



Health Insurance Counseling & Advocacy Program

- part of the national State Health Insurance Program "SHIP" offering assistance to people with Medicare
- publicly funded through the Older Californians Act and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services
- only agency authorized by the California Department of Aging to provide Medicare counseling
- offers individual counseling and community education about Medicare, financial assistance programs, and longterm care insurance



HICAP Provides FREE and UNBIASED SERVICES

- HICAP does not sell anything
- No affiliation with agents, brokers, insurance companies or HMOs
- Counseling is confidential and available by appointment
- Network of local volunteers
 - ☐ Trained by local Central Coast HICAP and the California Health Advocates organization
 - □ Registered by California Department of Aging



Topics for Today

- 2026 Medicare Parts A & B Costs
 - □ To Be Announced
- 2026 Medicare Negotiated Drugs
- Medicare Open Enrollment Choices
- 2026 Part D Prescription Drug Plans
- 2026 Medicare Advantage Plans

First Ten Drugs in Medicare Price Negotiation Program Negotiated Prices Effective 2026

Drug Name	Commonly Treated Conditions			
Eliquis	Prevention & treatment of blood clots			
Fiasp	Diabetes			
Jardiance	Diabetes; Heart failure			
Xarelto	Prevention & treatment of blood clots; Reduction of risks for patients with coronary or peripheral artery disease			
Januvia	Diabetes			
Farxiga	Diabetes; Heart failure; Chronic kidney disease			
Entresto	Heart failure			
Enbrel	Rheumatoid arthritis; Psoriasis; Psoriatic arthritis			
Imbruvica	Blood Cancers			
Stelara	Psoriasis; Psoriatic arthritis; Crohn's disease; Ulcerative Colitis			



MEDICARE OPEN ENROLLMENT

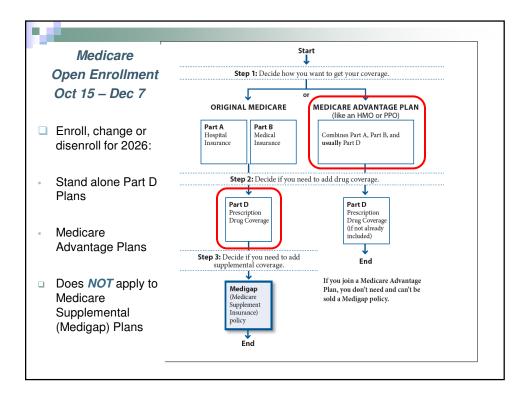
October 15 – December 7

- Can join, switch, or drop Prescription Drug Plans (Part D) or Medicare Advantage (MA) plans for 2026
- Enrolling in new plan automatically disenrolls you from old plan at the end of 2025 and new plan starts Jan 1, 2026

Plans can change ~ and so can you!

this is the time to do a new PDP comparison

- □ To enroll in a new plan for 2026:
 - Call the plan you want to join, or
 - Enroll online at Medicare.gov or the new plan website



Medicare Part D Prescription Drug Plans

- Prescription drug insurance sold by private insurance companies
- Plans approved and monitored by Medicare to ensure strict guidelines are followed
- Voluntary (but subject to late enrollment penalty)
- Must have Medicare Part A or B to enroll in a stand-alone plan
- Two ways to enroll in a Part D plan:
 - □ Prescription Drug Plans PDP stand-alone plans offered by private health companies
 - Medicare Advantage MA-PD plans such as HMOs and PPOs that include prescription drug coverage

Note: the same coverage levels apply to both types of Par D



Part D - 2026 Levels of Coverage

- Deductible 0 to \$615 you pay full plan cost for drugs subject to the deductible
- Initial Coverage after deductible you pay on average 25% of drug cost – continues until member has paid \$2,100 for drugs under the plan
- Catastrophic Coverage begins after beneficiary out-of-pocket spending reaches \$2,100 – 0 co-pays

No cost-sharing for Part D formulary drugs for the remainder of the year after you reach the out-of-pocket threshold of \$2,100

