

# Important Changes to Your Medicare in 2026



## EXAMPLE OF A 2026 MEDICARE DRUG COVERAGE JOURNEY

COVERAGE STATUS <i>You/Medicare</i>	Your Drug Costs	Your True Out-of-Pocket Costs
<b>Deductible Phase</b> <i>You pay all/Medicare pays none</i>	\$0 - \$615	\$0 - \$615
<b>Initial Coverage Phase</b> <i>You pay 25%/Medicare and the manufacturer pay 75%</i>	\$615 - \$2,100	\$615 - \$2100
<b>Catastrophic Coverage Phase</b> <i>You pay \$0 for formulary medications</i>	Over \$2,100	\$0

\* The example above shows 2026 calendar year costs for covered drugs in a Medicare-approved plan with the standard \$615 deductible. Your out-of-pocket costs may vary, since each Medicare drug plan is structured differently with varying deductibles and copays.

## WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR YOU?

**True Out-of-Pocket (TrOOP) Costs:** Beginning in 2026, the annual out-of-pocket spending cap will be increasing to \$2,100, up from \$2,000 in 2025. This means that you will spend slightly more before entering the catastrophic coverage phase.

In 2026, your Medicare coverage will have three phases:

- **Deductible Phase:** If your Medicare plan requires a deductible, you'll pay 100% of your drug costs until you reach the deductible, which is \$615 for 2026.
- **Initial Coverage Phase:** During the initial coverage phase, you'll pay 25% coinsurance for covered drugs, after meeting your deductible. The initial coverage phase ends when you reach your annual out-of-pocket spending cap of \$2,100.
- **Catastrophic Coverage Phase:** If you reach your \$2,100 out-of-pocket spending cap, you'll pay nothing for formulary medications for the remainder of the calendar year.

## Ways To Save

- **Consider switching to generic, over-the-counter (OTC), or other lower-cost drugs.** Ask your doctor about generic, OTC, or less-expensive brand-name drugs that would work just as well as the ones you're taking now. Switching to lower-cost drugs can save you hundreds or thousands of dollars a year.
- **Explore National and Community-Based Charitable Programs.** These might offer assistance (such as the National Patient Advocate Foundation or the National Organization for Rare Disorders). These organizations may have programs that can help with your drug costs. Comprehensive information on federal, state, and private assistance programs in your area is available on the Benefits Check Up website, please visit [benefitscheckup.org](https://benefitscheckup.org).
- **Look into Pharmaceutical Assistance Programs.** Many of the major drug manufacturers offer programs, sometimes called Patient Assistance Programs, for people enrolled in a Medicare drug plan. You can find out whether a Pharmaceutical Assistance Program is offered by the manufacturers of the drugs you take by visiting [medicare.gov/basics/costs/help/drug-costs](https://medicare.gov/basics/costs/help/drug-costs).
- **Look at State Pharmaceutical Assistance Programs (SPAP).** Many states offer some type of coverage to help people with Medicare costs, including drug plan premiums and/or cost sharing. You can find out if your state has a State Pharmaceutical Assistance Program by visiting [medicare.gov/basics/costs/help/drug-costs](https://medicare.gov/basics/costs/help/drug-costs).
- **Apply for Extra Help.** If you have Medicare and have limited income and resources, you may qualify for extra help paying for your prescription drugs. Contact Social Security by visiting [ssa.gov](https://ssa.gov) or calling 1-800-772-1213. TTY users should call 1-800-325-0778.
- **NOTE:** Not all expenses will count toward your out-of-pocket costs. After you have paid \$2,100 out-of-pocket for medications in 2026, almost all of your drug costs will be covered. If you want to switch to a plan that offers additional coverage, you can do so during Annual Open Enrollment between October 15th and December 7th each year. Your coverage will begin on January 1 of the following year.

## 3 Easy Ways to Get More Information and Potentially Save Money:

1. Connect with a Guardian Benefits Navigator at [guardianpharmacy.com/contact-benefits-navigator](https://guardianpharmacy.com/contact-benefits-navigator)
2. Connect with a licensed insurance agent by calling 833-540-0264. Let the representative know you are a Guardian Pharmacy customer.
3. Get started comparing plans online today at [navigatemyicare.com/guardian](https://navigatemyicare.com/guardian) or visit us at [guardianpharmacy.com/medicareoptions](https://guardianpharmacy.com/medicareoptions) for more information.

## Questions About Medicare?

We're here to help connect you with the right resources.  
To get started, visit us at  
[guardianpharmacy.com/medicareoptions](https://guardianpharmacy.com/medicareoptions)

