



FIVE THINGS THAT ORIGINAL MEDICARE DOES **NOT** COVER THAT COULD COST YOU THOUSANDS IF YOU NEED THEM

By Russell Hoffman, Las Vegas Insurance Advisers LLC

Original Medicare was never designed for fully paying your medical bills. That is why your Part A and B have deductibles. When you enroll in Medicare, you usually have two choices:

- get a supplement and prescription drug plan to go with your Original Medicare to cover your Part A deductible and your Part B co-pays,
- or enroll in an Advantage Plan to provide your Part A and Part B coverage as well as other “Extra” benefits.

Many people think that when they get their Red, White, and Blue card from the Center for Medicare Services that they are done. Unfortunately, that is NOT the case! In a recent survey by Deft Research (2020), 80% of Medicare enrollees did not understand all their benefits and 85% did not understand how the deductibles worked. The purpose of this report is to shed some light on how Medicare plans actually work.

For starters, there ARE things that Original Medicare and supplements do not cover. When you go to a doctor and present your Original Medicare card, the bill is sent to Medicare for payment. Medicare then sends the remainder of the bill to the supplement company to pay the other 20%. If Medicare does NOT pay the 80%, the supplement company does not pay the other 20%.

You should also be aware that there is no out-of-pocket maximum if you do NOT have a supplement. Supplements may cost upward of \$150.00 to over \$220.00 a month, however, if you got a \$10,000.00 chemotherapy bill, that supplement is paying 20% on the bill.

Let's look at the 5 things people on Medicare need and use that Original Medicare and supplements do NOT pay for:

1. **Dentistry** – Original Medicare does NOT provide for dental exams, cleanings, X-Rays, fillings, crowns, or any major dental work. Below is a list of items with the average national cost shown (mountziondental.com):

- Dental Cleaning: \$70.00 - \$400.00 if a deep cleaning/scaling is needed
- Implants: \$3,000.00 - \$6,000.00
- Crown: \$1,000.00 - \$2,500.00 depending on the material used
- Filling: \$150.00 - \$1,000.00 depending on the material used.

2. **Vision Exams and Eyeglasses:** According to glasses.com, the average cost for an eye exam is approximately \$150.00 and eyeglasses cost \$200.00 - \$300.00. Over a 2-year period, this can cost you almost \$500.00. Many people mistakenly believe Original Medicare covers this. It does NOT. Which means supplements do not pay the 20% either.

3. **Hearing Aids:** Original Medicare does NOT cover annual hearing exams or hearing aids. Hearing aids alone can cost into the high hundreds and even up to \$3,000.00 dollars depending on the hearing aid you purchase. The Nevada average cost of an annual hearing exam, according to sidecarhealth.com, is \$79.00 - \$117.00 (other sites have higher costs).

4. **Prescription Medications:** I have run into literally over a hundred people in the past 9 years that rationalized that, "I don't take many (or any) medications. Why should I buy a drug plan?" Do you plan on having an auto accident? Or believing your house never burned down before so it won't in the future?

Medicare imposes a penalty for every year you don't have a prescription drug plan. Your monthly premium goes up 10% of the national average cost of a drug plan, which may be over \$5.00 additional for every year you did not have one in 2025. And many experts believe that is a conservative estimate. That penalty is for every YEAR you did not have a PDP. Which means by age 75, you will have possibly doubled your monthly premium when the penalty is added on. And the penalty NEVER GOES AWAY!

In 2024, Medicare Prescription Drug Plans had a \$480.00 deductible. In 2025, it will be about \$590.00. While that sounds high, remember these 2 things:

- You MAY end up getting a prescription for a medication that you will need to pay \$700.00 a month for. And that is only YOUR portion of the payment. With no drug plan, you bear the total cost. If it is a monthly prescription, you pay over \$700.00 a month.
- The Medicare drug plans will have a \$2,000.00 out of pocket maximum in 2025. Without a drug plan, you will pay \$8,400.00 during the year. With a drug plan, you'll pay \$2,000.00. AND you can get on a payment plan with a prescription drug plan and spread the payment out over several months.

IF you have prescription drug coverage under another source, such as an employer, TriCare, or the V.A., and you do NOT enroll in a prescription drug plan, the penalty may be waived if you sign up in the future. For everyone else, since the cost of medications is often the most unpredictable part of your Medicare expenses, this should be a serious consideration.

5. Acupuncture and Chiropractic Services: Over the past few years, Medicare has begun covering SOME of these charges. The best thing to do is find out if the treatment is a Medicare-approved charge PRIOR to receiving the services.

IF you receive any of these services, and you have no coverage, it may end up costing you THOUSANDS out-of-pocket annually. Why try and

save \$40.00 a month on a dental plan and end up spending almost \$2,000.00 for a root canal at the dentist? It doesn't make any economic sense.

Get the coverage you need in 2025. The Annual Enrollment Period starts on October 15th and ends December 7th. Medicare has made some HUGE changes for 2025. This is NOT a year to simply say, "I'll just keep what I've got now." Find out if there are other plans that better suit your needs.

If you do NOT have a Prescription Drug Plan, you can only enroll in one at two designated times:

- When you are enrolling in Medicare at age 65 or later
- During the Annual Enrollment Period every year

You can obtain dental and vision plans at any time of the year, however, they will not provide coverage for already missing teeth and many (but not all) will not cover major dental work for one year. The best advice I can give is to get a plan BEFORE you need one. At a minimum, you'll get 2 cleanings, 2 exams, and 1 set of X-Rays annually, which almost costs what your annual premium will be. So at least you come close to "breaking even".

If you have further questions or wish to discuss options, you can do the following:

- Call me at 702-757-7447
- Email me at rhoffmanins.lv@gmail.com
- Schedule an appointment at www.calendly.com/rhoffmanins-lv

I send best wishes for the rest of 2024 and an enjoyable, healthy 2025!

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