

6. Medicare Part D Notice of Creditable Coverage

Important Notice from The University of Texas System Office of Employee Benefits About Your Prescription Drug Coverage and Medicare

Please read this notice carefully and keep it where you can find it. This notice has information about your current prescription drug coverage with The University of Texas System and about your options under Medicare's prescription drug coverage. This information can help you decide whether or not you want to join a Medicare drug plan.

Medicare-eligible retirees and their Medicare-eligible dependents covered under the UT medical plans are automatically enrolled in the UT SELECT PDP Employer Group Waiver Plan (EGWP), also known as UT SELECT Part D. Active employees and retirees working in a benefits-eligible position at a UT institution, as well as their dependents, who are covered under the UT medical plans are enrolled in the UT prescription drug plan (non-Medicare) regardless of Medicare eligibility. If you are considering enrolling in a Medicare Part D plan or an Advantage Plan with prescription drug coverage that is not affiliated with UT, you should compare your current coverage through UT, including which drugs are covered at what cost, with the coverage and costs of the Medicare plans available to you. Information about where you can get help with making decisions about your prescription drug coverage is included at the end of this notice.

There are two important things you need to know about your current coverage and Medicare's prescription drug coverage:

1. Medicare prescription drug coverage became available in 2006 to everyone with Medicare. You can get this coverage if you join a Medicare Prescription Drug Plan or join a Medicare Advantage Plan (like an HMO or PPO) that offers prescription drug coverage. All Medicare drug plans provide at least a standard level of coverage set by Medicare. Some plans may also offer more coverage for a higher monthly premium.
2. The University of Texas System Office of Employee Benefits has determined that the coverage offered by the UT prescription drug plan is, on average for all plan participants, expected to pay out as much as standard Medicare prescription drug coverage pays and is therefore considered Creditable Coverage. Because your existing coverage is Creditable Coverage, you can keep this coverage and not pay a higher premium (a penalty) if you later decide to join a Medicare drug plan.

When Can You Join a Medicare Drug Plan?

You can join a Medicare drug plan when you first become eligible for Medicare and each year from October 15th to December 7th. However, if you lose your current creditable prescription drug coverage, through no fault of your own, you will also be eligible for a two (2) month Special Enrollment Period (SEP) to join a Medicare drug plan.

What Happens to Your Current Coverage If You Decide to Join a Medicare Drug Plan?

For participants in the UT prescription drug plan (non-Medicare), you are not required to drop your UT medical and prescription plan coverage if you choose to join a Part D plan not affiliated with UT. Your UT prescription drug benefits will coordinate with your outside Part D coverage.

For participants in the UT SELECT Part D plan, enrollment in a Medicare Part D or Advantage plan not affiliated with UT will conflict with your UT SELECT Part D coverage. You will need to choose either a UT or non-UT plan, then take further action to disenroll from the other. Failure to do so may result in automatic disenrollment from the plan of your choice or a disruption in your coverage.

If you do decide to join a Medicare drug plan and drop or lose your current UT medical plan coverage, be aware that you and your dependents will be able to get this coverage back during annual enrollment or following a qualified change of status event.

When Will You Pay a Higher Premium (Penalty) to Join a Medicare Drug Plan?

You should also know that if you drop or lose your current coverage with the UT medical plan and don't join a Medicare drug plan within 63 continuous days after your current coverage ends, you may pay a higher premium (a penalty) to join a Medicare drug plan later.

If you go 63 continuous days or longer without creditable prescription drug coverage, your monthly premium may go up by at least 1% of the Medicare base beneficiary premium per month for every month that you did not have that coverage. For example, if you go nineteen months without creditable coverage, your premium may consistently be at least 19% higher than the Medicare base beneficiary premium. You may have to pay this higher premium (a penalty) as long as you have Medicare prescription drug coverage. In addition, you may have to wait until the following October to join.

For More Information About This Notice Or Your Current Prescription Drug Coverage

Contact your institution Benefits Office for additional information. NOTE: You'll get this notice each year and if this coverage changes through the UT medical plans. You also may request a copy of this notice at any time from The Office of Employee Benefits or your institution Benefits Office.

For More Information About Your Options Under Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage

More detailed information about Medicare plans that offer prescription drug coverage is in the "Medicare & You" handbook. You'll get a copy of the handbook in the mail every year from Medicare. You may also be contacted directly by Medicare drug plans.

For more information about Medicare prescription drug coverage, visit www.medicare.gov.

Call your State Health Insurance Assistance Program (see the inside back cover of your copy of the "Medicare & You" handbook for their telephone number) for personalized help.

Call **1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227)**. TTY users should call 1-877-486-2048.

If you have limited income and resources, extra help paying for Medicare prescription drug coverage is available. For information about this extra help, visit Social Security on the web at www.socialsecurity.gov, or call them at **1-800-772-1213** (TTY 1-800-325-0778).

Remember: Keep this Creditable Coverage notice. If you decide to join one of the Medicare drug plans, you may be required to provide a copy of this notice when you join to show whether or not you have maintained creditable coverage and, therefore, whether or not you are required to pay a higher premium (a penalty). Medicare prescription drug coverage is available. For information about this extra help, visit Social Security on the web at www.socialsecurity.gov, or call them at **1-800-772-1213** (TTY 1-800-325-0778).