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Medicare Part B Premiums, Deductibles Going Back Up in 2024

In 2023, seniors were happy to see their Medicare Part B standard monthly premiums and annual deductibles go down for the first time in more than a decade. Unfortunately, that's not the case for 2024, when these charges will be back on the rise.

In the fact sheet it released about the updated numbers, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) outlined the following changes for 2024:

Medicare Part B Changes

Medicare Part B enrollees will pay a standard monthly premium of $174.70 come 2024 (up $9.80 from $164.90 in 2023). (Note that beneficiaries who have higher incomes typically have a higher premium.)

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The Part B annual deductible is rising to $240 in 2024 (an increase of $14 from $226 in 2023). Part B enrollees must cover all costs until they meet this deductible; Medicare then pays for most of the remaining fees.

Medicare is a federal health insurance program for seniors and people with qualifying disabilities. Medicare Part B specifically focuses on covering such services as medically necessary visits to doctors, outpatient medical treatments, ground ambulance transport, and preventative care, including vaccines.

Updates to Medicare Part A Charges

The deductible for Medicare Part A will also see a slight increase, about 2 percent, from $1,600 in 2023 up to $1,632 in 2024. Note that most people end up paying no premium for Part A because they (or their spouse) paid Medicare taxes throughout the years they were employed.

Part A relates to medical care in institutions such as inpatient hospitals and skilled nursing facilities, in addition to other settings. If you're an enrollee and are admitted to a hospital, Medicare Part A will pay for your expenses for the first 60 days, after you

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pay your deductible. If you go to a skilled nursing facility, Part A covers the first 20 days. After that, you'll have the following co-pays:

- **Co-payment for hospital stay, days 61 to 90** = $408 per day in 2024 (up from $400 in 2023)
- **Co-payment for hospital stay, days 91 and beyond** = $816 per day in 2024 (an increase from $800 in 2023)
- **Co-payment for skilled nursing facility, days 21 to 100** = $204 per day in 2024 (up from $200 in 2023)

Medicare Open Enrollment

Each fall, from October 15 to December 7, Medicare's Open Enrollment Period takes place. During this time, you can enroll in a plan or make changes to your existing plan. For some helpful resources on Medicare for the coming year, check out the following:

- 3 Tips to Prepare Yourself for Open Enrollment
- Feds Ease Enrollment Process for Medicare Savings Programs
- Medicare Extra Help Program Set to Expand in 2024

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What Will Your 2024 Social Security Benefits Look Like?

In 2023, recipients of Social Security benefits saw the biggest increase in decades in their monthly checks. Although their payouts will indeed rise again in 2024, the cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) will be more modest – just 3.2 percent, versus the nearly 9 percent boost in 2023.

Does COLA Only Affect Retired Workers?

Each fall, the Social Security Administration (SSA) announces changes to the annual cost-of-living adjustment for the forthcoming year.

Based in part on the consumer price index, the COLA has an impact on Social Security payouts for retirees as well as many seniors and people with disabilities who receive disability benefits.

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How Much Can You Expect to Receive?

In early December, the SSA begins notifying Social Security's roughly 66 million beneficiaries about what their monthly retirement benefits checks will total as of 2024. These notifications go out via snail mail. How much each recipient gets in their monthly payout can vary depending on such factors as one's age, employment history, and past work earnings.

If you don't want to wait for your mail to learn the details, you can find out how much more you will be receiving in 2024 by visiting the My Social Security online portal in December. There, not only can you obtain details on what your 2024 benefits increase will look like, but you can also carry out numerous other tasks, including estimating your spouse's Social Security benefits, reviewing your statements, opting out of some printed mailings, or updating your direct deposit information.

As a result of the latest COLA, the monthly amount retirees will receive in their 2024 Social Security checks will, on average, be $59 higher than in 2023 – about $1,907 (up from $1,848). This equals $22,884 per year for an individual recipient.

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What About My 2024 SSI Payments?

If you are among the 7.5 million people who receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI), the announcement regarding COLA will also bring your payouts up by 3.2 percent.

So, in 2024, the maximum monthly SSI benefit will rise from $914 to $943. (Maximum monthly payouts for couples receiving SSI will be $1,415, up from $1,371.) These adjustments begin earlier, on December 29, 2023.

Are These Payout Increases Enough?

