



VANTAGE MEDICARE  
A D V A N T A G E



VANTAGE HEALTH PLAN, INC.  
*Making Healthcare Work!*

# EVIDENCE *of* COVERAGE 2011

## Contact Member Services

### Local

318-361-0900

### Toll Free

888-823-1910

### TTY Local

318-361-2131

### TTY Toll Free

866-524-5144

Call seven days a week  
8:00 A.M. - 8:00 P.M. CST

After March 1, 2011:  
Monday - Friday  
8:00 A.M. - 8:00 P.M. CST

An answering service will  
operate on weekends and  
holidays.

Your Medical Health Benefits and Services  
as a Member of Vantage Health Plan, Inc.



## MEDICARE ADVANTAGE HMO FOR LOUISIANA STATE RETIREES

**January 1, 2011 - December 31, 2011**

*This booklet gives the details about your Medicare health coverage and explains how to get the care you need. This booklet is an important legal document. Please keep it in a safe place.*

**January 1 – December 31, 2011**

## **Evidence of Coverage**

### **Your Medicare Health Benefits and Services and Prescription Drug Coverage as a Member of *Vantage Medicare Advantage***

This booklet gives you the details about your Medicare health and prescription drug coverage from January 1 – December 31, 2011. It explains how to get the health care and prescription drugs you need. This is an important legal document. Please keep it in a safe place.

#### **Vantage Health Plan, Inc.’s Member Services:**

For help or information, please call Member Services or go to our plan website at [www.vhp-stategroup.com](http://www.vhp-stategroup.com).

(318) 361-0900

1 (888) 823-1910 (Calls to this number are free.)

TTY users call: (318) 361-2131 or toll-free (866) 524-5144

This plan is offered by Vantage Health Plan, Inc., referred throughout the *Evidence of Coverage* as “we,” “us,” or “our.” *Vantage Medicare Advantage* is referred to as “plan” or “our plan.”

Vantage Health Plan is a health plan with a Medicare Advantage contract.

## **Table of Contents**

This list of chapters and page numbers is just your starting point. For more help in finding information you need, go to the first page of a chapter. **You will find a detailed list of topics at the beginning of each chapter.**

<b>Chapter 1.</b>	<b>Getting started as a member of <i>Vantage Medicare Advantage</i>.....</b>	<b>1</b>
	Tells what it means to be in a Medicare health plan and how to use this booklet. Tells about materials we will send you, your plan premium, your plan membership card, and keeping your membership record up to date.	
<b>Chapter 2.</b>	<b>Important phone numbers and resources .....</b>	<b>10</b>
	Tells you how to get in touch with our plan ( <i>Vantage Medicare Advantage</i> ) and with other organizations including Medicare, the State Health Insurance Assistance Program, the Quality Improvement Organization, Social Security, Medicaid (the state health insurance program for people with low incomes), programs that help people pay for their prescription drugs, and the Railroad Retirement Board.	
<b>Chapter 3.</b>	<b>Using the plan's coverage for your medical services.....</b>	<b>22</b>
	Explains important things you need to know about getting your medical care as a member of our plan. Topics include using the providers in the plan's network and how to get care when you have an emergency.	
<b>Chapter 4.</b>	<b>Medical Benefits Chart (what is covered and what you pay) .....</b>	<b>35</b>
	Gives the details about which types of medical care are covered and <i>not</i> covered for you as a member of our plan. Tells how much you will pay as your share of the cost for your covered medical care.	
<b>Chapter 5.</b>	<b>Using the plan's coverage for your Part D prescription drugs .....</b>	<b>58</b>
	Explains rules you need to follow when you get your Part D drugs. Tells how to use the plan's <i>List of Covered Drugs (Formulary)</i> to find out which drugs are covered. Tells which kinds of drugs are <i>not</i> covered. Explains several kinds of restrictions that apply to your coverage for certain drugs. Explains where to get your prescriptions filled. Tells about the plan's programs for drug safety and managing medications.	
<b>Chapter 6.</b>	<b>What you pay for your Part D prescription drugs .....</b>	<b>76</b>
	Tells about the two stages of drug coverage ( <i>Initial Coverage Stage, Catastrophic Coverage Stage</i> ) and how these stages affect what you pay	

for your drugs. Explains the two cost-sharing tiers for your Part D drugs and tells what you must pay for copayments or coinsurance as your share of the cost for a drug in each cost-sharing tier. Tells about the late enrollment penalty.

**Chapter 7. Asking the plan to pay its share of a bill you have received for covered services or drugs..... 89**

Tells when and how to send a bill to us when you want to ask us to pay you back for our share of the cost for your covered services.

**Chapter 8. Your rights and responsibilities ..... 95**

Explains the rights and responsibilities you have as a member of our plan. Tells what you can do if you think your rights are not being respected.

**Chapter 9. What to do if you have a problem or complaint (coverage decisions, appeals, complaints) ..... 110**

Tells you step-by-step what to do if you are having problems or concerns as a member of our plan.

- Explains how to ask for coverage decisions and make appeals if you are having trouble getting the medical care or prescription drugs you think are covered by our plan. This includes asking us to make exceptions to the rules or extra restrictions on your coverage for prescription drugs, and asking us to keep covering hospital care and certain types of medical services if you think your coverage is ending too soon.
- Explains how to make complaints about quality of care, waiting times, customer service, and other concerns.

**Chapter 10. Ending your membership in the plan ..... 165**

Tells when and how you can end your membership in the plan. Explains situations in which our plan is required to end your membership.

**Chapter 11. Legal notices ..... 171**

Includes notices about governing law and about nondiscrimination.

**Chapter 12. Definitions of important words ..... 176**

Explains key terms used in this booklet.

---

## **Chapter 1. Getting started as a member of *Vantage Medicare Advantage***

<b>SECTION 1</b>	<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>2</b>
Section 1.1	What is the <i>Evidence of Coverage</i> booklet about? .....	2
Section 1.2	What does this Chapter tell you? .....	2
Section 1.3	What if you are new to <i>Vantage Medicare Advantage</i> ? .....	2
Section 1.4	Legal information about the <i>Evidence of Coverage</i> .....	3
<b>SECTION 2</b>	<b>What makes you eligible to be a plan member?.....</b>	<b>3</b>
Section 2.1	Your three eligibility requirements.....	3
Section 2.2	What are Medicare Part A and Medicare Part B?.....	3
Section 2.3	Here is the plan service area for <i>Vantage Medicare Advantage</i> .....	4
<b>SECTION 3</b>	<b>What other materials will you get from us?.....</b>	<b>4</b>
Section 3.1	Your plan membership card – Use it to get all covered care and drugs .....	4
Section 3.2	The <i>Provider Directory</i> : your guide to all providers in the plan’s network .....	5
Section 3.3	The <i>Pharmacy Directory</i> : your guide to pharmacies in our network .....	6
Section 3.4	The plan’s <i>List of Covered Drugs (Formulary)</i> .....	6
Section 3.5	Reports with a summary of payments made for your prescription drugs.....	6
<b>SECTION 4</b>	<b>Your monthly premium for <i>Vantage Medicare Advantage</i>.....</b>	<b>7</b>
Section 4.1	How much is your plan premium?.....	7
Section 4.2	There are several ways you can pay your plan premium.....	8
Section 4.3	Can we change your monthly plan premium during the year? .....	8
<b>SECTION 5</b>	<b>Please keep your plan membership record up to date .....</b>	<b>9</b>
Section 5.1	How to help make sure that we have accurate information about you .....	9

---

## **SECTION 1      Introduction**

---

<b>Section 1.1      What is the <i>Evidence of Coverage</i> booklet about?</b>
--

This *Evidence of Coverage* booklet tells you how to get your Medicare medical care and prescription drugs through our plan, a Medicare Advantage Plan. This booklet explains your rights and responsibilities, what is covered, and what you pay as a member of the plan.

- You are covered by Medicare and you have chosen to get your Medicare health care and your prescription drug coverage through our plan, *Vantage Medicare Advantage*.
- There are different types of Medicare Advantage Plans. *Vantage Medicare Advantage* is a Medicare Advantage HMO Plan (HMO stands for Health Maintenance Organization) with a Point of Service (POS) option. See Section 3.2 of this chapter for more information about the POS option.

This plan is offered by Vantage Health Plan, Inc., referred throughout the *Evidence of Coverage* as “we,” “us,” or “our.” *Vantage Medicare Advantage* is referred to as “plan” or “our plan.”

The word “coverage” and “covered services” refers to the medical care and services and the prescription drugs available to you as a member of *Vantage Medicare Advantage*.

<b>Section 1.2      What does this Chapter tell you?</b>
--

Look through Chapter 1 of this *Evidence of Coverage* to learn:

- What makes you eligible to be a plan member?
- What is your plan’s service area?
- What materials will you get from us?
- What is your plan premium and how can you pay it?
- How do you keep the information in your membership record up to date?

<b>Section 1.3      What if you are new to <i>Vantage Medicare Advantage</i>?</b>
---

If you are a new member, then it is important for you to learn how the plan operates – what the rules are and what services are available to you. We encourage you to set aside some time to look through this *Evidence of Coverage* booklet.

*If you are confused or concerned or just have a question, please contact our plan's Member Services (contact information is on the cover of this booklet).*

## **Section 1.4      Legal information about the *Evidence of Coverage***

### **It is part of our contract with you**

This *Evidence of Coverage* is part of our contract with you about how *Vantage Medicare Advantage* covers your care. Other parts of this contract include your enrollment form, the *List of Covered Drugs (Formulary)*, and any notices you receive from us about changes to your coverage or conditions that affect your coverage. These notices are sometimes called “riders” or “amendments.”

The contract is in effect for months in which you are enrolled in *Vantage Medicare Advantage* between January 1, 2011 and December 31, 2011.

### **Medicare must approve our plan each year**

Medicare (the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services) must approve *Vantage Medicare Advantage* each year. You can continue to get Medicare coverage as a member of our plan only as long as we choose to continue to offer the plan for the year in question and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services renews its approval of the plan.

## **SECTION 2      What makes you eligible to be a plan member?**

### **Section 2.1      Your three eligibility requirements**

*You are eligible for membership in our plan as long as:*

- You live in our geographic service area (section 2.3 below describes our service area)
- -- *and* -- you are entitled to Medicare Part A
- -- *and* -- you are enrolled in Medicare Part B

### **Section 2.2      What are Medicare Part A and Medicare Part B?**

When you originally signed up for Medicare, you received information about how to get Medicare Part A and Medicare Part B. Remember:

- Medicare Part A generally covers services furnished by institutional providers such as hospitals, skilled nursing facilities or home health agencies.

- Medicare Part B is for most other medical services, such as physician’s services and other outpatient services.

**Section 2.3 Here is the plan service area for *Vantage Medicare Advantage***

Although Medicare is a Federal program, *Vantage Medicare Advantage* is available only to individuals who live in our plan service area. To stay a member of our plan, you must keep living in this service area. The service area is described below.

Our service area includes the entire state of Louisiana.

If you plan to move out of the service area, please contact Member Services.

**SECTION 3 What other materials will you get from us?**

**Section 3.1 Your plan membership card – Use it to get all covered care and drugs**

While you are a member of our plan, you must use your membership card for our plan whenever you get any services covered by this plan and for prescription drugs you get at network pharmacies. Here’s a sample membership card to show you what yours will look like:

*SAMPLE CARD*

<b>RXBIN:</b> 005947	PC \$ 5	<b>Rx 31-day supply</b>
<b>RXPCN:</b> CLAIMCR	SP \$ 20	Tier 1 \$ 0
<b>RXGRP:</b> VHPMD	ER \$ 50	Tier 2 \$ 20
<b>ISSUER (80840)</b>	ASU \$ 100	Tier 3 \$ 40
<b>ID:</b> 100000000	IP \$ 25/DAY, max \$125	Tier 4 25%

**NAME:** JOHN DOE  
H5576\_ 2020 \_CY11 CMS APPROVED <\_/\_/2010>  
www.VHP-StateGroup.com

**Submit Claims to:** Vantage Health Plan, Inc.  
130 Desiard Street, Suite 300  
Monroe, LA 71201

**Benefit Information:** (318) 361-0900 or (888) 823-1910  
(318) 361-2131 TTY  
(866) 524-5144 Toll-free TTY

**Pharmacy Help Desk:** (888) 869-4600  
Administered by Catalystx

**Medicare Contact Information:** (800) MEDICARE  
(800) 633-4227

As long as you are a member of our plan you must **not** use your red, white, and blue Medicare card to get covered medical services (with the exception of routine clinical research studies and hospice services). Keep your red, white, and blue Medicare card in a safe place in case you need it later.

