

## MEDIGAP PLAN F- IS IT GOING AWAY???

A Medicare supplement (also referred to as Medigap) is an option for individuals who are enrolled in Medicare parts A and B. The Medigap plans help to cover Medicare's out of pocket costs such as deductibles, coinsurance and copays. These plans are all standardized and do not change from year to year unlike the Medicare Advantage plans. Medigap plan F is one of the most comprehensive Medicare Supplement plans, leaving you with fewest out of pocket costs.

Anyone who is eligible for Medicare before January 1, 2020 can enroll in plan F and can keep their plan for as long as they choose. However, if you become eligible on or after January 1, 2020, you will not be able to purchase Medigap plan F. Plan G has been introduced by a lot of carriers. One of the main differences between plans F and G is that plan F will cover the part B deductible and plan G will not.

## WHEN AND HOW CAN I ENROLL IN MEDICARE???

There are different periods of time in which individuals can enroll in Medicare. This is just a brief list and description. It is by no means all inclusive. Please refer to [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov) for more complete information.

### Initial enrollment period (IEP) for Medicare at age 65

This is the time frame for most people to sign up for Medicare. It runs seven months - starting three months before the month in which you turn 65, the month in which you turn 65, and ending three months after that month.

If you are already receiving [Social Security](#) retirement benefits when you turn 65, Social Security will automatically enroll you in Medicare Parts A and B. You have the right to decline Part B within a certain length of time if you or your spouse are still working for an employer that provides your health insurance.

If you become eligible for Medicare under age 65 because of disability, you will receive a letter from Social Security stating when your Medicare coverage will begin. It typically starts 24 months after your disability benefits are approved. Social Security will automatically enroll you in Part A and Part B.

If you are not taking Social Security, you would need to sign up for Parts A, or Parts A and B, depending on if you have other creditable coverage (e.g. active employer coverage). You can sign up online at [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov) or by going to your local Social Security office. If you decide to go to the Social Security office, you usually need to call to schedule an appointment in advance.

### Special enrollment period (SEP)

This is when you have a qualifying event that allows you to enroll in part B after your initial eligibility period without getting a late penalty. This would include retiring and/or losing employer coverage when you or your spouse is an active employee with creditable group coverage. When you enroll now for part B, your employer will need to complete a form from Social Security showing that you had this creditable coverage from the time you were first eligible for Medicare until the present time.

### Annual enrollment period (AEP)

This takes place annually from October 15<sup>th</sup> to December 7<sup>th</sup>. This is a period when you can review your existing Medicare Advantage and or

Prescription Drug Coverage and change to another plan. The new plan becomes effective January 1<sup>st</sup> of the following year. In September, the insurance carriers mail out an ANOC (Annual Notice of Change) which explains how your Medicare Advantage or Prescription Drug plan will be changing during the following year. If you do not like the changes, or want to switch to a different MAPD or Rx (Part D plan), you would need to make the changes during this period.

It is very important for you to review these changes and to confirm that your medications are still covered in your plan's formulary during this period. Please be sure to let me know if you would like to remain with the same plan or if you would like to make a change. I am happy to review the changes with you in more detail, either by phone or in person.

### **General enrollment period for Medicare: Jan. 1 through March 31**

This period is specifically for people who missed signing up for Medicare Part B at the required time — either during their initial enrollment period or during a special enrollment period for Part B. If you need to sign up for Part B during this period, be aware that your coverage will not begin until July 1, and you may be required to pay a late penalty based on how many years you have delayed coverage.

### **WHAT ARE DENTAL DISCOUNT PLANS?**

Dental discount plans are an affordable alternative to dental insurance. I offer dental insurance as well, which can offer 100% coverage for preventative services, and different levels of coverage for basic and major services, depending on the plan. Also, with dental insurance you tend to have an annual maximum per person and sometimes there is a waiting period for certain services with individual dental insurance. There is a monthly premium for the dental insurance which varies based on the coverage.

On the other hand, dental discount plans allow families to pay an annual membership fee to access discounts ranging from 10% to 60% on most dental care procedures. Plans have no annual limits and no waiting periods. To get the savings, your dentist must participate in the program. You can access information on the dental plans as well as the participating dentists by going to my website, [www.bluepeakinsurance.com](http://www.bluepeakinsurance.com) and clicking on dental discount plans. You can also see exactly what the savings would be with the various services. Feel free to call with any questions or to request a quote for dental discount and/or dental insurance plans.

### **WHAT IS GROUP COVERAGE AND HOW DO I KNOW IF MY BUSINESS IS ELIGIBLE?**

Group medical coverage usually refers to a policy issued to a business with employees that covers all eligible employees and sometimes their dependents as well. It is not a requirement for small businesses (under 50 full time equivalent employees) to provide health insurance; however, if they choose to do so, the Affordable Care Act (ACA), spells out certain requirements to keep in mind.

A group needs to have at least 2 employees; the owner can count as one. However, if the employees are husband and wife, the carriers tend not to consider this a group. Eligible employees are legal employees; 1099 employees and/or independent contractors are not eligible for coverage. If coverage is offered to one full time employee, it needs to be offered to all full-time employees - there cannot be discrimination. Under the ACA, a full-time employee is considered an individual working 30 hours. No employee can be denied based on preexisting conditions.

Usually a certain percentage of full time employees need to participate in the group health plan – at least 50% participation. Employee waiting periods cannot exceed 90 days. If you are interested in getting a quote for your company, please let me know. There is a census that I would need you to complete to allow me to get different plan options and pricing for your group.

## UPCOMING WORKSHOPS - - -

I am having 2 educational workshops on Medicare- one in April and one in September. The focus of these workshops will be educational. No plan specific information will be provided. I will review the different parts of Medicare, who is eligible, how to apply, Medicare enrollment periods, Medicare Advantage plans, Medigap plans and Prescription Drug plans.

The purpose of these workshops is to help individuals learn how to navigate the confusing Medicare maze. These workshops will be open to the public. It is for individuals aging into Medicare as well as those who already have Medicare and want a refresher. Please feel free to share this information with family members and friends.

The date of the upcoming workshop is **Thursday, April 26th from 1:00 pm until 2:30 pm.** It will be held at the Peters Township Library, 616 East McMurray Road, McMurray, PA 15317. RSVP is recommended to ensure space. You can do so by calling the office at 724-260-0341, or by emailing Cathy at [cdelaney@bluepeakinsurance.com](mailto:cdelaney@bluepeakinsurance.com)

Visit my updated website at  
[www.bluepeakinsurance.com](http://www.bluepeakinsurance.com)



**\*\*If you would rather receive the Newsletters via email, please let me know.**

**[nglicksman@bluepeakinsurance.com](mailto:nglicksman@bluepeakinsurance.com)**