



NORTHWEST SENIOR INSURANCE

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NORTHWEST SENIOR NEWS **SPECIALIZING IN MEDICARE SUPPLEMENTS, Medicare Advantage, & PART D PRESCRIPTIONS** **Volume 1. 2020**

Looking Ahead for 2020



The Annual Election Period (AEP) during the fall of 2019 was insanely busy and stressful. We helped over 500 people select new prescription plans. Not counting Sundays, that was at a rate of over ten per day.

On top of that, we helped many of you shop for lower cost Medicare supplement (MedSupps) or new Medicare advantage (MA) plans. Many of you in Montana took advantage of the new Lasso Healthcare MSA or Medical Savings Account MA plan.

We thank everyone for your patience and willingness to put up with our delayed call backs. Thank you again for your business and your referrals. That's what keeps us in business.

Lance D. Reedy and Isaac Reedy

2020 Medicare Changes

Here are the Medicare changes for 2020. These are the Part A deductible, extended hospitalization, the skilled nursing facility co-insurance, the Part B deductible, and your Medicare Part B premium.

The 2020 changes	2019	2020
Part A deductible	\$1,364	\$1,408
Days 61-90 hospital co-insurance	\$341/d	\$352/d
Lifetime Reserve days 91-150	\$682/d	\$704/d
Skilled nursing co-insurance	\$172/d	\$176/d
Annual Part B deductible	\$185	\$198
Medicare Part B Premium *	\$135.50	\$144.60

* This figure is for most people new to Medicare.

Exceptions: People previously on Medicare may have a lower premium. People in higher income brackets that are affected by IRMAA have a higher premium.

The Cause of These Increases

The Medicare Part B premium for most people has increased \$9.10 per month. Why so much? In large part this increase is due to the increased costs Medicare has experienced with Part B drugs.

Part B drugs are ones that are administered in a clinical setting. These can include chemotherapy, infusions such as Remicade, and eye injections.

As per the 1965 Medicare legislation, one's Medicare Part B premium is to be about 25% of the cost of administering Medicare Part B. The substantial uptick in the use of Medicare Part B drugs has contributed to the \$9.10 monthly premium increase.

There is nothing we can do about the increases in the Medicare Part B premium. It is what it is. However, those with a Medicare supplement plan may be able to qualify for a lower premium.

Note--We work with most all of the MedSupp companies and can assist you in shopping for lower rates.

Changing your Medicare Supplement Plan

Please remember that you can change your Medicare supplement plan **any month of the year**, provided that you medically qualify.

Almost every month we have someone who contacts us telling us about his/her MedSupp rate increases. In many cases, we can shop for lower rates on your behalf.

Your health does NOT need to be perfect; it just needs to be stable. Most companies' applications have a two-year lookback for many medical events such as a heart attack, bypass surgery, internal cancer, or a stroke.

You do NOT have to wait until the fall 2020 AEP to make a change. Please contact us with any questions about rates or medical qualifications.

Why Your Medicare Supplement Rates Go Up

- 1) Medicare raises the deductibles and co-insurances every year. Your supplement plan is required by Medicare to cover these increases.
- 2) In most states, your premium increases based on your age.
- 3) Increased utilization: Many people as they advance in age have more medical events. Unfortunately, that results in more claims (losses). Because of that, the insurance company will file for a rate increase with your state insurance department.

Plan F to Plan G or Plan G to Plan N

A terrific strategy for finding lower MedSupp rates is to switch from Plan F to Plan G. The two plans are identical except that with Plan G you pay the annual Part B deductible, which is \$198 in 2020.

For example, we have had many people in Montana switch from their Plan F to Plan G. The premium savings have typically ranged from \$30 to \$50 per month.

We just had a party in Oregon switch from her Plan G to a Plan N. That knocked off about \$40 per month in premium. Plan N is still a quality plan, but you will have a little more out-of-pocket. Here are the changes when switching from Plan G to Plan N.

- You have a doctor office copay from \$10-\$20 after you have met your Part B deductible and a \$50 copay for an ER visit.
- The Part B excess is not covered.

Plan N still covers the big-ticket items such as:

- The 20% for other Part B services,
- The extended hospitalization co-insurances.
- The \$1,408 Part A hospital deductible.
- The \$176 per day skilled nursing co-insurance.

The Correct Scoop About Plan F

Contrary to many misunderstandings, Plan F is NOT going away. However, Plan F and Plan C will no longer be available for those turning 65 after January 1, 2020.

As time permits, we'll continue to contact those of you with Plan F to explore converting to a Plan G. Please remember that medical qualification applies.

The New "Open Enrollment Period" or (OEP)

For People with Medicare advantage plans.

The Open Enrollment Period (OEP) runs from January 1 through March 31. During the OEP you can do the following:

- Drop your MA plan and return to Original Medicare. You can add a Part D Prescription Plan (PDP) if your MA plan had drug coverage.
- You can make *one* change from one Medicare Advantage (MA) plan to another. It must be a like to like plan change. If you have an MA plan with Rx (MAPD), you can switch to another MAPD plan. This can be a different plan with the same company or an MAPD plan (if available) with another company.
- If you have an MA only plan, you can switch to another MA only plan (if available).

What you cannot do:

- Add or change a Part D Prescription plan.
- Add a Medicare advantage plan.

Northwest Senior News E-letter

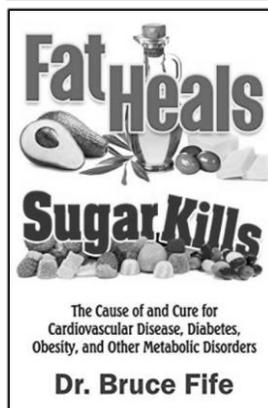
We have been publishing our e-letter, *Northwest Senior News (NSN)*, for over six years. We're continuing to publish on a bi-monthly basis.

If you are not receiving *NSN* and would like to do so, please email us at lance@nwsimail.com. We have spoken with a few people who did not find our e-letter in their inbox. Try checking your spam or junk folder.

We'll continue with these three major themes in *Northwest Senior News*.

- Medicare and Medicare related topics
- Prescription information and ways to save
- Health and wellness book reviews and digests

Fat Heals—Sugar Kills by Dr. Bruce Fife



Fat Heals—Sugar Kills is the new book we'll be reviewing starting with our January-February E-letter.

Replacing fat with refined carbohydrates was the worst dietary blunder of the twentieth century has led to skyrocketing levels of chronic disease we are experiencing today. Fortunately, there is a

solution—cut out the refined carbohydrates and add good fats back into our diet.

New research is showing that fats are essential nutrients with important functions and can be used to help prevent and even reverse heart disease, diabetes, cancer, Alzheimer's and many other chronic degenerative diseases that are caused or made worse by the over consumption of refined carbohydrates.

This book explains how sugar and refined carbohydrates are destroying our health. It also reveals new evidence and cutting-edge science behind the incredible healing potential of dietary fats and explains how and why certain fats are now considered not only healthy, but some of our most powerful superfoods.

To Save Yourself Much Grief—Please Call Us First

If you run into any issue concerning your Medicare supplement, Medicare advantage, or Part D prescription plan, save tons of frustration. Please call us first. End

Have a healthy and uneventful 2020! Lance and Isaac