**Here is why this is so important:** If you get covered services using your red, white, and blue Medicare card instead of using your *Vantage Medicare Advantage* membership card while you are a plan member, you may have to pay the full cost yourself.

If your plan membership card is damaged, lost, or stolen, call Member Services right away and we will send you a new card.

<b>Section 3.2</b>	<b>The <i>Provider Directory</i>: your guide to all providers in the plan's network</b>
--------------------	---

Every year that you are a member of our plan, we will send you either a new *Provider Directory* or an update to your *Provider Directory*. This directory lists our network providers.

### **What are “network providers”?**

**Network providers** are the doctors and other health care professionals, medical groups, hospitals, and other health care facilities that have an agreement with us to accept our payment and any plan cost-sharing as payment in full. We have arranged for these providers to deliver covered services to members in our plan.

### **Why do you need to know which providers are part of our network?**

It is important to know which providers are part of our network because, with limited exceptions, while you are a member of our plan you may be required to use network providers to get your medical care and services. The only exceptions are emergencies, urgently needed care when the network is not available (generally, when you are out of the area), out-of-area dialysis services, and cases in which *Vantage Medicare Advantage* authorizes use of out-of-network providers. See Chapter 3 (*Using the plan's coverage for your medical services*) for more specific information about emergency, out-of-network, and out-of-area coverage.

Our plan does offer a Point of Service (POS) option for certain services. All services obtained from out-of-network providers require prior authorization (except emergency services, urgently needed care and dialysis outside the plan's service area) and are subject to twenty percent (20%) coinsurance in addition to the in-network cost sharing. In most cases, services obtained from out-of-network providers will be treated as in-network if prior authorization has been obtained and will not be subject to the additional twenty percent (20%) coinsurance. Our plan will notify you in writing if an authorized service from an out-of-network provider will not be treated as in-network. See Chapter 12 for definition.

If you do not have your copy of the *Provider Directory*, you can request a copy from Member Services. You may ask Member Services for more information about our network providers, including their qualifications. You can also see the *Provider Directory* at [www.vhp-stategroup.com](http://www.vhp-stategroup.com), or download it from this website. Both Member Services and the website can give you the most up-to-date information about changes in our network providers.

<b>Section 3.3</b>	<b>The <i>Pharmacy Directory</i>: your guide to pharmacies in our network</b>
--------------------	---

### What are “network pharmacies”?

Our *Pharmacy Directory* gives you a complete list of our network pharmacies – that means all of the pharmacies that have agreed to fill covered prescriptions for our plan members.

### Why do you need to know about network pharmacies?

You can use the *Pharmacy Directory* to find the network pharmacy you want to use. This is important because, with few exceptions, you must get your prescriptions filled at one of our network pharmacies if you want our plan to cover (help you pay for) them.

We will send you a complete *Pharmacy Directory* **at least once every three years**. Every year that you do not get a new *Pharmacy Directory*, we will send you an update that shows changes to the directory.

If you do not have the *Pharmacy Directory*, you can get a copy from Member Services (phone numbers are on the front cover). At any time, you can call Member Services to get up-to-date information about changes in the pharmacy network. You can also find this information on our website at [www.vhp-stategroup.com](http://www.vhp-stategroup.com).

<b>Section 3.4</b>	<b>The plan’s <i>List of Covered Drugs (Formulary)</i></b>
--------------------	--

The plan has a *List of Covered Drugs (Formulary)*. We call it the “Drug List” for short. It tells which Part D prescription drugs are covered by *Vantage Medicare Advantage*. The drugs on this list are selected by the plan with the help of a team of doctors and pharmacists. The list must meet requirements set by Medicare. Medicare has approved the *Vantage Medicare Advantage* Drug List.

We will send you a copy of the Drug List. To get the most complete and current information about which drugs are covered, you can visit the plan’s website ([www.vhp-stategroup.com](http://www.vhp-stategroup.com)) or call Member Services (phone numbers are on the front cover of this booklet).

<b>Section 3.5</b>	<b>Reports with a summary of payments made for your prescription drugs</b>
--------------------	--

When you use your prescription drug benefits, we will send you a report to help you understand and keep track of payments for your prescription drugs. This summary report is called the *Explanation of Benefits*.

The *Explanation of Benefits* tells you the total amount you have spent on your prescription drugs and the total amount we have paid for each of your prescription drugs during the month. Chapter

6 (*What you pay for your Part D prescription drugs*) gives more information about the *Explanation of Benefits* and how it can help you keep track of your drug coverage.

An *Explanation of Benefits* summary is also available upon request. To get a copy, please contact Member Services.

---

## **SECTION 4      Your monthly premium for *Vantage Medicare Advantage***

---

<b>Section 4.1      How much is your plan premium?</b>
--

As a member of our plan, you pay a monthly plan premium. For 2011, the monthly premium for *Vantage Medicare Advantage* is \$64.50 – single and \$129.00 – with spouse. In addition, you must continue to pay your Medicare Part B premium.

Your coverage is provided through a contract with OGB. Please contact OGB for information about your plan premium at 225-925-6625 or toll-free 1-800-272-8451.

### **In some situations, your plan premium could be less**

There are programs to help people with limited resources pay for their drugs. These include “Extra Help” and State Pharmaceutical Assistance Programs. Chapter 2, Section 7 tells more about these programs. If you qualify, enrolling in the program might lower your monthly plan premium.

If you are *already enrolled* and getting help from one of these programs, **some of the payment information in this *Evidence of Coverage* may not apply to you**. We have included a separate insert, called the “Evidence of Coverage Rider for People Who Get Extra Help Paying for Prescription Drugs” (LIS Rider), that tells you about your drug coverage. If you do not have this insert, please call Member Services and ask for the “Evidence of Coverage Rider for People Who Get Extra Help Paying for Prescription Drugs” (LIS Rider). Phone numbers for Member Services are on the front cover.

### **In some situations, your plan premium could be more**

In some situations, your plan premium could be more than the amount listed above in Section 4.1. These situations are described below.

- Some members are required to pay a **late enrollment penalty** because they did not join a Medicare drug plan when they first became eligible or because they had a continuous period of 63 days or more when they did not keep their coverage. For these members, the late enrollment penalty is added to the plan’s monthly premium. Their premium amount will be the monthly plan premium plus the amount of their late enrollment penalty.

- If you are required to pay the late enrollment penalty, the amount of your penalty depends on how long you waited before you enrolled in drug coverage or how many months you were without drug coverage after you became eligible. Chapter 6, Section 8 explains the late enrollment penalty.

### **Many members are required to pay other Medicare premiums**

As explained in Section 2 above, in order to be eligible for our plan, you must maintain your eligibility for Medicare Parts A and B. For that reason, some plan members will be paying a premium for Medicare Part A and most plan members will be paying a premium for Medicare Part B, in addition to paying the monthly plan premium. You must continue paying your Medicare Part B premium to remain a member of the plan.

- Your copy of *Medicare & You 2011* tells about these premiums in the section called “2011 Medicare Costs.” This explains how the Part B premium differs for people with different incomes.
- Everyone with Medicare receives a copy of *Medicare & You* each year in the fall. Those new to Medicare receive it within a month after first signing up. You can also download a copy of *Medicare & You 2011* from the Medicare website (<http://www.medicare.gov>). Or, you can order a printed copy by phone at 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227), 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. TTY users call 1-877-486-2048.

#### **Section 4.2      There are several ways you can pay your plan premium**

Your employer will forward your monthly plan premiums to our Plan on your behalf. Please contact OGB at 225-925-6625 or toll-free 1-800-272-8451 for more information about monthly plan premium payment options.

#### **Section 4.3      Can we change your monthly plan premium during the year?**

**No.** We are not allowed to change the amount we charge for the plan’s monthly plan premium during the year. If the monthly plan premium changes for next year we will tell you in October and the change will take effect on January 1.

However, in some cases the part of the premium that you have to pay can change during the year. This happens if you become eligible for the Extra Help program or if you lose your eligibility for the Extra Help program during the year. If a member qualifies for Extra Help with their prescription drug costs, the Extra Help program will pay part of the member’s monthly plan premium. So a member who becomes eligible for Extra Help during the year would begin to pay less toward their monthly premium. And a member who loses their eligibility during the year will need to start paying their full monthly premium. You can find out more about the Extra Help program in Chapter 2, Section 7.

---

## **SECTION 5      Please keep your plan membership record up to date**

---

<b>Section 5.1      How to help make sure that we have accurate information about you</b>
---

Your membership record has information from your enrollment form, including your address and telephone number. It shows your specific plan coverage including your Primary Care Provider.

The doctors, hospitals, pharmacists, and other providers in the plan's network need to have correct information about you. **These network providers use your membership record to know what services and drugs are covered for you.** Because of this, it is very important that you help us keep your information up to date.

Please help keep your membership record up to date if there are changes to your name, address, phone number, work status, or if you go into a nursing home. You may send your changes directly to the Office of Group Benefits, ATTN: Eligibility, P.O. Box 66678, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70896 or call the Office of Group Benefits Customer Service Department. Also, tell the Office of Group Benefits about any changes in other health insurance coverage you have, such as from your employer, your spouse's employer, workers' compensation, Medicaid, or liability claims such as claims from an automobile accident.

### **Call Member Services to let us know about these changes:**

- Changes in any other health insurance coverage you have (such as from your employer, your spouse's employer, workers' compensation, or Medicaid)
- If you have any liability claims, such as claims from an automobile accident
- If you have been admitted to a nursing home
- If you are participating in a clinical research study

### **Read over the information we send you about any other insurance coverage you have**

Medicare requires that we collect information from you about any other medical or drug insurance coverage that you have. That is because we must coordinate any other coverage you have with your benefits under our plan.

Once each year, we will send you a letter that lists any other medical or drug insurance coverage that we know about. Please read over this information carefully. If it is correct, you do not need to do anything. If the information is incorrect, or if you have other coverage that is not listed, please call Member Services (phone numbers are on the cover of this booklet).

---

## **Chapter 2. Important phone numbers and resources**

<b>SECTION 1</b>	<b><i>Vantage Medicare Advantage</i> contacts (how to contact us, including how to reach Member Services at the plan).....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>SECTION 2</b>	<b>Office of Group Benefits contacts .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>SECTION 3</b>	<b>Medicare (how to get help and information directly from the Federal Medicare program) .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>SECTION 4</b>	<b>State Health Insurance Assistance Program (free help, information, and answers to your questions about Medicare) .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>SECTION 5</b>	<b>Quality Improvement Organization (paid by Medicare to check on the quality of care for people with Medicare).....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>SECTION 6</b>	<b>Social Security .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>SECTION 7</b>	<b>Medicaid (a joint Federal and state program that helps with medical costs for some people with limited income and resources).....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>SECTION 8</b>	<b>Information about programs to help people pay for their prescription drugs .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>SECTION 9</b>	<b>How to contact the Railroad Retirement Board.....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>SECTION 10</b>	<b>Do you have “group insurance” or other health insurance from an employer?.....</b>	<b>21</b>

---

**SECTION 1**      ***Vantage Medicare Advantage* contacts**  
(how to contact us, including how to reach Member Services at the plan)

---

**How to contact our plan's Member Services**

For assistance with claims, billing or member card questions, please call or write to *Vantage Medicare Advantage* Member Services. We will be happy to help you.