Many seniors have concerns about the failure of Social Security payouts in keeping up with rising prices for everything from prescription meds to groceries. They aren't wrong; a 2023 survey showed that benefits have effectively resulted in a 36 percent loss in buying power since 2000.

Administrators of the survey give an example of the effects: A dozen eggs in 2023 cost $4.21 on average. In 2000, the cost hovered around a dollar – that's an increase of more than 300 percent. Get additional details on the 2024 Social Security changes on the SSA website.

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Is an Independent Living Facility Right for Me?

Housing options and the associated costs are a seniors. Today, the housing market is unpredictable, while many seniors currently living independently may also have concerns about continuing their lifestyles. Moving to an independent living facility may be the best choice to accomplish your financial goals and maintain your way of life.

What Is an Independent Living Facility?

An independent living facility is a housing arrangement that caters to older people, usually aged 55 and older. These facilities offer a community. Residents can live with people who share common interests while having fun and staying active. Some people may refer to these facilities as 55-and-over communities, active adult communities, or retirement communities.

These environments are different from other long-term care facilities. For example, in

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nursing homes patients are not likely to live in a private apartment or arrangement. They are usually dependent on medical caregivers. Residents of assisted living facilities, meanwhile, may not require medical care 24-7, but do need assistance with activities of daily living.

In contrast, older adults who live in independent living facilities continue to maintain their independent lifestyles but gain the support of trained staff.

Who Is the Best Fit for Independent Living?

Independent living facilities best serve seniors who do not require constant medical care. If you or your spouse require round-the-clock medical attention, you should consider another living arrangement. However, there are usually 24-hour staff in these types of facilities to respond in case of an emergency.

While independent living facilities are best for more active seniors, they are also beneficial for older adults who do not have the ability or resources to maintain their homes anymore. Independent living facilities remove the need for older people to do household chores and yardwork, which can make their lives that much easier.

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Types of Independent Living Facilities

Living arrangements in these facilities can vary. Here are some of the types of housing options an older adult can expect from an independent living facility:

SENIOR APARTMENTS

A senior can choose to live in an apartment complex that is age-restricted, where most residents are at least 55 years old. Some facilities include recreational programs, community meals, transportation services, and community services in the rent.

LOW-INCOME HOUSING

If you are a low-income senior, you may be able to find housing complexes that are subsidized by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Learn more about HUD's Supportive Housing Program.

CONTINUING CARE RETIREMENT COMMUNITIES

At a Continuing Care Retirement Community (CCRC), seniors who can care for themselves but have declining health may be a good fit. CCRCs allow a spectrum of arrangements, so when a resident's health starts to wane, they can easily move from

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one part of the facility to another that offers more extensive care while remaining in the same complex.

What Should I Look for in an Independent Living Facility?

You should take some time to consider what you want in your living arrangements before making a final decision about where you will spend your time in your older years.

You may want to consider location as a major factor in your decision. Will you be close enough to stay in contact with your network of family and friends, if that is your preference? Or would you like to make a move to a different state or a warmer climate to connect with new people?

What services are you set on having? For example, will you have your own vehicle and, if not, does the facility offer transportation options?

You may want to live in a facility that offers certain amenities. Perhaps you would like to use a gym, take part in classes or workshops, or enjoy other hobbies. Some facilities

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offer access to more than one on-site dining option. Others may have a movie theater, nail salon, walking trails, or organized trips to nearby museums, concert halls, or casinos.

Of course, cost is more often than not also part of the equation. Compare the costs of several different independent living communities if possible. Confirm whether the cost of the facility includes the services and amenities in which you are interested.

Pricing will also vary greatly across states and cities. For instance, in Connecticut, the average monthly cost for an independent living facility is nearly $3,500. In Mississippi, the average may be less than $2,000 a month.

Also, think about the following before choosing a community:

YOUR HEALTH AND YOUR SPOUSE'S HEALTH

The level of care you and your spouse require is one of the biggest questions that you must answer before choosing the best living arrangements. Independent living facilities are not the best option for people who need a great deal of medical care.

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YOUR MOBILITY

It may be time to make new living arrangements if your mobility has decreased as you have gotten older.

CAN YOU MAINTAIN YOUR HOME?

Moving to an independent living facility can be a good decision for seniors who are looking to downsize from their home.

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