You have the option to enroll in the plan's Medicare Prescription Payment Plan



Part D **2026**

Late Enrollment Penalty

- Part D Late Enrollment Penalty (LEP) applies if you had Medicare A or B but did not enroll in a Part D plan or have other creditable Rx coverage for over 60 days
- Formula for LEP is 1% of base premium x # months you did not have Rx coverage and is added to your Part D premium for as long as you are enrolled in a Part D plan
- Base premium used to calculate LEP in 2026 is \$38.99
- Examples: If you had Medicare and opted not to enroll in a plan for 2025 but enroll in a 2026 plan, your LEP in 2025 would be:
 - □ \$.3899 x 12 months = \$4.679 rounded to nearest .1 = \$4.70 per month
- If you were Medicare eligible in 2005 and did not enroll in a plan by May 2006 or since then, but enroll in a 2026 plan your LEP in 2026 would be:
 - □ \$.3899 x 235 months rounded to nearest .1 = \$91.60 per month

10/22/25 5



2026 Part D - California Prescription Drug Plans

- 12 stand alone plans in California (16 in 2025)
- monthly premiums 8 increasing 4 decreasing
 - □ lowest = \$ 0 HealthSpring Assurance Rx
 - □ highest = \$227.80 Blue Shield Rx Enhanced
- deductibles on some or all drugs
 - □ range from \$130 to \$615
 - □ 2 plans have 0 deductible
 - □ lowest premium with 0 deductible: *Humana Premier Rx* \$172.90
- 2 Benchmark Plans: HealthSpring Assurance Rx \$0 premium Wellcare Classic - \$6.20 premium



2026 Part D California Stand-alone Plan Changes

2025 Non-Renewing Plans in 2026

- ☐ Anthem Blue Cross MediBlue Rx Standard
- ☐ Anthem Blue Cross MediBlue Rx Plus
- Cigna Extra Rx

Special Enrollment Period for Non-Renewing Plans
Dec 8 2025 through Feb 28 2026

2025 Plans Other Changes in 2026

- □ Cigna Assurance Rx − offered as 2026 HealthSpring Assurance Rx
- □ Cigna Saver Rx offered as 2026 HealthSpring Extra Rx
- □ Wellcare Rx Value Plus combined with 2026 Wellcare Value Script

California Part D Plans 2026	Premium	Premium	Deductible	
	2025	2026	2026	Change
Aetna				
SilverScript Choice	\$53.60	\$103.60	615 - all	\$50.00
Blue Shield				
Rx Plus	\$161.70	\$199.70	615 - all	\$38.00
Rx Enhanced	\$183.50	\$227.80	\$0.00	\$44.30
Cigna/Health Care Svc				
HealthSpring Extra Rx	\$20.60	\$70.60	615 - some	\$50.00
(2025 was Cigna Saver Rx)				
HealthSpring Assurance Rx	\$1.80	\$0.00	615 - all	(\$1.80)
Humana				
Basic Rx	\$110.20	\$132.20	615 - all	\$22.00
Premier Rx	\$164.20	\$172.90	\$0.00	\$8.70
Value Rx	\$94.00	\$104.60	615 - some	\$10.60
United HealthCare				
AARP Rx Saver from UHC	\$124.80	\$109.40	615 - all	(\$15.40)
AARP Rx Preferred from UHC	\$115.40	\$165.40	130 - some	\$50.00
Wellcare				
Value Script	\$17.40	\$5.70	615 - some	(\$11.20)
Classic	\$16.80	\$6.20	615 - all	(\$11.10)



Choosing a Prescription Drug Plan

- Prescription Drug Plan Finder tool at www.Medicare.gov gives drug plan cost information for stand alone Part D plans and MA-PD plans
- Complete your own online search at Medicare.gov:
 - find and compare all plans in your area
 - enroll in a plan
 - □ view your current plan
- Have HICAP complete the search for you:
 - □ www.CentralCoastSeniors.org/hicap
 - complete the simple form online, or
 - mail a paper worksheet to HICAP
 - receive search results of the top 3 plans specific to your medications