<b>Member Services</b>	
<b>CALL</b>	(318) 361-0900 (888) 823-1910 Calls to this number are free.  Member Services will operate seven (7) days a week from 8:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m. CST from November 15, 2010 – March 1, 2011. After March 1, 2011, Member Services will operate five (5) days a week, Monday – Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m. CST. An answering service will operate on weekends and holidays. When leaving a message, please leave your name, number and the time you called, and a representative will return your call no later than one business day.
<b>TTY</b>	(318) 361-2131 (866) 524-5144 Calls to this number are free.  These numbers require special telephone equipment and are only for people who have difficulties with hearing or speaking.  Member Services will operate seven (7) days a week from 8:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m. CST from November 15, 2010 – March 1, 2011. After March 1, 2011, Member Services will operate five (5) days a week, Monday – Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m. CST.
<b>FAX</b>	(318) 361-2159
<b>WRITE</b>	130 DeSiard Street, Suite 300, Monroe, LA 71201
<b>WEBSITE</b>	<a href="http://www.vhp-medicare.com">www.vhp-medicare.com</a> or <a href="http://www.vhp-stategroup.com">www.vhp-stategroup.com</a>

### How to contact us when you are asking for a coverage decision about your medical care or Part D prescription drugs

You may call us if you have questions about our coverage decision process.

<b>Coverage Decisions for Medical Care or Part D Prescription Drugs</b>	
<b>CALL</b>	(318) 361-0900 (888) 823-1910 Calls to this number are free.
<b>TTY</b>	(318) 361-2131 (866) 524-5144 Calls to this number are free. These numbers require special telephone equipment and are only for people who have difficulties with hearing or speaking.
<b>FAX</b>	(318) 361-2159
<b>WRITE</b>	130 DeSiard Street, Suite 300, Monroe, LA 71201

For more information on asking for coverage decisions about your medical care or Part D prescription drugs, see Chapter 9 (*What to do if you have a problem or complaint (coverage decisions, appeals, complaints)*).

### How to contact us when you are making an appeal about your medical care or Part D prescription drugs

<b>Appeals for Medical Care or Part D Prescription Drugs</b>	
<b>CALL</b>	(318) 361-0900 (888) 823-1910 Calls to this number are free.
<b>TTY</b>	(318) 361-2131 (866) 524-5144 Calls to this number are free. These numbers require special telephone equipment and are only for people who have difficulties with hearing or speaking.
<b>FAX</b>	(318) 361-2159
<b>WRITE</b>	130 DeSiard Street, Suite 300, Monroe, LA 71201

For more information on making an appeal about your medical care or Part D prescription drugs, see Chapter 9 (*What to do if you have a problem or complaint (coverage decisions, appeals, complaints)*).

## How to contact us when you are making a complaint about your medical care or Part D prescription drugs

<b>Complaints about Medical Care or Part D Prescription Drugs</b>	
<b>CALL</b>	(318) 361-0900 (888) 823-1910 Calls to this number are free.
<b>TTY</b>	(318) 361-2131 (866) 524-5144 Calls to this number are free. These numbers require special telephone equipment and are only for people who have difficulties with hearing or speaking.
<b>FAX</b>	(318) 361-2159
<b>WRITE</b>	130 DeSiard Street, Suite 300, Monroe, LA 71201

For more information on making a complaint about your medical care or Part D prescription drugs, see Chapter 9 (*What to do if you have a problem or complaint (coverage decisions, appeals, complaints)*).

## Where to send a request that asks us to pay for our share of the cost for medical care or a drug you have received

For more information on situations in which you may need to ask us for reimbursement or to pay a bill you have received from a provider, see Chapter 7 (*Asking the plan to pay its share of a bill you have received for medical services or drugs*).

**Please note:** If you send us a payment request and we deny any part of your request, you can appeal our decision. See Chapter 9 (*What to do if you have a problem or complaint (coverage decisions, appeals, complaints)*) for more information.

<b>Payment Requests</b>	
<b>CALL</b>	(318) 361-0900 (888) 823-1910 Calls to this number are free.
<b>TTY</b>	(318) 361-2131 (866) 524-5144 Calls to this number are free. These numbers require special telephone equipment and are only for people who have difficulties with hearing or speaking.
<b>FAX</b>	(318) 361-2159
<b>WRITE</b>	130 DeSiard Street, Suite 300, Monroe, LA 71201

---

## **SECTION 2 Office of Group Benefits contacts**

---

<b>Office of Group Benefits Customer Service</b>	
<b>CALL</b>	(225) 925-6625  (800) 272-8451 Calls to this number are free.
<b>TTY</b>	(225) 925-6770  (800) 259-6771 Calls to this number are free. These numbers require special telephone equipment and are only for people who have difficulties with hearing or speaking.

---

## **SECTION 3 Medicare** (how to get help and information directly from the Federal Medicare program)

---

Medicare is the Federal health insurance program for people 65 years of age or older, some people under age 65 with disabilities, and people with End-Stage Renal Disease (permanent kidney failure requiring dialysis or a kidney transplant).

The Federal agency in charge of Medicare is the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (sometimes called “CMS”). This agency contracts with Medicare Advantage organizations including us.

<b>Medicare</b>	
<b>CALL</b>	1-800-MEDICARE, or 1-800-633-4227  Calls to this number are free.  24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
<b>TTY</b>	1-877-486-2048  This number requires special telephone equipment and is only for people who have difficulties with hearing or speaking.  Calls to this number are free.

---

**WEBSITE**      <http://www.medicare.gov>

This is the official government website for Medicare. It gives you up-to-date information about Medicare and current Medicare issues. It also has information about hospitals, nursing homes, physicians, home health agencies, and dialysis facilities. It includes booklets you can print directly from your computer. It has tools to help you compare Medicare Advantage Plans and Medicare drug plans in your area. You can also find Medicare contacts in your state by selecting “Help and Support” and then clicking on “Useful Phone Numbers and Websites.”

If you do not have a computer, your local library or senior center may be able to help you visit this website using its computer. Or, you can call Medicare at the number above and tell them what information you are looking for. They will find the information on the website, print it out, and send it to you.

---

**SECTION 4      State Health Insurance Assistance Program**  
(free help, information, and answers to your questions  
about Medicare)

---

The State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) is a government program with trained counselors in every state. In Louisiana, the SHIP is called State Health Insurance Assistance Program.

State Health Insurance Assistance Program is independent (not connected with any insurance company or health plan). It is a state program that gets money from the Federal government to give free local health insurance counseling to people with Medicare.

State Health Insurance Assistance Program counselors can help you with your Medicare questions or problems. They can help you understand your Medicare rights, help you make complaints about your medical care or treatment, and help you straighten out problems with your Medicare bills. State Health Insurance Assistance Program counselors can also help you understand your Medicare plan choices and answer questions about switching plans.

<b>State Health Insurance Assistance Program</b>	
<b>CALL</b>	(800) 259-5301 Calls to this number are free.
<b>WRITE</b>	P.O. Box 94214, Baton Rouge, LA 70804
<b>WEBSITE</b>	<a href="http://www.ldi.state.la.us/Health/SHIIP">www.ldi.state.la.us/Health/SHIIP</a>

---

## **SECTION 5      Quality Improvement Organization** (paid by Medicare to check on the quality of care for people with Medicare)

---

There is a Quality Improvement Organization in each state. In Louisiana, the Quality Improvement Organization is called Louisiana Health Care Review.

Louisiana Health Care Review has a group of doctors and other health care professionals who are paid by the Federal government. This organization is paid by Medicare to check on and help improve the quality of care for people with Medicare. Louisiana Health Care Review is an independent organization. It is not connected with our plan.

You should contact Louisiana Health Care Review in any of these situations:

- You have a complaint about the quality of care you have received.
- You think coverage for your hospital stay is ending too soon.
- You think coverage for your home health care, skilled nursing facility care, or Comprehensive Outpatient Rehabilitation Facility (CORF) services are ending too soon.

<b>Louisiana Health Care Review</b>	
<b>CALL</b>	(800) 433-4958 Calls to this number are free.
<b>WRITE</b>	8591 United Plaza Boulevard, Suite 270 Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70809
<b>WEBSITE</b>	<a href="http://www.lhcr.org">www.lhcr.org</a>

---

## **SECTION 6      Social Security**

---

The Social Security Administration is responsible for determining eligibility and handling enrollment for Medicare. U.S. citizens who are 65 or older, or who have a disability or end stage renal disease and meet certain conditions, are eligible for Medicare. If you are already getting Social Security checks, enrollment into Medicare is automatic. If you are not getting Social Security checks, you have to enroll in Medicare and pay the Part B premium. Social Security handles the enrollment process for Medicare. To apply for Medicare, you can call Social Security or visit your local Social Security office.

<b>Social Security Administration</b>	
<b>CALL</b>	1-800-772-1213  Calls to this number are free.  Available 7:00 am to 7:00 pm, Monday through Friday.  You can use our automated telephone services to get recorded information and conduct some business 24 hours a day.
<b>TTY</b>	1-800-325-0778  This number requires special telephone equipment and is only for people who have difficulties with hearing or speaking.  Calls to this number are free.  Available 7:00 am to 7:00 pm, Monday through Friday.
<b>WEBSITE</b>	<a href="http://www.ssa.gov">http://www.ssa.gov</a>

---

## **SECTION 7      Medicaid** (a joint Federal and state program that helps with medical costs for some people with limited income and resources)

---

Medicaid is a joint Federal and state government program that helps with medical costs for certain people with limited incomes and resources. Some people with Medicare are also eligible for Medicaid. Medicaid has programs that can help pay for your Medicare premiums and other costs, if you qualify. To find out more about Medicaid and its programs, contact Louisiana Medicaid.

<b>Louisiana Medicaid</b>	
<b>CALL</b>	(888) 342-6207 Calls to this number are free.
<b>TTY</b>	(225) 216-7387 Calls to this number are <i>not</i> free.  This number requires special telephone equipment and is only for people who have difficulties with hearing or speaking.
<b>WRITE</b>	628 N. 4 <sup>th</sup> Street, P.O. Box 629 (Zip 70821-0629), Baton Rouge, LA 70802
<b>WEBSITE</b>	<a href="http://www.dhh.louisiana.gov">www.dhh.louisiana.gov</a>

---

## **SECTION 8      Information about programs to help people pay for their prescription drugs**

---

### **Medicare’s “Extra Help” Program**

Medicare provides “Extra Help” to pay prescription drug costs for people who have limited income and resources. Resources include your savings and stocks, but not your home or car. If you qualify, you get help paying for any Medicare drug plan’s monthly premium, yearly deductible, and prescription copayments. This Extra Help also counts toward your out-of-pocket costs.

People with limited income and resources may qualify for Extra Help. Some people automatically qualify for Extra Help and do not need to apply. Medicare mails a letter to people who automatically qualify for Extra Help.

You may be able to get Extra Help to pay for your prescription drug premiums and costs. To see if you qualify for getting Extra Help, call:

- 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227). TTY users should call 1-877-486-2048, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week;
- The Social Security Office at 1-800-772-1213, between 7 am to 7 pm, Monday through Friday. TTY users should call 1-800-325-0778; or
- Your State Medicaid Office. (See Section 6 of this chapter for contact information)

If you believe you have qualified for Extra Help and you believe that you are paying an incorrect cost-sharing amount when you get your prescription at a pharmacy, our plan has established a

process that allows you to either request assistance in obtaining evidence of your proper co-payment level, or, if you already have the evidence, to provide this evidence to us.

