

Don't Wait! Medicare Open Enrollment Is Underway, and Marketplace Enrollment Is Just Around the Corner

Important deadlines are approaching for individuals and families reviewing their health insurance coverage for 2027.

As the end of the year approaches, millions of Americans have an important opportunity to review their health insurance coverage and make changes for the coming year. Whether you are covered by Medicare or purchase your health insurance through the Affordable Care Act (ACA) Marketplace, now is the time to evaluate your options and make sure your coverage meets your needs for 2027.

Understanding the different enrollment periods, deadlines, and available options can help you avoid costly mistakes and ensure that you and your family have appropriate health insurance coverage.

Medicare Open Enrollment: October 15 – December 7, 2026

Medicare's Annual Open Enrollment Period began October 15 and continues through December 7, 2026. During this period, individuals already enrolled in Medicare can review their existing coverage and make changes that will generally take effect January 1, 2027.

- Switch from Original Medicare to a Medicare Advantage plan, or vice versa.
- Change from one Medicare Advantage plan to another.
- Join, switch, or drop a Medicare Part D prescription drug plan.
- Review changes to premiums, deductibles, prescription drug coverage, and participating healthcare providers.

Even if you are satisfied with your current Medicare coverage, it is wise to review your plan annually. Insurance companies can change their premiums, covered medications, provider networks, and out-of-pocket expenses from year to year.

An important reminder: Medicare's Annual Open Enrollment Period is different from the Initial Enrollment Period for individuals who are turning 65 or otherwise becoming eligible for Medicare. Those enrolling in Medicare for the first time may have different deadlines and enrollment requirements.

Health Insurance Marketplace Open Enrollment: November 1, 2026 – January 15, 2027

For individuals and families who do not receive health insurance through an employer or Medicare, the Affordable Care Act Marketplace offers another opportunity to obtain health coverage.

In Ohio, Marketplace Open Enrollment for 2027 coverage begins November 1, 2026, and continues through January 15, 2027. To have coverage begin January 1, 2027, enroll by December 15, 2026. Those who enroll between December 16, 2026, and January 15, 2027, will generally have coverage beginning February 1, 2027, after paying their first premium.

Ohio's Department of Insurance advises consumers who purchased coverage through the federal exchange in 2026 and want coverage in 2027 to select a new plan during Open

Enrollment. Even if automatic re-enrollment may apply, actively reviewing and selecting coverage helps ensure that the plan still meets your needs.

Marketplace coverage may be an option for eligible self-employed individuals, early retirees, and families without access to affordable employer-sponsored coverage. Compare premiums, deductibles, out-of-pocket maximums, covered prescriptions, and provider networks. Financial assistance may be available depending on household circumstances.

Why You Shouldn't Wait Until the Last Minute

Waiting until the final days can limit the time available to compare plans, ask questions, and resolve application issues. Health insurance decisions can have significant financial consequences, particularly for retirees, individuals living on fixed incomes, and families managing ongoing healthcare expenses.

Taking time now to evaluate your coverage can help prevent unexpected expenses, interruptions in prescription drug coverage, or the loss of access to preferred healthcare providers.

Mark Your Calendar!

- Medicare Open Enrollment: October 15 – December 7, 2026.
- Marketplace Open Enrollment (Ohio): November 1, 2026 – January 15, 2027.
- Marketplace deadline for January 1 coverage: December 15, 2026.
- Marketplace enrollment December 16 – January 15: Coverage generally begins February 1, 2027.

For Medicare information, visit www.Medicare.gov or call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227). For Marketplace plans and enrollment, visit www.HealthCare.gov or call 1-800-318-2596.

Don't put off this important decision. A little time spent reviewing your options today could make a meaningful difference in your healthcare coverage and financial security in the coming year.

Sources

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, "Open Enrollment," Medicare.gov:
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Ohio Department of Insurance, "2027 Federal Exchange Plans":
<https://insurance.ohio.gov/consumers/health/federal-exchange-plans>

HealthCare.gov, "Automatic re-enrollment keeps you covered":
<https://www.healthcare.gov/keep-or-change-plan/automatically-enrolled/>