



## CMS NEWS

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### **High-Quality Care for Medicare Beneficiaries Continues as Medicare Health and Drug Plans Receive Star Ratings**

*CMS Releases Star Ratings for 2021 Medicare Advantage and Part D Prescription Drug Plans Ahead of Medicare Open Enrollment*

Today, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) announced that Medicare beneficiaries will continue to have access to high-quality Medicare Advantage and Part D prescription drug plans in 2021. According to the latest data, quality ratings of Medicare Advantage and Medicare Part D drug plans remain strong. Most Medicare beneficiaries – about 77 percent – who enroll in Medicare Advantage plans with drug coverage will be in plans with four or more stars in 2021. That compares with 69 percent of beneficiaries enrolled in such plans in 2017. Almost half – about 49 percent – of Medicare Advantage plans that offer prescription drug coverage will have an overall rating of four stars or higher, up from about 45 percent in 2017. The average Star Rating for all Medicare Advantage plans with prescription drug coverage improved to 4.06 out of 5 stars in 2021 from 4.02 in 2017.

“The historically low premiums for Medicare Advantage plans this year would mean little if they didn’t come paired with high-quality care,” said CMS Administrator Seema Verma. “Thankfully, President Trump’s patient-oriented policies have led to exactly that. With nearly half of Medicare Advantage plans with drug coverage rated at four stars or higher, and more than three-quarters of beneficiaries in Medicare Advantage plans with drug coverage enrolled in such four-star plans, seniors are coming out on top in 2021.”

Today’s announcement is consistent with President Trump’s Executive Order on Strengthening and Improving Medicare for Our Nation’s Seniors and delivers increased quality, more plan choices and lower costs, with Medicare Advantage premiums at historic lows. Average 2021 premiums for Medicare Advantage plans are expected to decline 34.2 percent from 2017, while plan choices, benefits, and enrollment continue to increase. The Medicare Advantage average

monthly premium will be the lowest in 14 years (since 2007) for the more than 26 million Medicare beneficiaries projected to enroll in Medicare Advantage plans for 2021. Also, for the first time, seniors who use insulin will have more than 1,600 Medicare Advantage and Part D prescription drug plans to choose from that will offer a range of insulins at no more than a \$35 monthly co-pay, beginning in January 2021.

More Medicare beneficiaries will have access to higher-quality stand-alone Medicare Part D prescription drug plans. Based on current enrollment, about 98 percent of beneficiaries enrolled in stand-alone prescription drug plans for 2021 will be in plans with 3.5 stars or higher, an increase from about 70 percent in 2020. The average Star Rating for a stand-alone prescription drug plan rose to 3.58 in 2021 from 3.50 in 2020.

The Star Ratings system helps Medicare beneficiaries, their families, and their caregivers compare the quality of Medicare health and drug plans. Medicare health and drug plans are rated on a one-to-five scale, with one star representing poor performance and five stars representing excellent performance. Medicare beneficiaries can compare health coverage choices and the Star Ratings through the online Medicare Plan Finder tool available at Medicare.gov (<http://www.medicare.gov>). CMS publishes the Medicare Advantage and Part D Star Ratings every year to measure the quality of, and reflect the experiences of beneficiaries in, Medicare Advantage and Part D plans. Star Ratings support CMS's efforts to put the patient first in all of our programs.

Comparing Star Ratings, premiums, co-pays, and benefits for Medicare Advantage and Part D plans is easy on Medicare.gov.

Medicare Open Enrollment begins October 15, 2020, and ends December 7, 2020. During this time, Medicare beneficiaries can compare coverage options like Original Medicare and Medicare Advantage, and choose health and drug plans for 2021. Medicare health and drug plan costs and covered benefits can change from year to year, so people with Medicare should look at their coverage choices and decide on the options that best meet their health needs. They can visit Medicare.gov (<https://www.medicare.gov>), call 1-800-MEDICARE, or contact their [State Health Insurance Assistance Program](#).

For more information on the 2021 Medicare Advantage and Part D Star Ratings, including a fact sheet, please visit: <http://go.cms.gov/partcanddstarratings>, and download the "2021 Part C and D Medicare Star Ratings Data" zip file in the downloads section.

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