- Any of the following forms of evidence is accepted to establish the subsidy status of a full benefit dual eligible beneficiary when provided by the beneficiary or the beneficiary's pharmacist, advocate, representative, family member or other individual acting on behalf of the beneficiary:
  1. A copy of the beneficiary's Medicaid card that includes the beneficiary's name and an eligibility date during a month after June of the previous calendar year;
  2. A copy of a state document that confirms active Medicaid status during a month after June of the previous calendar year;
  3. A print out from the State electronic enrollment file showing Medicaid status during a month after June of the previous calendar year;
  4. A screen print from the State's Medicaid systems showing Medicaid status during a month after June of the previous calendar year;
  5. Other documentation provided by the State showing Medicaid status during a month after June of the previous calendar year,
  6. A letter from SSA showing that the individual receives SSI; or,
  7. An Important Information letter from SSA, confirming that the beneficiary is automatically eligible for extra help.

Any one of the following forms of evidence is accepted from beneficiaries or pharmacists to establish that a beneficiary is institutionalized and qualifies for zero cost-sharing:

1. A remittance from the facility showing Medicaid payment for a full calendar month for that individual during a month after June of the previous calendar year;
  2. A copy of a state document that confirms Medicaid payment on behalf of the individual to the facility for a full calendar month after June of the previous calendar year; or
  3. A screen print from the State's Medicaid systems showing that individual's institutional status based on at least a full calendar month stay for Medicaid payment purposes during a month after June of the previous calendar year.
- When we receive the evidence showing your copayment level, we will update our system so that you can pay the correct copayment when you get your next prescription at the pharmacy. If you overpay your copayment, we will reimburse you. Either we will forward a check to you in the amount of your overpayment or we will offset future copayments. If the pharmacy has not collected a copayment from you and is carrying your copayment as a debt owed by you, we may make the payment directly to the pharmacy. If a state paid on your behalf, we may make payment directly to the state. Please contact Member Services if you have questions.

## **State Pharmaceutical Assistance Programs**

Many states have State Pharmaceutical Assistance Programs that help some people pay for prescription drugs based on financial need, age, or medical condition. Each state has different rules to provide drug coverage to its members.

In Louisiana, the Louisiana SenioRx is a state organization that provides limited income and medically needy seniors and individuals with disabilities financial help for prescription drugs.

<b>Louisiana SenioRx</b>	
<b>CALL</b>	(877) 340-9100 Calls to this number are free.
<b>WRITE</b>	412 North 4th Street, 3rd Floor Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70802  P. O. Box 61 Baton Rouge, LA 70821-0061
<b>WEBSITE</b>	<a href="http://www.louisianaseniorx.org">www.louisianaseniorx.org</a>

---

## **SECTION 9      How to contact the Railroad Retirement Board**

---

The Railroad Retirement Board is an independent Federal agency that administers comprehensive benefit programs for the nation's railroad workers and their families. If you have questions regarding your benefits from the Railroad Retirement Board, contact the agency.

<b>Railroad Retirement Board</b>	
<b>CALL</b>	1-877-772-5772  Calls to this number are free.  Available 9:00 am to 3:30 pm, Monday through Friday  If you have a touch-tone telephone, recorded information and automated services are available 24 hours a day, including weekends and holidays.
<b>TTY</b>	1-312-751-4701  This number requires special telephone equipment and is only for people who have difficulties with hearing or speaking.  Calls to this number are <i>not</i> free.
<b>WEBSITE</b>	<a href="http://www.rrb.gov">http://www.rrb.gov</a>

---

## **SECTION 10      Do you have “group insurance” or other health insurance from an employer?**

---

If you or your spouse gets benefits from your spouse’s employer or retiree group, call your spouse’s employer/union benefits administrator if you have any questions about the plan’s enrollment period, health benefits, prescription drug coverage, premiums or how that plan’s coverage may work with OGB coverage.

---

## **Chapter 3. Using the plan's coverage for your medical services**

<b>SECTION 1</b>	<b>Things to know about getting your medical care as a member of our plan.....</b>	<b>24</b>
Section 1.1	What are “network providers” and “covered services”?.....	24
Section 1.2	Basic rules for getting your medical care that is covered by the plan .....	24
<b>SECTION 2</b>	<b>Use providers in the plan's network to get your medical care.....</b>	<b>25</b>
Section 2.1	You must choose a Primary Care Provider (PCP) to provide and oversee your medical care.....	25
Section 2.2	What kinds of medical care can you get without getting approval in advance from your PCP? .....	27
Section 2.3	How to get care from specialists and other network providers.....	27
Section 2.4	How to get care from out-of-network providers.....	28
<b>SECTION 3</b>	<b>How to get covered services when you have an emergency or an urgent need for care .....</b>	<b>28</b>
Section 3.1	Getting care if you have a medical emergency .....	28
Section 3.2	Getting care when you have an urgent need for care.....	29
<b>SECTION 4</b>	<b>What if you are billed directly for the full cost of your covered services? .....</b>	<b>30</b>
Section 4.1	You can ask the plan to pay our share of the cost of your covered services.....	30
Section 4.2	If services are not covered by our plan, you must pay the full cost.....	31
<b>SECTION 5</b>	<b>How are your medical services covered when you are in a “clinical research study”? .....</b>	<b>31</b>
Section 5.1	What is a “clinical research study”? .....	31
Section 5.2	When you participate in a clinical research study, who pays for what? .....	32

---

<b>SECTION 6</b>	<b>Rules for getting care in a “religious non-medical health care institution”</b> .....	<b>33</b>
Section 6.1	What is a religious non-medical health care institution? .....	33
Section 6.2	What care from a religious non-medical health care institution is covered by our plan? .....	33

---

## **SECTION 1      Things to know about getting your medical care as a member of our plan**

---

This chapter tells things you need to know about using the plan to get your medical care covered. It gives definitions of terms and explains the rules you will need to follow to get the medical treatments, services, and other medical care that are covered by the plan.

For the details on what medical care is covered by our plan and how much you pay as your share of the cost when you get this care, use the benefits chart in the next chapter, Chapter 4 (*Medical Benefits Chart, what is covered and what you pay*).

<b>Section 1.1      What are “network providers” and “covered services”?</b>
--

Here are some definitions that can help you understand how you get the care and services that are covered for you as a member of our plan:

- **“Providers”** are doctors and other health care professionals that the state licenses to provide medical services and care. The term “providers” also includes hospitals and other health care facilities.
- **“Network providers”** are the doctors and other health care professionals, medical groups, hospitals, and other health care facilities that have an agreement with us to accept our payment and your cost-sharing amount as payment in full. We have arranged for these providers to deliver covered services to members in our plan. The providers in our network generally bill us directly for care they give you. When you see a network provider, you usually pay only your share of the cost for their services.
- **“Covered services”** include all the medical care, health care services, supplies, and equipment that are covered by our plan. Your covered services for medical care are listed in the benefits chart in Chapter 4.

<b>Section 1.2      Basic rules for getting your medical care that is covered by the plan</b>
---

*Vantage Medicare Advantage* will generally cover your medical care as long as:

- **The care you receive is included in the plan’s Medical Benefits Chart** (this chart is in Chapter 4 of this booklet).
- **The care you receive is considered medically necessary.** It needs to be accepted treatment for your medical condition.
- **You have a primary care provider (a PCP) who is providing and overseeing your care.** As a member of our plan, you must choose a PCP (for more information about this, see Section 2.1 in this chapter).

- In most situations, your PCP must give you approval in advance before you can use other providers in the plan's network, such as specialists, hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, or home health care agencies. This is called giving you a "referral." For more information about this, see Section 2.2 of this chapter.
- Referrals from your PCP are not required for emergency care or urgently needed care. There are also some other kinds of care you can get without having approval in advance from your PCP (for more information about this, see Section 2.3 of this chapter).
- **You generally must receive your care from a network provider** (for more information about this, see Section 2 in this chapter). Our plan covers care you receive from an out-of-network provider (a provider who is not part of our plan's network) as follows:
  - Emergency care or urgently needed care that you get from an out-of-network provider is covered. For more information about this, and to see what emergency or urgently needed care means, see Section 3 in this chapter.
  - If you need medical care that Medicare requires our plan to cover and the providers in our network cannot provide this care, you can get this care from an out-of-network provider. An authorization should be obtained from our plan prior to seeking care. In this situation, you will pay the same as you would pay if you got the care from a network provider.
  - The plan covers services obtained from out-of-network providers if a prior authorization is obtained. Services obtained from out-of-network providers are subject to twenty percent (20%) coinsurance in addition to the in-network cost sharing. In most cases, services obtained from out-of-network providers will be treated as in-network if prior authorization has been obtained and will not be subject to the additional twenty percent (20%) coinsurance. Our Plan will notify you in writing if an authorized service from an out-of-network provider will not be treated as in-network.

---

## **SECTION 2      Use providers in the plan's network to get your medical care**

---

<b>Section 2.1      You must choose a Primary Care Provider (PCP) to provide and oversee your medical care</b>
--

### **What is a "PCP" and what does the PCP do for you?**

When you become a member of our plan, you must choose a plan provider to be your PCP. Your PCP is a Family Practitioner, General Practitioner, Pediatrician, or Internal Medicine Physician who meets state requirements and is trained to give you basic medical care. As we explain below, you will get your routine or basic care from your PCP. Your PCP will also coordinate the rest of the covered services you get as a member of our Plan. For example, in order for you to see a specialist, you usually need to get your PCP's approval first (this is called

getting a “referral” to a specialist). Your PCP will provide most of your care and will help you arrange or coordinate the rest of the covered services you get as a member of our plan. This includes:

- x-rays
- laboratory tests
- therapies
- care from doctors who are specialists
- hospital admissions
- home health, and
- follow-up care.

“Coordinating” your services includes checking or consulting with other plan providers about your care and how it is going. If you need certain types of covered services or supplies, you must get approval in advance from your PCP (for example, get a referral to see a specialist). In some cases, your PCP will need to get prior authorization (prior approval) from us. Since your PCP will provide and coordinate your medical care, you should have all of your past medical records sent to your PCP’s office.

### **How do you choose your PCP?**

You can choose the PCP you want from the plan’s panel of doctors. Each member can select his/her own personal PCP who specializes in Family or General Practice, Pediatrics, or Internal Medicine. Your selection can be made from the Provider Directory, by contacting Member Services, or by visiting our website for a complete listing at [www.vhp-stategroup.com](http://www.vhp-stategroup.com). Once your choice is made, you can call Member Services or fill out a member change form which is located on our website. Once we receive this information, the provider you selected will immediately be added to your membership record.

PCP selection is a very personal and private decision and Vantage Health Plan, Inc. would like you to be comfortable with your choice. You have the option of changing your selection at any time and you may change as often as you like.

### **Changing your PCP**

You may change your PCP for any reason, at any time. Also, it is possible that your PCP might leave our plan’s network of providers and you would have to find a new PCP.

If this happens, you will have to switch to another provider who is part of our plan. Member Services can assist you in finding and selecting another provider. They will check to be sure the PCP you want to switch to is accepting new patients. Member Services will change your membership record to show the name of your new PCP, and tell you when the change to your new PCP will take effect.

<b>Section 2.2</b>	<b>What kinds of medical care can you get without getting approval in advance from your PCP?</b>
--------------------	--

You can get the services listed below without getting approval in advance from your PCP.

- Routine women's health care, which include breast exams, mammograms (x-rays of the breast), Pap tests, and pelvic exams, as long as you get them from a network provider.
- Flu shots and pneumonia vaccinations as long as you get them from a network provider.
- Emergency services from network providers or from out-of-network providers.
- Urgently needed care from in-network providers or from out-of-network providers when network providers are temporarily unavailable or, e.g., when you are temporarily outside of the plan's service area.
- Kidney dialysis services that you get at a Medicare-certified dialysis facility when you are temporarily outside the plan's service area. *If possible, please let us know before you leave the service area where you are going to be so we can help arrange for you to have maintenance dialysis while outside the service area.*
- Routine eye exams from an ophthalmologist/optometrist, as long as you get them from a network provider.
- Prostate screening exams, as long as you get them from a network provider.
- Routine physical exams, as long as you get them from a network provider.