Medicare Drug Plan Finder Tool



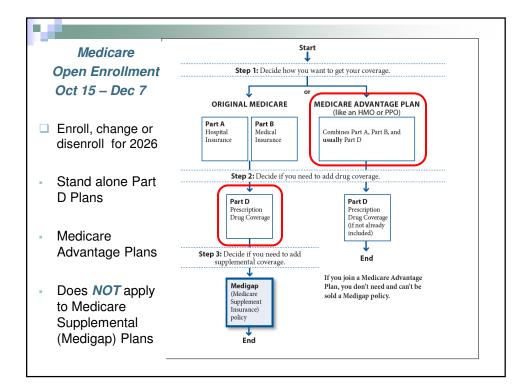
Ways to Lower Drug Costs

- Consider Switching to Generic Drugs
- Use of Mail Order pharmacies
- Prescription Discount cards
- Pharmaceutical Assistance Programs
 - □ Alliance for Pharmaceutical Access www.apameds.org
 - Office in Santa Maria (805) 614-2040
 - Email Advocates@apameds.org
- Apply for Extra Help with Part D Costs



Low Income Assistance Program Extra Help with Part D Costs

- Social Security program that provides assistance to Medicare beneficiaries
- Can help pay costs charged by Part D plan, including premium, deductible and co-pays for covered drugs
- To be eligible must:
 - □ have countable monthly income below 150% of the Federal Poverty Level: \$1,976 Individuals \$2,664 couples
 - □ have resources (excluding house & car) that are less than: \$17,600 for single people and \$35,130 for couples
 - Apply on-line at www.ssa.gov
 - Call Social Security at 1-800-772-1213
 - Call HICAP for assistance at 1-800-434-0222



Medicare Advantage Plans

- Alternative to fee-for-service delivery of Medicare Part A and Part B benefits - may have monthly premium and co-pays for services
- Must have Medicare Parts A & B to enroll still pay Part B Premium
- Medicare sponsors MA plans and pays private insurance companies to provide health services to beneficiaries who have enrolled in plans
- Plans are geographic-specific and can change each year
- MA plans with Part D follow the same rules and coverage periods as stand-alone Part D
- MA plans are required to have Maximum Out of Pocket limit
 after reach this amount, co-pays are waived for the rest of the year
- Can include benefits in addition to Medicare covered services



2026 Medicare Advantage Plans San Luis Obispo County

- 8 Health Maintenance Organizations (HMO) generally must get your care and services from doctors, other health care providers, and hospitals in the plan's network
- 2 Preferred Provider Organization (PPO) include network health care providers with generally lower co-pays, but can also use out-of-network providers for covered services if the provider agrees to treat you and hasn't opted out of Medicare
- 7 Special Needs Plans (SNP) are a type of Medicare Advantage Plan which limits membership to people with specific diseases or characteristics, and may tailor their benefits, provider choices, and drug formularies to best meet the specific needs of those groups



Medicare Advantage Special Needs Plan CenCal CareConnect

CenCal CareConnect is a new Special Needs HMO for people who are enrolled in both Medicare & Medi-Cal in SLO and SB counties

- designed to coordinate Medicare and Medi-Cal benefits in one plan
- members will have a dedicated care coordinator as well as a care coordination team helping to meet their needs
- \$0 co-pays for Medicare & Medi-Cal benefits
- additional benefits beyond Medicare & Medi-Cal include:
 - $\hfill \square$ \$480 per year (\$120 per quarter) to purchase over-the-counter items
 - $\hfill \square$ up to \$1,250 per year toward hearing exams, fittings and aids
 - $\hfill \square$ up to \$400 every two years toward eyeglasses or contacts
- Enrollment is optional no one will be automatically enrolled
- You can enroll or disenroll any month during the year

For information call **1-877-227-3051** (8 am to 8 pm – 7 days a week) or go to **www.cencalhealth.org/careconnect**



San Luis Obispo County 2025 Medicare Advantage Plans not offered in 2026

- AARP MA Patriot HMO \$0/mo No Part D
- AARP Medicare Advantage from UHC HMO \$31/mo
- AARP Medicare Advantage from UHC PPO \$40/mo
- Aetna Medicare Elite Plan PPO \$24/mo
- Alignment My Choice CalPlus HMO \$0
- Imperial Traditional HMO \$0
- Imperial Giveback HMO \$0

