



# Medicare Annual Enrollment Period (AEP) Readiness Guide





## Medicare Annual Enrollment Period (AEP)

October 15 - December 7

The Medicare Annual Enrollment Period (AEP) - also called the Medicare Open Enrollment Period - is an election period that allows you to make changes to your Medicare coverage each year. **Your new coverage would take effect January 1 of the following year.**

### What changes can you make during AEP?

- Change from Original Medicare (Part A and Part B) to a Medicare Advantage plan.
- Change from one Medicare Advantage plan to another.
- Disenroll from your Medicare Advantage plan, go back to Original Medicare, and add a Prescription Drug plan if needed.
- Disenroll from Medicare Advantage, go back to Original Medicare, add a Medicare Supplement plan, and add a Prescription Drug plan if needed.
- Change from one Prescription Drug plan (Medicare Part D) to another.
- Enroll in a Prescription Drug plan.
- Cancel your Prescription Drug plan coverage.

**Note:** It's important to carefully review your plan each year to determine if you should make a change during AEP. If you like your current Medicare coverage, you don't need to do anything during AEP. Your current plan will automatically renew for the next year.

*TogetherHealth brings clarity to the complex Medicare system by providing access to a variety of leading Medicare plans. Our online marketplace, HealthInsurance.com, and consultative phone service, Medicare Coverage Helpline, allow our customers to evaluate their individual needs, shop the way they prefer, and compare & enroll in plans - all in one place.*

*In short, our mission is to match customers with Medicare solutions that best meet their needs now and in the future.*



## Making Changes During AEP

Medicare premiums, costs and plans can change from year to year. That's why it's crucial to review your Medicare Annual Notice of Change (ANOC) letter from your insurance carrier, which is mailed in September each year.

**5 common reasons** why you might change your plan during AEP include:

### 1 You Need A Plan That Better Fits Your Budget.

A premium increase is a common reason to change plans during AEP – especially if you find a different plan that meets your needs for less money.

*Both Medicare Advantage plans and Prescription Drug (Part D) plans can have premium increases.*

### 2 You Want To Stay In-Network With Your Preferred Doctors.

Your doctors, such as your Primary Care Physician (PCP), may change medical groups, hospital affiliations, or insurance plans that they accept. This may impact your decision to change plans during AEP.

*Each year, be sure to check if your doctors will be in-network with your current plan or the plan you're going to switch to during AEP.*

### 3 You Need A Plan That Covers Your Medications.

Just like with in-network doctors, some plans may change their **drug formularies**. If your plan stops covering one of your medications or moves it to a more expensive drug tier, changing plans during AEP may be right for you.

#### Drug Formulary:

The list of prescription drugs that a Medicare plan covers.

*You can receive drug coverage from a standalone Prescription Drug plan (PDP) or from a Medicare Advantage Prescription Drug plan (MAPD). In either case, you can find a new plan that will cover your medications or cover them at lower prices.*

### 4 You Need A Plan With More Benefits.

Original Medicare (Parts A and B) does not cover dental, vision or hearing benefits, for example. But a Medicare Advantage plan may cover these extra benefits, plus fitness programs, telehealth services and rides to doctor appointments.

*Be sure to evaluate your health care needs and required services each year to ensure your current Medicare coverage is what you need.*

### 5 You Want A Plan With Better Ratings To Meet Your Expectations.

Medicare uses member satisfaction surveys and plans to give performance star ratings to plans. A plan can get a rating between 1 and 5 stars (5 is considered excellent). This overall rating gives a quick summary of your plan's performance in several categories like quality of care and customer service.

*This 5-star rating system is updated each fall and can help you to compare plans based on quality and performance.*

## Tips To Prepare For AEP

### 1 Mark Your Calendar With Key Dates (October 15 - December 7)

Set a yearly reminder to review your plan's Annual Notice of Change (ANOC) letter in September so you can be prepared to make changes during AEP, if needed (more on this below). Then, be sure to save the AEP date for **October 15 - December 7** each year.

