

Medicare and Medex

FAQ

Why Do I need to enroll in Medicare Parts A and B?

Effective July 1, 1997, the city of Fall River adopted Mass. General Laws, Chapter 32b, Section 18, which requires all Medicare-eligible subscribers who wish to obtain health insurance through the city to enroll in Medicare Parts A and B and transfer to a Medicare extension plan.

If a subscriber does not provide the required Medicare information they will not be eligible to continue their existing health coverage. The city may periodically request proof of Medicare eligibility or ineligibility.

Should a subscriber delay their enrollment in Medicare they may be responsible for co-insurance through their active health insurance plan as well as be assessed a penalty on their Medicare premium at the time of enrollment. The city will reimburse the subscriber for the penalty however the subscriber will be responsible for any co-insurance premiums from the health insurance provider.

Medicare Is:

- A federally funded health insurance plan designed for people age 65 or older and some disabled people under age 65.

Medicare has two parts:

- Medicare Part A pays for inpatient hospital charges, skilled nursing facility care, and hospice care.
- Medicare Part B pays for outpatient hospital charges, doctor visits, and many other medical services not covered by Part A.

With Medicare, you get easy access to care.

- You can use any doctor/hospital that accepts Medicare (and most do),
- Medicare doesn't require you to select a primary care (PCP) or get a referral to seek specialist care.

Medicare Enrollment

Most People Get Parts A and B Automatically if:

- You are already getting benefits from Social Security or the Railroad Retirement Board.
- You are under 65 and disabled.
- If you have ALS (Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis, also called Lou Gehrig's Disease).

If you're automatically enrolled you will get a Medicare card in the mail about 3 months prior to your 65th birthday or 25th month of disability.

You Might Need to Sign Up for Parts A and B if:

- You aren't getting Social Security or Railroad Retirement Board Benefits
- You qualify for Medicare because you have End-Stage Renal Disease (ESRD).

When Can You Sign Up for Parts A and B?

- When you are first eligible.
 - You have a 7-month Initial Enrollment Period which begins 3 months before the month you turn 65, includes the month you turn 65, and ends 3 months after the month you turn 65.
 - **The city recommends you sign up 3 months prior to turning 65 so the proper premiums are reflected in your pension.**
- During the General Enrollment Period between January 1st through March 31st each year.
- If you qualify for a Special Enrollment Period.
 - If you're covered under a group health plan based on current employment, you have a Special Enrollment Period to sign up for Part A and/or Part B any time as long as you or your spouse (or family member if you're disabled) is working, and you're covered by a group health plan through the employer or union based on that work.
 - You also have an 8-month Special Enrollment Period to sign up for Part A and/or B that starts the month after the employment ends or the group health plan insurance based on current employment ends, whichever happens first.

When Will Coverage Start?

- If you sign up for Part A and/or Part B during the first 3 months of your Initial Enrollment Period, your coverage starts the first day of your birthday month, unless your birthday is on the first day of the month in which case coverage will begin the first day of the prior month.
- If you sign up during the General Enrollment Period coverage will begin July 1st.

Part B Premiums and Penalties:

- Contact Social Security for the monthly cost of your Part B premium.
- If you get Social Security, Rail Road Benefits, or Civil Service benefits, your Part B premium will get deducted from your benefit payment. If you don't get these benefit payments you will be billed.
- If you don't sign up for Part B when you're first eligible, you may have to pay a late enrollment penalty for as long as you have Medicare. Your monthly premium for Part B may go up 10% for each full 120month period that you could have had Part B, but didn't sign up for it.
 - Usually, you don't pay a late enrollment penalty if you meet certain conditions that allow you to sign up for Part B during a Special Enrollment Period.

Why Do I need to Supplement Medicare?

Although Medicare pays a large portion of your medical expenses, you are responsible for the remaining costs. Also, Medicare does not cover all medical services in *all* situations.

Here are some important things to know about Medicare:

- ❑ You may have to pay deductible and co-insurance costs. When Medicare covers a service, you must often pay for a portion of the cost. Your portion is referred to as a deductible or co-insurance. Deductibles are the amount you are responsible for before Medicare begins to pay and are subject to increase from year to year. After your deductible is paid, you may also need to pay an additional amount—usually 20% of the cost for the service, called co-insurance.
- ❑ Only specific “preventive services” are covered. Medicare generally covers the cost of tests to diagnose or treat an illness. *Some of these same tests are not covered by Medicare when they are part of a regular checkup.*
- ❑ Medicare does not cover the cost of most outpatient prescription drugs.
- ❑ Medicare does not cover you outside the United States, even in the event of an emergency.

Adding a Medicare Supplement Plan Improves your Medicare Coverage:

Expenses that are not covered by Medicare are often referred to as “gap.” Medicare supplement, “Medigap” plans, such as Medex help to fill in these coverage gaps. It helps you pay Medicare’s deductible and co-insurance costs, and covers certain services Medicare doesn’t.

How Medex Works:

With Medex, you show two cards when you receive medical care: your Medicare card and your Medex card. Medicare, your primary insurance, pays first.

The Medex plan has many advantages:

- ❑ You can seek care from any Medicare physician or hospital throughout the United States.
- ❑ You don’t need to get referrals for specialty care.
- ❑ Your Blue Cross Blue Shield ID is recognized around the world.

When to Enroll:

If you are:

- ❑ Approaching 65, enrolling in both Parts of Medicare
- ❑ 65 and retired
- ❑ Over 65 and retiring
- ❑ Under 65, retired and enrolling in Medicare due to disability other than end-stage renal disease.