<b>Section 2.3</b>	<b>How to get care from specialists and other network providers</b>
--------------------	---

A specialist is a doctor who provides health care services for a specific disease or part of the body. There are many kinds of specialists. Here are a few examples:

- Oncologists, who care for patients with cancer.
- Cardiologists, who care for patients with heart conditions.
- Orthopedists, who care for patients with certain bone, joint, or muscle conditions.

When your PCP thinks that you need specialized treatment, he/she will give you a referral (approval in advance) to see a plan specialist or certain other providers. For some types of referrals, your PCP may need to get approval in advance from our plan (this is called getting "prior authorization"). For example:

- Durable medical equipment
- Outpatient therapy
- Major diagnostic testing
- Surgery
- Inpatient treatment

It is very important to get a referral (approval in advance) from your PCP before you see a plan specialist or certain other providers (there are a few exceptions, including routine women's health care). **If you do not have a referral (approval in advance) before you get services from a specialist, you may have to pay for these services yourself.**

A referral is good for two visits within a 90-day period. **If the specialist wants you to come back for more care,** your specialist can contact our plan for approval of additional visits.

### **What if a specialist or another network provider leaves our plan?**

Sometimes a specialist, clinic, hospital or other network provider you are using might leave the plan. If your specialist or other network provider leaves our plan, we will inform you with written notification, along with a Provider Directory to assist you in selecting a new provider and phone numbers to call if you need assistance.

#### **Section 2.4      How to get care from out-of-network providers**

Our plan does offer a Point of Service (POS) option for certain services. All services obtained from out-of-network providers require prior authorization (except emergency services, urgently needed care and dialysis outside the Plan's service area) and are subject to twenty percent (20%) coinsurance in addition to the in-network cost sharing.

In most cases, services obtained from out-of-network providers will be treated as in-network if prior authorization has been obtained and will not be subject to the additional twenty percent (20%) coinsurance. Our plan will notify you in writing if an authorized service from an out-of-network provider will not be treated as in-network. See the Benefits Chart in Chapter 4, Section 2 for detailed benefits which are covered under the POS option

---

### **SECTION 3      How to get covered services when you have an emergency or an urgent need for care**

---

#### **Section 3.1      Getting care if you have a medical emergency**

#### **What is a "medical emergency" and what should you do if you have one?**

When you have a "medical emergency," you believe that your health is in serious danger. A medical emergency can include severe pain, a bad injury, a sudden illness, or a medical condition that is quickly getting much worse.

If you have a medical emergency:

- **Get help as quickly as possible.** Call 911 for help or go to the nearest emergency room, hospital, or urgent care center. Call for an ambulance if you need it. You do *not* need to get approval or a referral first from your PCP.

- **As soon as possible, make sure that our plan has been told about your emergency.** We need to follow up on your emergency care. You or someone else should call to tell us about your emergency care, usually within 48 hours. If you need assistance, call Vantage Health Plan, Inc. at (318) 361-0900 or toll-free (888) 823-1910 (TTY (318) 361-2131 or toll-free (866) 524-5144).

### **What is covered if you have a medical emergency?**

You may get covered emergency medical care whenever you need it, anywhere in the United States or its territories. Our plan covers ambulance services in situations where getting to the emergency room in any other way could endanger your health. For more information, see the Medical Benefits Chart in Chapter 4 of this booklet.

**You are always covered for emergency care no matter where you go.** You may go to an emergency room anywhere in the world, if you reasonably believe you need emergency care. See Chapter 4 for more information.

If you have an emergency, we will talk with the doctors who are giving you emergency care to help manage and follow up on your care. The doctors who are giving you emergency care will decide when your condition is stable and the medical emergency is over.

After the emergency is over, you are entitled to follow-up care to be sure your condition continues to be stable. Your follow-up care will be covered by our plan. If your emergency care is provided by out-of-network providers, we will try to arrange for network providers to take over your care as soon as your medical condition and the circumstances allow.

### **What if it was not a medical emergency?**

Sometimes it can be hard to know if you have a medical emergency. For example, you might go in for emergency care – thinking that your health is in serious danger – and the doctor may say that it was not a medical emergency after all. If this happens, you are still covered for the care you got to determine what was wrong, as long as you thought your health was in serious danger, as explained in "What is a 'medical emergency'?" above. If you get any extra care after the doctor says it was not a medical emergency, the Plan will pay its portion of the covered additional care if authorized by us. We will pay our portion of the covered additional care from an out-of-network provider as a POS benefit if authorized by us.

<b>Section 3.2</b>	<b>Getting care when you have an urgent need for care</b>
--------------------	---

### **What is “urgently needed care”?**

“Urgently needed care” is a non-emergency situation when you need medical care right away because of an illness, injury, or condition that you did not expect or anticipate, but your health is not in serious danger.

---

### **What if you are in the plan's service area when you have an urgent need for care?**

Whenever possible, you must use our network providers when you are in the plan's service area and you have an urgent need for care. (For more information about the plan's service area, see Chapter 1, Section 2.3 of this booklet.)

In most situations, if you are in the plan's service area, we will cover urgently needed care *only* if you get this care from a network provider and follow the other rules described earlier in this chapter. If the circumstances are unusual or extraordinary, and network providers are temporarily unavailable or inaccessible, our plan will cover urgently needed care that you get from an out-of-network provider.

### **What if you are outside the plan's service area when you have an urgent need for care?**

Suppose that you are temporarily outside our plan's service area, but still in the United States. If you have an urgent need for care, you probably will not be able to find or get to one of the providers in our plan's network. In this situation (when you are outside the service area and cannot get care from a network provider), our plan will cover urgently needed care that you get from any provider.

Our plan does not cover urgently needed care or any other care if you receive the care outside of the United States.

---

## **SECTION 4      What if you are billed directly for the full cost of your covered services?**

---

<b>Section 4.1      You can ask the plan to pay our share of the cost of your covered services</b>
--

In limited instances, you may be asked to pay the full cost of the service. Other times, you may find that you have paid more than you expected under the coverage rules of the plan. In either case, you will want our plan to pay our share of the costs by reimbursing you for payments you have already made.

There may also be times when you get a bill from a provider for the full cost of medical care you have received. In many cases, you should send this bill to us so that we can pay our share of the costs for your covered medical services.

If you have paid more than your share for covered services, or if you have received a bill for the full cost of covered medical services, go to Chapter 7 (*Asking the plan to pay its share of a bill you have received for medical services or drugs*) for information about what to do.

---

<b>Section 4.2</b>	<b>If services are not covered by our plan, you must pay the full cost</b>
--------------------	--

*Vantage Medicare Advantage* covers all medical services that are medically necessary, are covered under Medicare, and are obtained consistent with plan rules. You are responsible for paying the full cost of services that are not covered by our plan, either because they are not plan-covered services, or they were obtained out-of-network where not authorized.

If you have any questions about whether we will pay for any medical service or care that you are considering, you have the right to ask us whether we will cover it before you get it. If we say we will not cover your services, you have the right to appeal our decision not to cover your care.

Chapter 9 (*What to do if you have a problem or complaint*) has more information about what to do if you want a coverage decision from us or want to appeal a decision we have already made. You may also call Member Services at the number on the front cover of this booklet to get more information about how to do this.

For covered services that have a benefit limitation, you pay the full cost of any services you get after you have used up your benefit for that type of covered service. For example, you may have to pay the full cost of any Physical Therapy services you get after our plan's payments reach the benefit limit. Paying for costs once the benefit limit has been reached will not count toward your out-of-pocket maximum. You can call Member Services when you want to know how much of your benefit limit you have already used.

---

<b>SECTION 5</b>	<b>How are your medical services covered when you are in a "clinical research study"?</b>
------------------	---

---

<b>Section 5.1</b>	<b>What is a "clinical research study"?</b>
--------------------	---

A clinical research study is a way that doctors and scientists test new types of medical care, like how well a new cancer drug works. They test new medical care procedures or drugs by asking for volunteers to help with the study. This kind of study is one of the final stages of a research process that helps doctors and scientists see if a new approach works and if it is safe.

Not all clinical research studies are open to members of our plan. Medicare first needs to approve the research study. If you participate in a study that Medicare has *not* approved, *you will be responsible for paying all costs for your participation in the study.*

Once Medicare approves the study, someone who works on the study will contact you to explain more about the study and see if you meet the requirements set by the scientists who are running the study. You can participate in the study as long as you meet the requirements for the study *and* you have a full understanding and acceptance of what is involved if you participate in the study.

If you participate in a Medicare-approved study, Original Medicare pays most of the costs for the covered services you receive as part of the study. When you are in a clinical research study, you may stay enrolled in our plan and continue to get the rest of your care (the care that is not related to the study) through our plan.

If you want to participate in a Medicare-approved clinical research study, you do *not* need to get approval from our plan or your PCP. The providers that deliver your care as part of the clinical research study do *not* need to be part of our plan's network of providers.

Although you do not need to get our plan's permission to be in a clinical research study, **you do need to tell us before you start participating in a clinical research study.** Here is why you need to tell us:

1. We can let you know whether the clinical research study is Medicare-approved.
2. We can tell you what services you will get from clinical research study providers instead of from our plan.
3. We can keep track of the health care services that you receive as part of the study.

If you plan on participating in a clinical research study, contact Member Services (see Chapter 2, Section 1 of this *Evidence of Coverage*).

<b>Section 5.2</b>	<b>When you participate in a clinical research study, who pays for what?</b>
--------------------	--

Once you join a Medicare-approved clinical research study, you are covered for routine items and services you receive as part of the study, including:

- Room and board for a hospital stay that Medicare would pay for even if you were not in a study.
- An operation or other medical procedure if it is part of the research study.
- Treatment of side effects and complications of the new care.

Original Medicare pays most of the cost of the covered services you receive as part of the study. After Medicare has paid its share of the cost for these services, our plan will also pay for part of the costs. We will pay the difference between the cost-sharing in Original Medicare and your cost-sharing as a member of our plan. This means your costs for the services you receive as part of the study will not be higher than they would be if you received these services outside of a clinical research study.

When you are part of a clinical research study, **neither Medicare nor our plan will pay for any of the following:**

- Generally, Medicare will *not* pay for the new item or service that the study is testing unless Medicare would cover the item or service even if you were *not* in a study.

- Items and services the study gives you or any participant for free.
- Items or services provided only to collect data, and not used in your direct health care. For example, Medicare would not pay for monthly CT scans done as part of the study if your condition would usually require only one CT scan.

### **Do you want to know more?**

To find out what your coinsurance would be if you joined a Medicare-approved clinical research study, please call us at Member Services (phone numbers are on the cover of this booklet).

You can get more information about joining a clinical research study by reading the publication “Medicare and Clinical Research Studies” on the Medicare website (<http://www.medicare.gov>). You can also call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227), 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. TTY users should call 1-877-486-2048.

---

## **SECTION 6 Rules for getting care in a “religious non-medical health care institution”**

---

<b>Section 6.1</b>	<b>What is a religious non-medical health care institution?</b>
--------------------	---

A religious non-medical health care institution is a facility that provides care for a condition that would ordinarily be treated in a hospital or skilled nursing facility care. If getting care in a hospital or a skilled nursing facility is against a member’s religious beliefs, our plan will instead provide coverage for care in a religious non-medical health care institution. You may choose to pursue medical care at any time for any reason. This benefit is provided only for Part A inpatient services (non-medical health care services). Medicare will only pay for non-medical health care services provided by religious non-medical health care institutions.

<b>Section 6.2</b>	<b>What care from a religious non-medical health care institution is covered by our plan?</b>
--------------------	---

To get care from a religious non-medical health care institution, you must sign a legal document that says you are conscientiously opposed to getting medical treatment that is “non-excepted.”

- “Non-excepted” medical care or treatment is any medical care or treatment that is *voluntary* and *not required* by any federal, state, or local law.
- “Excepted” medical treatment is medical care or treatment that you get that is *not* voluntary or *is required* under federal, state, or local law.