### 2 Make A List Of Your Healthcare Needs

Start by writing down all of your **1) preferred doctors, 2) health care facilities, 3) hospitals and 4) prescription drugs**. You may want to make a list of value-added benefits that you're interested in, too.

For example, you may be someone who likes to keep active and have social interaction. So a fitness program like SilverSneakers®, which gives you access to a network of gyms and other programs, might be a good fit for you.

### 3 Review Your Plan's ANOC Letter

If you're enrolled in a Medicare Advantage or Prescription Drug plan, you will receive your ANOC letter in September. The ANOC will inform you of any changes to your plan's benefits, costs and rules (i.e., new network changes or restrictions).

Be sure to carefully review this notice every year because it will help you determine if you need to change your plans. As you read the ANOC, **ask yourself the following questions:**

- Is my premium increasing?
- Will my doctors, specialists and facilities still be in-network next year?
- Are my prescriptions still covered, or will their costs increase?
- Are there any changes to my copayments and coinsurance for benefits I'm likely to use next year?
- Do I need referrals or prior authorizations for any services or medications?
- Do I need extra benefits like dental, vision, hearing or fitness programs?

*Tip: Be sure to assess your living situation and travel plans, too. Consider if you'll move or split your time between states during the next plan year. If so, you may need a different Medicare plan.*

### 4 Get Your Information Ready

If you decide to change plans during AEP, be sure to have the following information on hand:

- Medicare card number
- Date of birth
- Your permanent residential and mailing address
- List of doctors, specialists, facilities and medications
- Preferred hospital and pharmacy
- Your current Medicare plan information (if applicable)

### 5 Compare Plans And Shop Around Early

Know that you don't have to go it alone when deciding what's right for you before or during the Medicare Open Enrollment Period. We can walk you through your plan options from the nation's top insurance carriers and help you to enroll in a new Medicare plan.



**Call us at 1-800-917-2369 (TTY 711)  
to get guidance and evaluate your  
plan options during AEP.**

**Remember AEP  
is Oct. 15 - Dec. 7  
each year.**



## What If I Miss AEP?

### Medicare Advantage Open Enrollment Period

If you already have Medicare Advantage coverage, you will have one other opportunity to make changes to your plan during the Medicare Advantage Enrollment Period (MA-OEP) on January 1 - March 31 each year.

During the MA-OEP, you can make the following plan changes:

- Switch from one Medicare Advantage plan to another.
- Drop Medicare Advantage and return to Original Medicare.
- Switch or add a Prescription Drug plan if you return to Original Medicare, depending on your Medicare Advantage coverage status.

***If you make a change during MA-OEP, your new coverage will be effective on the first day of the month after you make the change. For example, if you enroll in a different Medicare Advantage plan on February 10, your new coverage will be effective on March 1.***

### Medicare Special Enrollment Periods (SEP)

You might have another opportunity to make a change to your coverage if you qualify for a Special Enrollment Period (SEP). Some common reasons for Special Enrollment Periods are:

- Moving to a new county or state where you have new Medicare Plan options
- Gaining or losing eligibility for Medicaid
- Moving into or out of an institution like a Skilled Nursing Facility or Nursing Home
- Your plan loses or fails to renew its contract with CMS

***When you enroll in a plan during an SEP, your new coverage will be effective on the first day of the month after you enroll.***

## Contact Us: We're Here To Help

There are a number of ways to change plans or enroll in a new eligible plan during AEP, including contacting a TogetherHealth licensed insurance agent.

**Call: 1-800-917-2369 (TTY 711)**

**Compare Plans: [www.TogetherHealth.com](http://www.TogetherHealth.com)**

### **AEP hours of operation:**

Mon-Fri: 8am-10pm ET

Sat: 9am-10pm ET

Sun: 11am-5pm ET



Health insurance agency services provided by TogetherHealth, LLC, or Total Insurance Brokers, LLC, both part of the Benefytt Technologies, Inc. family of companies.