

MEDICARE PLANS AND RETIREMENT

My intent with this is to only address the Medicare Retirement Plans often offered by employers.

First, most employers turn over their Medicare Retirement Plans to a third-party organization for administration. Certainly, the employer had a role in the details of the plan on an annual basis. But after that is done, the third-party handles the rest.

When you read the material, it will appear as though you are required to take one of the plans offered to retain your retirement benefits. The material is carefully written to give you that impression. **Usually, you need only take the Part D drug plan to qualify for your retirement benefits.** Read the plan carefully. If you do not see that option, call, and specifically ask... if you get a vague answer, ask to speak with a supervisor and get the name of the supervisor.

Here's the deal: The benefits plan is written by the third party. They want you to be motivated to choose the plan for which they receive the highest commission – so that's the way they write the plan.

The Medicare Supplement that will be promoted will almost certainly be Plan G... there are excellent, less costly alternatives.

The Advantage Plans they promote will be the plans for which they were able to negotiate the highest commission.

Recognize this: **The choices you make when you first enroll in Medicare may well be "Lifetime Choices."**

In October of 2022, Clark Howard wrote an article from which I will quote:

"About half of people who are eligible for Medicare choose Advantage plans for any of a number of reasons. And many people are happy with the Advantage plans they've picked. In fact, every time I say something negative about them, I hear from people who are upset with me because they are beyond thrilled with the Advantage plan they chose.

"My objections are simple. Once you are in an Advantage plan, it's difficult to switch to regular Medicare. After your first 11 months, in most states, you can't easily buy a supplement without passing a medical evaluation. And you likely will have trouble switching to a competitor's Advantage plan if yours turns out to be a bad choice.

"In other words, you could end up being a prisoner of the Advantage plan you pick at 65 for the rest of your life — even if it turns out to be crummy or becomes rotten over time. In my opinion, this is a fatal flaw of Medicare Advantage plans. You could also end up with a serious illness, and the choice of doctors and facilities you are allowed under your particular Advantage plan could be the difference between life and death. With traditional Medicare, you have many more options to seek out the best care, best specialists, and best hospitals for your illness.

"Yes, traditional Medicare is more difficult to understand and buy upfront. Your premiums may be higher. But you are your own boss of your healthcare. With Medicare Advantage, understand that the insurer makes money by limiting your care and your options.

"That lower cost could kill you."

Please, if you have questions, call me: 925-519-1867. As an independent, licensed agent, I have no loyalties except to my clients – no obligation, no pressure. My interest is in helping you make the right decision.