To be covered by our plan, the care you get from a religious non-medical health care institution must meet the following conditions:

- The facility providing the care must be certified by Medicare.

- Our plan's coverage of services you receive is limited to *non-religious* aspects of care.
- If you get services from this institution that are provided to you in your home, our plan will cover these services only if your condition would ordinarily meet the conditions for coverage of services given by home health agencies that are not religious non-medical health care institutions.
- If you get services from this institution that are provided to you in a facility, the following conditions apply:
  - You must have a medical condition that would allow you to receive covered services for inpatient hospital care or skilled nursing facility care.
  - – *and* – you must get approval in advance from our plan before you are admitted to the facility or your stay will not be covered.

Our plan's Inpatient Hospital coverage limits also apply. Please refer to the Benefits Chart in Chapter 4 for limitations.

---

## **Chapter 4. Medical Benefits Chart (what is covered and what you pay)**

<b>SECTION 1</b>	<b>Understanding your out-of-pocket costs for covered services .....</b>	<b>36</b>
Section 1.1	What types of out-of-pocket costs do you pay for your covered services? .....	36
Section 1.2	What is the maximum amount you will pay for Medicare Part A and Part B covered medical services? .....	36
<b>SECTION 2</b>	<b>Use this <i>Medical Benefits Chart</i> to find out what is covered for you and how much you will pay.....</b>	<b>37</b>
Section 2.1	Your medical benefits and costs as a member of the plan.....	37
<b>SECTION 3</b>	<b>What types of benefits are not covered by the plan? .....</b>	<b>55</b>
Section 3.1	Types of benefits we do <i>not</i> cover (exclusions).....	55

---

## **SECTION 1      Understanding your out-of-pocket costs for covered services**

---

This chapter focuses on your covered services and what you pay for your medical benefits. It includes a Medical Benefits Chart that gives a list of your covered services and tells how much you will pay for each covered service as a member of *Vantage Medicare Advantage*. Later in this chapter, you can find information about medical services that are not covered. It also tells about limitations on certain services. See the addendum for additional important information about limitations, exclusions, and other detailed information about our plan.

<b>Section 1.1      What types of out-of-pocket costs do you pay for your covered services?</b>
---

To understand the payment information we give you in this chapter, you need to know about the types of out-of-pocket costs you may pay for your covered services.

- A **“copayment”** means that you pay a fixed amount each time you receive a medical service. You pay a copayment at the time you get the medical service.
- **“Coinsurance”** means that you pay a percent of the total cost of a medical service. You pay a coinsurance at the time you get the medical service.

Some people qualify for State Medicaid programs to help them pay their out-of-pocket costs for Medicare. If you are enrolled in one of these programs, you may still have to pay a copayment for the service, depending on the rules in your state.

<b>Section 1.2      What is the maximum amount you will pay for Medicare Part A and Part B covered medical services?</b>
--

Because you are enrolled in a Medicare Advantage plan, there is a limit to how much you have to pay out-of-pocket each year for medical services that are covered under Medicare Part A and Part B (see the Medical Benefits Chart in Section 2, below).

As a member of *Vantage Medicare Advantage*, the most you will have to pay out-of-pocket for covered Part A and Part B services in 2011 is \$3,250. (The amount you pay for your plan premium does not count toward your out-of-pocket maximum.) If you reach the maximum out-of-pocket payment amount of \$3,250 you will not have to pay any out-of-pocket costs for the remainder of the year for covered Part A and Part B services rendered by network providers. (You will have to continue to pay your plan premium and the Medicare Part B premium.) Benefits that will be applied to the out-of-pocket limit are notated in the Benefits Chart by the footnote “(1)”.

---

## **SECTION 2      Use this *Medical Benefits Chart* to find out what is covered for you and how much you will pay**

---

<b>Section 2.1      Your medical benefits and costs as a member of the plan</b>
---

The Medical Benefits Chart on the following pages lists the services *Vantage Medicare Advantage* covers and what you pay out-of-pocket for each service. The services listed in the Medical Benefits Chart are covered only when the following coverage requirements are met:

- Your Medicare covered services must be provided according to the coverage guidelines established by Medicare.
- Except in the case of preventive services and screening tests, your services (including medical care, services, supplies, and equipment) *must* be medically necessary. Medically necessary means that the services are used for the diagnosis, direct care, and treatment of your medical condition and are not provided mainly for your convenience or that of your doctor.
- You have a primary care provider (a PCP) who is providing and overseeing your care. In most situations, your PCP must give you approval in advance before you can see other providers in the plan’s network. This is called giving you a “referral.” Chapter 3 provides more information about getting a referral and the situations when you do not need a referral. Covered services that need a referral from your PCP are marked by a double asterisk (\*\*).
- Some of the services listed in the Medical Benefits Chart are covered *only* if your doctor or other network provider gets approval in advance (sometimes called “prior authorization”) from us. Covered services that need approval in advance are marked in the Medical Benefits Chart by an asterisk (\*). Covered services that need a referral from your PCP are marked by a double asterisk (\*\*).
- Our plan covers all Medicare-covered preventive services at no cost to you.
- Your provider will bill Original Medicare while your hospice election is in force.

Services that are covered for you	What you must pay when you get these services
<b>Inpatient Care</b>	
<p><b>Inpatient hospital care<sup>*(1)</sup></b></p> <p>Covered services include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Semi-private room (or a private room if medically necessary)</li><li>• Meals including special diets</li><li>• Regular nursing services</li><li>• Costs of special care units (such as intensive/coronary care units)</li><li>• Drugs and medications</li><li>• Lab tests</li><li>• X-rays and other radiology services</li><li>• Necessary surgical and medical supplies</li><li>• Use of appliances, such as wheelchairs</li><li>• Operating and recovery room costs</li><li>• Physical, occupational, and speech language therapy</li><li>• Under certain conditions, the following types of transplants are covered: corneal, kidney, kidney-pancreatic, heart, liver, lung, heart/lung, bone marrow, stem cell, and intestinal/multivisceral. If you need a transplant, we will arrange to have your case reviewed by a Medicare-approved transplant center that will decide whether you are a candidate for a transplant. If you are sent outside of your community for a transplant, we will arrange or pay for appropriate lodging and transportation costs for you and a companion.</li><li>• Blood - including storage and administration. All components of blood are covered beginning with the first pint used.</li><li>• Physician services</li></ul>	<p>For Medicare-covered hospital stays:</p> <p>Days 1-5: \$25 copayment per day</p> <p>Days 6-90: \$0 copayment per day</p> <p>Plan covers 90 days each benefit period. A "benefit period" starts the day you go into a hospital or skilled nursing facility. It ends when you go for 60 days in a row without hospital or skilled nursing care. If you go into the hospital after one benefit period has ended, a new benefit period begins. There is no limit to the number of benefit periods you can have.</p> <p>Except in an emergency, your doctor must tell the plan that you are going to be admitted to the hospital.</p> <p>If you get authorized inpatient care at an out-of-network hospital after your emergency condition is stabilized, your cost is the cost-sharing you would pay at a network hospital plus an additional 20% coinsurance.</p>
<p>* Covered services that require prior authorization</p> <p><sup>(1)</sup>Medicare-covered services that apply to out-of-pocket maximum</p>	

Services that are covered for you	What you must pay when you get these services
<p><b>Inpatient mental health care</b><sup>*(1)</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Covered services include mental health care services that require a hospital stay. You get up to 190 days in a Psychiatric Hospital in a lifetime. The 190-day limit does not apply to Mental Health services provided in a psychiatric unit of a general hospital.</li></ul>	<p>For Medicare-covered hospital stays:</p> <p>Days 1-5: \$25 copayment per day Days 6-90: \$0 copayment per day</p> <p>Plan covers 90 days each benefit period. A "benefit period" starts the day you go into a hospital or skilled nursing facility. It ends when you go for 60 days in a row without hospital or skilled nursing care. If you go into the hospital after one benefit period has ended, a new benefit period begins. There is no limit to the number of benefit periods you can have.</p> <p>Except in an emergency, your doctor must tell the plan that you are going to be admitted to the hospital.</p>
<p><b>Skilled nursing facility (SNF) care</b><sup>*(1)</sup></p> <p>(For a definition of "skilled nursing facility," see Chapter 12 of this booklet. Skilled nursing facilities are sometimes called "SNFs.")</p> <p>3-day prior hospital stay is required. Covered services include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Semiprivate room (or a private room if medically necessary)</li><li>Meals, including special diets</li><li>Regular nursing services</li><li>Physical therapy, occupational therapy, and speech therapy</li><li>Drugs administered to you as part of your plan of care</li></ul>	<p>For Medicare-covered SNF stays:</p> <p>Days 1 - 20: \$0 copayment per day Days 21-100: \$100 copayment per day</p> <p>Plan covers up to 100 days each benefit period. A "benefit period" starts the day you go into a hospital or SNF. It ends when you go for 60 days in a row without hospital or skilled nursing</p>

Services that are covered for you	What you must pay when you get these services
<p>(This includes substances that are naturally present in the body, such as blood clotting factors.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blood - including storage and administration. All components of blood are covered beginning with the first pint used.</li> <li>• Medical and surgical supplies ordinarily provided by SNFs</li> <li>• Laboratory tests ordinarily provided by SNFs</li> <li>• X-rays and other radiology services ordinarily provided by SNFs</li> <li>• Use of appliances such as wheelchairs ordinarily provided by SNFs</li> <li>• Physician services</li> </ul> <p>Generally, you will get your SNF care from plan facilities. However, under certain conditions listed below, you may be able to pay in-network cost-sharing for a facility that is not a plan provider, if the facility accepts our plan's amounts for payment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A nursing home or continuing care retirement community where you were living right before you went to the hospital (as long as it provides skilled nursing facility care).</li> <li>• A SNF where your spouse is living at the time you leave the hospital.</li> </ul>	<p>care. If you go into the hospital after one benefit period has ended, a new benefit period begins. There is no limit to the number of benefit periods you can have.</p>
<p><b>Inpatient services covered when the hospital or SNF days are not, or are no longer, covered<sup>*(1)</sup></b></p> <p>As described above, the plan covers up to 90 days per benefit period for inpatient hospital care and up to 100 days per benefit period for skilled nursing facility (SNF) care. Once you have reached these coverage limits, the plan will no longer cover your stay in the hospital or SNF. However, we will cover certain types of services that you receive while you are still in the hospital or the SNF. Covered services include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physician services</li> <li>• Tests (like X-ray or lab tests)</li> <li>• X-ray, radium, and isotope therapy including technician</li> </ul>	<p>Physician services are covered 100%.</p> <p>20% coinsurance up to \$100 per day for Medicare-covered X-rays.</p> <p>\$0 co-payment for Medicare-covered lab services.</p> <p>20% coinsurance up to \$100 per day for Medicare-covered diagnostic procedures and tests.</p>

