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2022 WINTER Newsletter

2022

WISHING YOU A HAPPY NEW YEAR

All Year Long



Winter Newsletter 2022



News You Can Use! News you can Share!

Merry Christmas and
Happy New Year!

2021 was certainly better than 2020, but it still was a year far from normal! The Coronavirus continued to plague our Nation and our Community. As a result, many mandates remained in place, and I decided again not to hold my October meetings.



307 W Meadow Rd, Suite A, in Eden

However, the phone was constantly ringing, literally! Many of you spoke with Becky, my assistant. As a licensed agent, she could answer many of your questions and explain the changes to your benefits for 2022. We attempted to return every phone call, and/or leave a message.

Speaking of questions, the two that we heard most often by far: "Is there a better plan for me?", and "What are all these Medicare TV commercials?" I'll discuss the TV ads more later.

I want to thank you again for allowing me to help you with your insurance needs. As always, if you ever have a question, please don't hesitate to call us.

We wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and healthy New Year in 2022!

Can I Change My Plan?

The Medicare Annual Election Period was from October 15 to December 7. However, there may be some special circumstances that will allow individuals to change their plan, like moving, a 5 Star Plan, an Emergency/ Disaster Declaration by Federal or State and local agencies.

There is also a new Critical Illness Special Needs Medicare Advantage Plan available in Rockingham County and a few others in 2022.

It is by Health Team Advantage and is for individuals with Diabetes and/or Chronic Heart Failure. Enrollment is available at any time of year, and the plan offers enhanced benefits, especially lower drug copays.

If you would like to consider a different plan, call our office to find out if you are eligible to change to a different plan.



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INDEPENDENT AGENT

- Medicare Supplements
- Medicare Advantage Plans
- Life Insurance & Final Expense
- Health Insurance
- Dental, Cancer, Critical Illness
- Long-Term & Short Term Care
- Annuities



ACA Plans (AKA Obamacare)

The Affordable Care Act **Open Enrollment Period** ended December 15, for a January 1 effective date. However, the Marketplace has extended the final deadline to January 15, for a February 1 effective date.

After January 15, in order to enroll, a Qualifying Life event is required to get a special enrollment option. Examples include: losing employer or group coverage, marriage, divorce, a new baby, moving, etc.

BlueCross BlueShield of North Carolina is available statewide. Four other companies are in the Triad area: Aetna, Ambetter, Bright Health, Friday Health Plan, and UnitedHealthcare.

New Part D Insulin Savings Program

The new Senior Insulin Savings Program will continue in 2022. Certain insulin medications like Lantus, Humalog, Novolog, Levemir, Toujeo, Tresiba, and others, will be available for a \$35 copay for a 30 day supply! No deductible, and no coverage gap on these insulins. These are huge savings! Only BlueCross BlueShield of North Carolina, Humana, and UnitedHealthcare are offering this savings program in their Medicare Advantage plans for 2022. And, each company only covers certain ones.

If you're taking any of these type insulin drugs, and you have a Medicare Advantage Plan, you should give me a call since you can make a plan change during the Medicare Advantage Open Enrollment Period, January 1 through March 31. It could save you hundreds of dollars!

Those Medicare TV Commercials

We have received so many calls and questions about these commercials. About 99% of these ads are by insurance agencies, **not** Medicare. These **are not** Medicare sponsored ads, but rather insurance agencies trying to sell you a different plan! And they offer the same plans that I offer. There are several TV commercials claiming Medicare has new benefits including dental, vision, and hearing benefits. These are not new benefits! They have been in most plans for years!

One is the **Medicare Benefits Help Line**, and the other is the **Medicare Coverage Help Line**, which has NFL Quarterback Joe Namath as the spokesperson. And there is the **Go Medicare Benefits Helpline** that implies you can have \$144 added to your Social Security each month. Yes, but **only if** you qualify for Medicaid!

And Jimmie Walker says he called and got \$100 added back to his Social Security check! But he doesn't tell you that you must enroll in a specific plan, and that the copays are a whole lot higher than your current plan!

So please, ignore these TV commercials, and those pieces of "junk mail" you receive. If it doesn't say CMS, Center for Medicare-Medicaid Services, then it is what most people call "junk mail".

Medicare Gives 5 Stars to Two Plans! ★★★★★

In the 16 years that I have been working with Medicare Plans, there has never been a plan in North Carolina to receive Medicare's 5 stars. For 2022, we have two! Medicare has awarded their 5-Star Rating to UnitedHealthcare's HMO series, and to HealthTeam Advantage's PPO Plans. Medicare rates plans on a variety of topics like customer service, preventive services participation, and prescription adherence.

A valuable benefit of being a 5-Star Plan is year-round enrollment! Any Medicare beneficiary can enroll now until December 31, 2021, for a January 1, 2022, effective date. Then all during 2022 until November 30, 2022, with an effective date of the first of the next month.

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS:

NC SHIP:
1-800-443-9354

Medicare:
1-800-Medicare (800-633-4227)

Social Security Admin
(Reidsville): 1-866-748-2091

Social Security Admin
(National): 1-800-772-1213

Do Not Call Registry:
1-888-382-1222



COMPANY ANNOUNCEMENTS & Updates!



Medicare Premiums & Deductibles

The Medicare Part B Standard Monthly Premium is increasing \$21.60 from \$148.50 to \$170.10 in 2022, which is a 14.5% increase.

The Medicare Part A Hospital Deductible is increasing from \$1,484 to \$1,556 in 2022. And the Part B Annual Deductible is increasing from \$203 to \$233. The Part B coinsurance is still 20%.

The copay for a Skilled Nursing Facility, which begins on Day 21 through Day 100, is increasing from \$185.50 to \$194.50. The first 20 days are covered 100%.

SOCIAL SECURITY INCREASE!

The government has announced the Cost of Living Adjustment for 2022 will be 5.9%, the highest increase in over 30 years. For example, a \$1000 monthly benefit will increase by \$59, a \$1500 benefit will increase \$88.50, and a \$2000 benefit by \$118 per month.

You should receive a letter from Social Security showing your new 2022 monthly benefit amount and when it will be deposited to your bank account.



Medicare Supplement Plans

Individuals with a Medicare Supplement or "Medigap" Plans, except Plans C & F, will be responsible for the first \$233, up \$30 in 2022. After meeting this Part B Deductible, the insurance company will then pay the 20% coinsurance.

Individuals with High Deductible Plans F, G, or J will be responsible for the first \$2,490 in 2022, after which the Plan will cover all Medicare covered costs.

Individuals with Plans K and L will have new Annual Maximum Out-of-Pocket limits for 2022. For Plan K, which has 50-50% coinsurance, the MOOP will be \$6,620. Plan L, which has 75-25% coinsurance, the MOOP will be \$3,310. These plans offer substantially lower monthly premiums than Plans F or G.