations, prescriptions, and other associated costs, the savings are enormous.

Many Medicare Advantage plans have no premiums and offer low or no deductibles. Another benefit of choosing Medicare Advantage is that most programs set limits on the maximum out-of-pocket costs you may pay. [Research by Trusted Source](#) has shown that you can save money on lab services and medical equipment by opting for a Medicare Advantage plan. If you opt for a Medicare HMO plan, you may save even more on healthcare services provided by your HMO network.

### Provides Coverage To Those Who May Otherwise Be Ineligible

Thanks to Medicare Advantage plans, millions of aging adults have received coverage they otherwise wouldn't have been able to afford. Before 1965, when Medicare was created, [around 9 million elderly Americans](#) didn't have health coverage, far greater than the 508,000 senior citizens who were uninsured in 2018. Medicare also covers many younger citizens with disabilities, as well as those who have amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, also known as ALS, and end-stage renal disease.

Consider the implications if Medicare and other supplement coverage didn't exist. Older citizens, who require most medical treatment, would find themselves paying expensive medical costs directly out of pocket. Their annual expenses would be staggering, likely exceeding their income. Individuals with disabilities would be dependent on their caretakers, who may not be able to afford their medical care.

### Provides Additional Coverage Medicare Doesn't

Millions of citizens enroll in Medicare Advantage plans every year, and enrollment is expected to grow in the future. Total enrollment increased to 22 million in 2019, up from 5.3 million in 2004. This plan offers beneficiaries an alternative way to get Medicare [benefits](#) through [private insurance](#) companies that contract with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services.

You receive all the program benefits of Part A and B of hospital and medical insurance, combined with additional services. When you opt for Part C coverage, [Medicare Advantage plans](#) may include other benefits such as dental and [vision](#) at minimal expense to you. These services are beneficial for older Americans who may otherwise not receive this broad range of coverage.

## **Provides Affordable Prescription Drug Coverage**

Millions of citizens now have access to essential prescription medications they otherwise couldn't afford. When pharmaceutical companies observed untapped potential in the Medicare market, they began investing billions of dollars in developing drugs explicitly tailored for seniors.

Medicare Part D Prescription Drug Plans and Medicare Advantage Prescription Drug Plans — both sold through [private insurance](#) companies — also gave Americans complete access to prescribed medications.

Medicare recipients have had access to these plans [since 2006](#), and enrollment has increased every year since. In 2006, 22.5 million (52%) citizens on Medicare were recorded in Part D compared to 43 million (72%) in the year 2018, according to research by the [Kaiser Family Foundation](#). Pharmaceutical companies may have more opportunities to develop drugs for this market as we move into the future.

## **Personalized Plan Structures**

[Medicare Advantage plans](#) offer various policy types for an array of situations. For example, if you have a health condition, an SNP Advantage plan can assist with your medical costs. If you prefer more provider freedom, a PPO or PFFS plan may be more convenient for you. If you want extra health services like dental, vision, or hearing, many Advantage plans include them as well.

## **Coordinated Medical Care**

This means that your healthcare providers actively communicate to coordinate your care between different healthcare services and medical specialties. This helps avoid unnecessary expense, testing, and preventing things like medication interactions. In [one study](#), researchers found that coordinated care was associated with higher patient ratings and more positive staff experiences.

## **Categories of Medicare Advantage Plans To Choose From**

- [Health Maintenance Organization \(HMO\)](#) - HMO plans utilize in-network doctors and require referrals for specialists.
- [Preferred Provider Organization \(PPO\)](#) - This plan charges different rates based on in-network or out-of-network services.

- [Private Fee-for-Service \(PFFS\)](#) - These plans are unique payment plans that offer provider flexibility.
- [Special Needs Plan \(SNP\)](#) - This plan helps with long-term medical costs for chronic conditions.
- [Medical Savings Account \(MSA\)](#) - MSA plans are medical savings accounts paired with high deductible health plans.

## How to Apply for Medicare

Some people are enrolled in Medicare Parts A and B automatically, while others may have to register. If you are within three months of age 65 or older and are not collecting monthly Social Security benefits yet, you can sign up for Medicare coverage. In this situation, you can use a retirement application to sign up. The application process typically takes less than 10 minutes, and usually, no documentation is required when applying.

## The Takeaway

Medicare Advantage plans offer many benefits to supplement Original Medicare, including convenient coverage, multiple plan options, and long-term savings. Whether you opt for only Original Medicare or want a Medicare Advantage plan, it's essential to review healthcare needs and Medicare options before choosing your coverage. Get an instant [quote](#) today and compare the best plans in under two minutes through [American Legacy Insurance](#).