Services that are covered for you	What you must pay when you get these services
<p>materials and services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Surgical dressings, splints, casts and other devices used to reduce fractures and dislocations</li> <li>• Prosthetics and orthotics devices (other than dental) that replace all or part of an internal body organ (including contiguous tissue), or all or part of the function of a permanently inoperative or malfunctioning internal body organ, including replacement or repairs of such devices</li> <li>• Leg, arm, back, and neck braces; trusses, and artificial legs, arms, and eyes including adjustments, repairs, and replacements required because of breakage, wear, loss, or a change in the patient's physical condition</li> <li>• Physical therapy, speech therapy, and occupational therapy</li> </ul>	<p>20% coinsurance up to \$100 per day for Medicare-covered diagnostic radiology services.</p> <p>\$0 co-payment for Medicare-covered therapeutic radiology services.</p> <p>20% of the cost for Medicare-covered prosthetic and orthotic devices, leg, arm, back, and neck braces</p> <p>20% of the cost for Medicare-covered physical therapy, speech therapy, and occupational therapy.</p>
<p><b>Home health agency care<sup>*(1)</sup></b></p> <p>Covered services include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Part-time or intermittent skilled nursing and home health aide services (To be covered under the home health care benefit, your skilled nursing and home health aide services combined must total fewer than 8 hours per day and 35 hours per week)</li> <li>• Physical therapy, occupational therapy, and speech therapy</li> <li>• Medical social services</li> <li>• Medical equipment and supplies</li> </ul>	<p>\$0 co-payment for Medicare-covered home health visits</p>
<p><b>Hospice care</b></p> <p>You may receive care from any Medicare-certified hospice program. Original Medicare (rather than our Plan) will pay the hospice provider for the services you receive. Your hospice doctor can be a network provider or an out-of-network provider. You will still be a plan member and will continue to get the rest of your care that is unrelated to your terminal condition through our Plan. However, Original Medicare will pay for these services while your hospice election is in force. Covered services include:</p>	<p>When you enroll in a Medicare-certified hospice program, your hospice services and your Original Medicare services are paid for by Original Medicare, not <i>Vantage Medicare Advantage</i>.</p>

Services that are covered for you	What you must pay when you get these services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drugs for symptom control and pain relief, short-term respite care, and other services not otherwise covered by Original Medicare</li> <li>• Home care</li> </ul>	
<b>Outpatient Services</b>	
<p><b>Physician services, including doctor’s office visits<sup>(1)</sup></b></p> <p>Covered services include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Office visits, including medical and surgical care in a physician’s office**</li> <li>• Medical or surgical services furnished in a certified ambulatory surgical center or in a hospital outpatient setting*</li> <li>• Consultation, diagnosis, and treatment by a specialist*</li> <li>• Hearing and balance exams, if your doctor orders it to see if you need medical treatment*</li> <li>• Telehealth office visits including consultation, diagnosis and treatment by a specialist</li> <li>• Second opinion by another network provider prior to surgery*</li> <li>• Outpatient hospital services*</li> <li>• Non-routine dental care (covered services are limited to surgery of the jaw or related structures, setting fractures of the jaw or facial bones, extraction of teeth to prepare the jaw for radiation treatments of neoplastic cancer disease, or services that would be covered when provided by a physician)*</li> </ul>	<p>Authorization rules may apply.</p> <p>See “Routine Physical Exam” for more information.</p> <p>\$5 co-payment for each primary care doctor visit for Medicare-covered benefits.</p> <p>\$20 co-payment for each specialist visit for Medicare-covered benefits.</p> <p>\$10 co-payment for each in-area, network urgent care Medicare-covered visit.</p> <p>20% coinsurance up to \$100 per day for major diagnostic tests.</p> <p>20% coinsurance for durable medical equipment.</p> <p>20% coinsurance applies for professional pain management and allergy services.</p> <p>Cholesterol screening is covered at 100% when performed by a PCP.</p> <p>Referrals are required from your PCP to see a specialist.</p>
<p>**Covered services by a specialist that require a referral from your PCP</p>	

Services that are covered for you	What you must pay when you get these services
<p><b>Chiropractic services<sup>*(1)</sup></b></p> <p>Covered services include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manual manipulation of the spine to correct subluxation</li> </ul>	<p>\$20 co-payment for each Medicare-covered visit.</p> <p>Medicare-covered chiropractic visits are for manual manipulation of the spine to correct subluxation (a displacement or misalignment of a joint or body part) if you get it from a chiropractor or other qualified providers.</p>
<p><b>Podiatry services<sup>** (1)</sup></b></p> <p>Covered services include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Treatment of injuries and diseases of the feet (such as hammer toe or heel spurs).</li> <li>• Routine foot care for members with certain medical conditions affecting the lower limbs</li> </ul>	<p>\$20 co-payment for each Medicare-covered visit.</p> <p>Medicare-covered podiatry benefits are for medically necessary foot care.</p> <p>Most routine foot care is not covered.</p> <p>Authorization rules may apply.</p>
<p><b>Outpatient mental health care<sup>*(1)</sup></b></p> <p>Covered services include:</p> <p>Mental health services provided by a doctor, clinical psychologist, clinical social worker, clinical nurse specialist, nurse practitioner, physician assistant, or other Medicare-qualified mental health care professional as allowed under applicable state laws.</p>	<p>\$20 co-payment for each Medicare-covered individual or group therapy visit.</p> <p>Additional facility charges may apply.</p>
<p><b>Partial hospitalization services<sup>*(1)</sup></b></p> <p>“Partial hospitalization” is a structured program of active psychiatric treatment that is more intense than the care received in your doctor’s or therapist’s office and is an alternative to inpatient hospitalization.</p>	<p>\$20 co-payment for each Medicare-covered individual or group therapy visit.</p> <p>Additional facility charges may apply.</p>

Services that are covered for you	What you must pay when you get these services
<p><b>Outpatient substance abuse services<sup>*(1)</sup></b></p>	<p>\$20 co-payment for Medicare-covered individual or group visits.</p> <p>Additional facility charges may apply.</p>
<p><b>Outpatient surgery, including services provided at hospital facilities and ambulatory surgical centers<sup>*(1)</sup></b></p>	<p>\$100 co-payment for each Medicare-covered ambulatory surgical center visit.</p> <p>\$100 co-payment for each Medicare-covered outpatient hospital facility visit.</p> <p>Physician charges related to ambulatory/outpatient surgery will be covered at 100%, excluding pain management and allergy services.</p> <p>20% coinsurance applies to professional pain management and allergy services.</p> <p>There is no cost share for blood; the Original Medicare three (3) pint blood deductible is waived.</p>
<p><b>Ambulance services<sup>(1)</sup></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Covered ambulance services include fixed wing, rotary wing, and ground ambulance services, to the nearest appropriate facility that can provide care only if they are furnished to a member whose medical condition is such that other means of transportation are contraindicated (could endanger the person's health). The member's condition must require both the ambulance transportation itself and the level of service provided in order for the billed service to be considered medically necessary.</li> </ul>	<p>Authorization rules may apply.</p> <p>\$100 co-payment per day for Medicare-covered ambulance benefits.</p>

Services that are covered for you	What you must pay when you get these services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Non-emergency transportation by ambulance is appropriate if it is documented that the member's condition is such that other means of transportation are contraindicated (could endanger the person's health) and that transportation by ambulance is medically required.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Emergency care<sup>(1)</sup></b></p>	<p>\$50 co-payment for Medicare-covered emergency room visits.</p> <p>Worldwide coverage</p> <p>If you are admitted to the hospital within 72 hours for the same condition, you pay \$0 for the emergency room visit.</p> <p>If you receive emergency care at an out-of-network hospital and need inpatient care after your emergency condition is stabilized, you must return to a network hospital in order for your care to continue to be covered <i>OR</i> you must have your inpatient care at the out-of-network hospital authorized by the plan and your cost is the cost-sharing you would pay at a network hospital.</p>
<p><b>Urgently needed care<sup>(1)</sup></b>  <i>Coverage is within the U.S.</i></p>	<p>\$10 co-payment for Medicare-covered urgently needed care visits.</p>
<p><b>Outpatient rehabilitation service<sup>*(1)</sup></b></p> <p>Covered services include: physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech language therapy, cardiac rehabilitation services, intensive cardiac rehabilitation services, pulmonary rehabilitation services,</p>	<p>There may be limits on physical therapy, occupational therapy, and speech and language pathology services. If so, there may be exceptions to</p>

Services that are covered for you	What you must pay when you get these services
<p>and Comprehensive Outpatient Rehabilitation Facility (CORF) services.</p>	<p>these limits.</p> <p>\$5 copayment per day for Medicare-covered Occupational Therapy visits.</p> <p>\$5 copayment per day for Medicare-covered Physical and/or Speech/Language Therapy visits.</p> <p>\$5 copayment per day for Medicare-covered Cardiac Rehab services.</p> <p>Additional facility charges may apply.</p>
<p><b>Durable medical equipment and related supplies<sup>*(1)</sup></b>                      (For a definition of “durable medical equipment,” see Chapter 12 of this booklet.)</p> <p>Covered items include, but are not limited to: wheelchairs, crutches, hospital bed, IV infusion pump, oxygen equipment, nebulizer, and walker.</p>	<p>20% of the cost for Medicare-covered items.</p> <p>Certain rental limitations apply as determined by CMS.</p>
<p><b>Prosthetic devices and related supplies<sup>*(1)</sup></b></p> <p>Devices (other than dental) that replace a body part or function. These include, but are not limited to: colostomy bags and supplies directly related to colostomy care, pacemakers, braces, prosthetic shoes, artificial limbs, and breast prostheses (including a surgical brassiere after a mastectomy). Includes certain supplies related to prosthetic devices, and repair and/or replacement of prosthetic devices. Also includes some coverage following cataract removal or cataract surgery – see “Vision Care” later in this section for more detail.</p>	<p>20% of the cost for Medicare-covered items.</p>
<p><b>Diabetes self-monitoring, training, and supplies<sup>(1)</sup></b>                      For all people who have diabetes (insulin and non-insulin users).</p>	<p>Authorization rules may apply.</p>

Services that are covered for you	What you must pay when you get these services
<p>Covered services include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blood glucose monitor, blood glucose test strips, lancet devices and lancets, and glucose-control solutions for checking the accuracy of test strips and monitors.*</li> <li>• For people with diabetes who have severe diabetic foot disease: One pair per calendar year of therapeutic custom-molded shoes (including inserts provided with such shoes) and two additional pairs of inserts, or one pair of depth shoes and three pairs of inserts (not including the non-customized removable inserts provided with such shoes). Coverage includes fitting.*</li> <li>• Self-management training is covered under certain conditions.*</li> <li>• For persons at risk of diabetes: Fasting plasma glucose tests. Unlimited</li> </ul>	<p>\$0 copayment for Diabetes self-monitoring training.</p> <p>\$0 copayment for Nutrition Therapy for Diabetes.</p> <p>20% of the cost for Diabetes supplies.</p> <p>Separate Office Visit cost sharing of \$5 to \$20 may apply.</p>
<p><b>Medical nutrition therapy<sup>*(1)</sup></b></p> <p>For people with diabetes, renal (kidney) disease (but not on dialysis), and after a transplant when referred by your doctor.</p>	<p>\$0 copayment for Nutrition Therapy for Diabetes.</p>
<p><b>Kidney disease education services</b></p> <p>Education to teach kidney care and help members make informed decisions about their care. For people with stage IV chronic kidney disease, when referred by their doctor, we cover up to six sessions of kidney disease education services per lifetime.</p>	<p>20% coinsurance for Kidney Disease Education Services.</p>
<p><b>Outpatient diagnostic tests and therapeutic services and supplies<sup>(1)</sup></b></p> <p>Covered services include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• X-rays</li> <li>• Radiation therapy*</li> <li>• Surgical supplies, such as dressings</li> <li>• Supplies, such as splints and casts</li> <li>• Laboratory tests</li> </ul>	<p>20% coinsurance up to \$100 per day for Medicare-covered X-rays.</p> <p>\$0 co-payment for Medicare-covered therapeutic radiology services.</p> <p>\$0 co-payment for Medicare-covered lab services.</p>

