

Don't be an April Fool

Every day, another 10,000 Baby Boomers turn 65. If you'll be one this year and wonder, "What do I do next?", one of the first things you'll want to handle is enrolling in Medicare Parts A and B. If you're receiving Social Security benefits, you will automatically get your Medicare card, but if you don't plan to collect Social Security benefits until a later date, you'll have to request it. This process can be easy for some and challenging for others.

More and more people now have a Social Security account set up online at ssa.gov. Do you? I've helped many seniors with this process, and it's getting easier. If you haven't already, you'll need to set up a username and password and be prepared to take multiple steps to verify your identity. If you'd like assistance, give me a call and I'll be glad to help you.

Once you get into your SS account, there are two options, and this is where things can start to get complicated. The first option simply says, "Sign up for Medicare." There is a little blue box with an (APPLY ONLINE) option. Most people should select this and start your application. The second option says, "Sign up for Part B Only" and that blue box will say, "Get Started." This is for folks that already have their Part A or delayed enrolling in Medicare Part B because they stayed on an employer group plan past the age of 65.

Keep in mind that once your application is complete, it will take 2-4 weeks before you receive your Medicare card.

In the meantime, you'll want to learn about the various options you have for health and prescription coverage once you become a Medicare Beneficiary. Changes in healthcare are ongoing, and you'll also want an idea of what coming ahead. For instance, in 2025, as part of the Inflation Reduction Act, seniors who choose a Medicare

Supplement plan and a separate Medicare Part D prescription plan will find prescription out-of-pocket costs capped at \$2000. This will have a significant impact on people currently managing high prescription costs.

Choosing a Supplement and Part D plan provides maximum coverage. Alternatively, there are highly rated \$0 premium Advantage plans that include prescription coverage in our area. There are a lot of choices to be made once you become Medicare eligible. It can get confusing, and what's best for you, personally, will depend on your needs and budget.

I'd love to see you on April 18th or any of the one-hour monthly Medicare seminars I'm conducting at the Stone House the third Thursday of each month. Seminars are free and a great opportunity to learn the basics and get many of your Medicare questions answered.

Don't be fooled by advertising that may enroll you in the wrong plan. Folks living in the Evergreen area have many excellent Medicare plans to choose from. Let me help you select the one that is right for you.