



Dear Stan,

*I have a Medicare drug plan I am not very happy with. Some of my prescriptions are really expensive. Is there a way I can change my plan and get another one? Are there any new benefits to Medicare drug plans starting in 2025?*

Maria  
Albuquerque

**Report Medicare Related Fraud by calling the New Mexico Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) at**

**1-800-432-2080**

**The SMP will provide you with the information you need to PREVENT, DETECT and REPORT Medicare fraud, errors, and abuse.**

Dear Maria,

Your questions are very timely. Every year between October 15 and December 7, Medicare beneficiaries can change their plans. This is known as the **Annual Open Enrollment (AOE)**. If you change your plan, it will become effective January 1 of the following year.

During the **AOE** you can compare plans and do the following:

- Change from a private Medicare Advantage Plan and move to traditional Medicare, or vice versa
- Switch from one Medicare Advantage Plan to another Medicare Advantage Plan
- Change from a Part D plan to another Part D plan. Part D plans provide prescription drug coverage, and most are associated with traditional Medicare
- Drop Medicare Part D coverage entirely if you have other creditable prescription insurance

- Join a Medicare Part D drug plan if you do not previously have one

You should compare your current drug plan with others that are available to make sure you are maximizing your Medicare prescription benefits and paying the lowest costs possible for your prescriptions. Consider these questions when choosing a Medicare Part D drug plan or a Medicare Advantage Plan to make sure that the prescription drug coverage meets your needs:

- Does the plan cover all the medications I take?
- Does the plan have restrictions on my drugs (i.e. prior authorization, step therapy, or quantity limits?)
- **Prior authorization** means that you must get approval from your Part D plan before the plan will pay for the drug.
- **Step therapy** means that your plan

*(Continued on page 2)*

requires you to try a cheaper version of your drug before it will cover the more expensive one.

- **Quantity limits** restrict the quantity of a drug you can get per prescription fill, such as 30 pills of Drug X per month.
- How much will I pay for monthly premiums and the annual deductible?
- How much will I pay at the pharmacy (copay/coinsurance) for each drug I take?
- What is the plan's star rating?

To compare different Medicare plans and benefits available in your area, go to [www.Medicare.gov](http://www.Medicare.gov) and search on 'plan finder'. Then enter your zip code and you will be able to compare the benefits of various Medicare Advantage plans or Medicare drug plans (Part D).

During this seven-week time frame, staff and volunteers of the New Mexico **Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC)** go all out to educate New Mexico Medicare beneficiaries so they can make informed decisions about their Medicare coverage. Many beneficiaries find it helpful to compare their current coverage with other Medicare plans. In many cases beneficiaries find better coverage and lower costs so they change to a new plan.

Medicare drug plan benefit improvements going into effect in 2025 are:

- The beneficiary annual out of pocket spending is capped at \$2,000 for drugs included in the formulary
- The Coverage Gap or "donut hole" will be eliminated. There will be a deductible phase, an initial coverage phase (capped at \$2,000) and a catastrophic phase (beneficiary pays nothing)
- The Medicare Prescription Payment Plan is available. This allows the beneficiary the option to pay for a prescription in the form of a monthly payment over the current year instead of all at once at the pharmacy. Your pharmacy will inform you if this option might benefit you

To make a phone appointment or find an in-person counseling event near you during **AOE**, contact the New Mexico **ADRC** at **1-800-432-2080**. Please bring copies of your Medicare cards, medical insurance cards and a list of current medications.

Stan,  
Volunteer Counselor, SHIP and SMP

In November and December the Ask Stan Newsletter will not be published due to the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays

**SHIP & SMP Program Volunteering: Learn more about Medicare and ways to better serve the public by contacting us about available SHIP SMP volunteer opportunities at 1-800-432-2080. We provide training on Medicare content, and can work with your schedule. We can serve more people together!**



**SHIP**

State Health Insurance  
Assistance Program

NEW MEXICO



**AGING & DISABILITY  
RESOURCE CENTER**



**SMP**

Senior Medicare Patrol

Preventing Medicare Fraud