Reassigned and auto enrolled in new 2026 plan

- Aetna Medicare Core Plan PPO \$0
 - □ Enrollees reassigned to: 2026 Aetna Medicare Signature Plan PPO
- Alignment Heroes + HMO \$0
 - □ Enrollees reassigned to: 2026 Alignment My Choice CalCare HMO



Non-Renewing Medicare Advantage Plans

If you are enrolled in a 2025 Medicare Advantage plan that is not renewing and you have not been assigned to another 2026 plan, you have several options:

Open Enrollment Period (OEP)

- You can enroll in another MA plan or a stand-alone Part D plan if you want to use Original Medicare next year from Oct 15 – Dec 7
- This option also applies if you want to change from a returning plan

Special Enrollment Period (SEP)

If you do not make a change during OEP, you have a SEP to enroll in another MA plan or a stand-alone Part D 2026 plan through Feb 28, 2025

Right to Buy a Medigap Policy

If you want to use Original Medicare in 2026, you have a guaranteed issue right to purchase Medigap plan without medical screening ~ you have up to 123 days after your MA plan ends to purchase a policy.



2026 Medicare Advantage Plans **San Luis Obispo County**

Health Maintenance Organizations (HMO)

- Blue Shield 65 Plus HMO \$65.00/mo (\$54 in 2025)
 - □ Maximum Out of Pocket Costs \$4,100 Part D Deductible \$425
- Imperial Dynamic Plan HMO \$0
 - □ Maximum Out of Pocket Costs \$296 Part B Rebate \$35
- Imperial Courage HMO \$0/mo No Part D
 - □ Maximum Out of Pocket Costs \$2,999 Part B Rebate \$75



2026 Medicare Advantage Plans San Luis Obispo County

cont'd

- Humana Gold Plus HMO (148) \$0
 - □ Maximum Out of Pocket Costs \$2,900 Part D deductible \$615
- Humana Gold Plus HMO (119) \$0
 - Maximum Out of Pocket Costs \$720
- Alignment Health My Choice HMO \$0
 - □ Maximum Out of Pocket Costs \$698
- NEW Alignment Health Honor+ HMO \$0
 - □ Maximum Out of Pocket Costs \$9,250 Part D deductible \$615
- NEW Alignment Health My Choice CalCare HMO \$0
 - Maximum Out of Pocket Costs \$3,499



2026 Medicare Advantage Plans **San Luis Obispo County**

cont'd

Preferred Provider Organizations (PPO)

- Aetna Medicare Signature PPO \$0/mo
- > 2025 Aetna Core PPO Name Changed to Aetna Signature PPO
 - □ Maximum Out of Pocket Costs In network \$6,750 In + Out \$9,500
 - □ Part D Deductible \$615
- Aetna Medicare Eagle PPO \$0/mo No Part D
- > 2025 Aetna Medicare Eagle Plus PPO Name Changed to Eagle PPO
 - □ Maximum Out of Pocket Costs In network \$6,750 In + Out \$9,500
 - □ Part B Premium Reduction \$25/mo



Medicare Advantage Open Enrollment Period

January 1 to March 31, 2026

If you are enrolled in an MA plan on January 1

- You can switch to another MA plan
- You can disenroll from your MA plan and return to Original Medicare and if you choose enroll in a Part D plan
- You can only make one change during this period, and any change will be effective the first of the month after making the change
- During this period you cannot
 - Switch from Original Medicare to an MA Plan
 - Join a Part D Plan if you're in Original Medicare
 - Switch from one PDP to another of you're in Original Medicare



Questions? ■ HICAP 1-800-434-0222 or 805-928-5663 Senior Connection 1-800-510-2020 Medicare 1-800-633-4227 1-800-772-1213 Social Security □ San Luis Obispo 855-207-4865 □ Santa Maria 866-331-2316 □ Santa Barbara 866-695-6285 for further information and upcoming HICAP seminars go to www.CentralCoastSeniors.org This project was supported by the Administration for Community Living (ACL), the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), as a part of a financial assistance award totaling \$369,915 with 100 percent funding by the ACL/HHS. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent official views of, nor an endorsement, by ACL/HHS, or the U.S. Government. COA mbl October 22 2025