Services that are covered for you	What you must pay when you get these services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Blood. Coverage begins with the first pint of blood that you need. Coverage of storage and administration begins with the first pint of blood that you need.</li> </ul> <p>Other outpatient diagnostic tests* including major diagnostic radiology services. Major diagnostic radiology services include, but are not limited to: Bone Scan, Cardiac Stress Test, CT Scan, Echocardiogram, EEG, EMG, Event Monitor, HIDA Scan, Holter Monitor, MRI, Nerve Conduction Study, Nuclear Cardiac Stress Test, PET Scan, Pulmonary Function Test, and Sleep Study.</p>	<p>20% coinsurance up to \$100 per day for Medicare-covered diagnostic procedures and tests.</p> <p>20% coinsurance up to \$100 per day for Medicare-covered diagnostic radiology services (not including x-rays).</p> <p>\$0 co-payment for EKG screening.</p> <p>Separate Office Visit cost sharing of \$5 to \$20 may apply.</p> <p>Authorizations apply to major diagnostic tests and radiation therapy only. Labs do not require an authorization/referral.</p>
<p><b>Vision care<sup>(1)</sup></b></p> <p>Covered services include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outpatient physician services for eye care.</li> <li>For people who are at high risk of glaucoma, such as people with a family history of glaucoma, people with diabetes, and African-Americans who are age 50 and older: glaucoma screening once per year</li> <li>One pair of eyeglasses or contact lenses after each cataract surgery that includes insertion of an intraocular lens. Corrective lenses/frames (and replacements) needed after a cataract removal without a lens implant.</li> </ul>	<p>20% of the cost for one pair of eyeglasses or contact lenses after cataract surgery. Cost is defined as the Medicare-approved amount. To receive Medicare-covered eyewear after cataract surgery, the provider must be a Medicare-approved supplier.</p> <p>\$20 co-payment for exams to diagnose and treat diseases and conditions of the eye.</p> <p>Glaucoma screening is covered at 100%.</p>

Services that are covered for you	What you must pay when you get these services
<b>Preventive Care and Screening Tests</b>	
<p><b>Abdominal aortic aneurysm screening**<sup>(1)</sup></b></p> <p>A one-time screening ultrasound for people at risk. The plan only covers this screening if you get a referral for it as a result of your routine physical exam.</p>	<p>0% of the cost for Medicare-covered abdominal aortic aneurysm screening</p>
<p><b>Bone mass measurement<sup>(1)</sup></b></p> <p>For qualified individuals (generally, this means people at risk of losing bone mass or at risk of osteoporosis), the following services are covered every 2 years or more frequently if medically necessary: procedures to identify bone mass, detect bone loss, or determine bone quality, including a physician’s interpretation of the results.</p>	<p>Authorization rules may apply. There are no authorization requirements for the initial exam and bi-annual services.</p> <p>\$0 co-payment for Medicare-covered bone mass measurement</p> <p>Separate Office Visit cost sharing of \$5 to \$20 may apply.</p>
<p><b>Colorectal screening<sup>(1)</sup></b></p> <p>For people 50 and older, the following are covered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flexible sigmoidoscopy (or screening barium enema as an alternative) every 48 months*</li> <li>• Fecal occult blood test, every 12 months</li> </ul> <p>For people at high risk of colorectal cancer, we cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Screening colonoscopy (or screening barium enema as an alternative) every 24 months*</li> </ul> <p>For people not at high risk of colorectal cancer, we cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Screening colonoscopy every 10 years, but not within 48 months of a screening sigmoidoscopy*</li> </ul>	<p>Authorization rules may apply.</p> <p>\$0 co-payment for Medicare-covered colorectal screenings.</p> <p>There is a \$100 outpatient facility co-payment for sigmoidoscopies and colonoscopies.</p> <p>There is no co-payment for lab services.</p> <p>Separate Office Visit cost sharing of \$5 to \$20 may apply.</p>

Services that are covered for you	What you must pay when you get these services
<p><b>HIV screening</b></p> <p>For people who ask for an HIV screening test or who are at increased risk for HIV infection, we cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One screening exam every 12 months</li> </ul> <p>For women who are pregnant, we cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Up to three screening exams during a pregnancy</li> </ul>	<p>\$0 co-payment for Medicare-covered HIV screening.</p>
<p><b>Immunizations<sup>(1)</sup></b></p> <p>Covered services include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pneumonia vaccine</li> <li>• Flu shots, once a year in the fall or winter</li> <li>• Hepatitis B vaccine if you are at high or intermediate risk of getting Hepatitis B</li> <li>• Other vaccines if you are at risk</li> </ul> <p>We also cover some vaccines under our outpatient prescription drug benefit.</p>	<p>\$0 co-payment for Flu and Pneumonia vaccines.</p> <p>\$0 co-payment for Hepatitis B vaccine.</p> <p>No referral needed for flu, pneumonia and Hepatitis B vaccines.</p>
<p><b>Mammography screening<sup>(1)</sup></b></p> <p>Covered services include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One baseline exam between the ages of 35 and 39</li> <li>• One screening every 12 months for women age 40 and older</li> </ul>	<p>\$0 co-payment for Medicare-covered screening mammograms.</p> <p>Separate Office Visit cost sharing of \$5 to \$20 may apply.</p>
<p><b>Pap test, pelvic exams, and clinical breast exams<sup>(1)</sup></b></p> <p>Covered services include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For all women, Pap tests, pelvic exams, and clinical breast exams are covered once every 24 months</li> <li>• If you are at high risk of cervical cancer or have had an abnormal Pap test and are of childbearing age: one Pap test every 12 months</li> </ul>	<p>\$0 co-payment for Medicare-covered pap smears, pelvic exams, and clinical breast exams.</p> <p>Separate Office Visit cost sharing of \$5 to \$20 may apply.</p>

Services that are covered for you	What you must pay when you get these services
<p><b>Prostate cancer screening exams<sup>(1)</sup></b></p> <p>For men age 50 and older, covered services include the following - once every 12 months:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Digital rectal exam</li> <li>• Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA) test</li> </ul>	<p>\$0 co-payment for Medicare-covered prostate cancer screening.</p> <p>Separate Office Visit cost sharing of \$5 to \$20 may apply.</p>
<p><b>Cardiovascular disease testing<sup>(1)</sup></b></p> <p>Blood tests for the detection of cardiovascular disease (or abnormalities associated with an elevated risk of cardiovascular disease). Once every 12 months</p>	<p>\$0 co-payment for Medicare-covered cardiovascular disease testing.</p>
<p><b>Routine Physical Exam</b></p> <p>Routine physical exams can be performed by PCPs and/or OB-GYNs (includes pap/pelvic and prostate screening).</p>	<p>\$0 co-payment for routine exams.</p> <p>Limited to 1 exam every year.</p>
<p><b>Personalized Prevention Plan Services (Annual Wellness Visit)</b></p> <p>Routine physical exams can be performed by PCPs and/or OB-GYNs (includes pap/pelvic and prostate screening).</p>	<p>\$0 co-payment for routine exams.</p> <p>Limited to 1 exam every year.</p>
<p><b>Other Services</b></p>	
<p><b>Dialysis (kidney)*<sup>(1)</sup></b></p> <p>Covered services include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outpatient dialysis treatments (including dialysis treatments when temporarily out of the service area, as explained in Chapter 3)</li> <li>• Inpatient dialysis treatments (if you are admitted to a hospital for special care)</li> <li>• Self-dialysis training (includes training for you and anyone helping you with your home dialysis treatments)</li> <li>• Home dialysis equipment and supplies</li> </ul>	<p>Authorization rules may apply.</p> <p>20% of the cost for renal dialysis</p> <p>\$0 copayment for Nutrition Therapy for End-Stage Renal Disease</p>

Services that are covered for you	What you must pay when you get these services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Certain home support services (such as, when necessary, visits by trained dialysis workers to check on your home dialysis, to help in emergencies, and check your dialysis equipment and water supply)</li></ul>	
<p><b>Medicare Part B prescription drugs<sup>(1)</sup></b></p> <p>These drugs are covered under Part B of Original Medicare. Members of our plan receive coverage for these drugs through our plan. Covered drugs include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Drugs that usually are not self-administered by the patient and are injected while you are getting physician services</li><li>• Drugs you take using durable medical equipment (such as nebulizers) that was authorized by the plan</li><li>• Clotting factors you give yourself by injection if you have hemophilia</li><li>• Immunosuppressive Drugs, if you were enrolled in Medicare Part A at the time of the organ transplant</li><li>• Injectable osteoporosis drugs, if you are homebound, have a bone fracture that a doctor certifies was related to post-menopausal osteoporosis, and cannot self-administer the drug</li><li>• Antigens</li><li>• Certain oral anti-cancer drugs and anti-nausea drugs</li><li>• Certain drugs for home dialysis, including heparin, the antidote for heparin when medically necessary, topical anesthetics, and erythropoiesis-stimulating agents (such as Epogen®, Procrit®, Epoetin Alfa, Aranesp®, or Darbepoetin Alfa)</li><li>• Intravenous Immune Globulin for the home treatment of primary immune deficiency diseases</li></ul> <p>Chapter 5 explains the Part D prescription drug benefit, including rules you must follow to have prescriptions covered. What you pay for your Part D prescription drugs through our plan is listed in Chapter 6.</p>	<p>Authorization rules may apply.</p> <p>20% of the cost for Part B covered drugs, <b>except:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Most Part B drugs given in the office are covered 100%.</li><li>• Injectable chemotherapy drugs given in any setting during the course of cancer/radiation treatment are covered 100%.</li></ul>

Services that are covered for you	What you must pay when you get these services
<b>Additional Benefits</b>	
<p><b>Dental services</b><sup>*(1)</sup></p>	<p>Authorization rules may apply.</p> <p>20% of the cost for Medicare-covered dental benefits.</p> <p>Preventive dental benefits (such as cleaning) are not covered.</p> <p>Separate Office Visit cost sharing of \$5 to \$20 may apply.</p>
<p><b>Hearing services</b><sup>*(1)</sup></p>	<p>Routine hearing exams and hearing aids are not covered.</p> <p>20% of the cost for Medicare-covered diagnostic hearing exams</p>
<p><b>Health and wellness education programs</b><sup>(1)</sup></p> <p>Smoking Cessation: Covered if ordered by your doctor. Includes two counseling attempts within a 12-month period if you are diagnosed with a smoking-related illness or are taking medicine that may be affected by tobacco. Each counseling attempt includes up to four face-to-face visits.</p>	<p>Authorization rules may apply.</p> <p>The plan covers the following health/wellness education benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Written health education materials, including newsletters</li> </ul> <p>\$0 copayment for each Medicare-covered smoking cessation counseling session.</p>

Services that are covered for you	What you must pay when you get these services
<p><b>Point of Service (POS)*</b></p> <p>\$5,000 limit every year for POS Benefits.</p> <p><b>The POS benefits include a 20% coinsurance in addition to the in-network cost sharing.</b></p>	<p>Point of Service coverage is available for the following benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Inpatient Hospital Acute</li><li>-Inpatient Hospital Psychiatric</li><li>-Skilled Nursing Facility (SNF)</li><li>-Comprehensive Outpatient Rehabilitation Facility (CORF)</li><li>-Partial Hospitalization</li><li>-Home Health Services</li><li>-Primary Care Physician Services</li><li>-Chiropractic Services</li><li>-Occupational Therapy Services</li><li>-Physician Specialist Services</li><li>-Mental Health Specialty Services</li><li>-Podiatry Services</li><li>-Other Health Care Professional</li><li>-Psychiatric Services</li><li>-Physical Therapy and Speech/Language Pathology Services</li><li>-Outpatient Diagnostic Procedures/Tests/Lab Services</li><li>-Diagnostic Radiological Services</li><li>-Therapeutic Radiological Services</li><li>-Outpatient X-Rays</li><li>-Outpatient Hospital Services</li><li>-Ambulatory Surgical Center (ASC) Services</li><li>-Outpatient Substance Abuse</li><li>-Cardiac Rehabilitation Services</li><li>-Ambulance Services</li></ul>

Services that are covered for you	What you must pay when you get these services
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-DME</li><li>-Prosthetics/Medical Supplies</li><li>-Diabetes Monitoring Supplies</li><li>-Health Education/Wellness</li><li>-Immunizations</li><li>-Routine Physical Exams</li><li>-Pap Smears and Pelvic Exams</li><li>-Prostate Screening</li><li>-Colorectal Screening</li><li>-Bone Mass Measurement</li><li>-Mammography Screening</li><li>-Diabetes Monitoring</li><li>-Nutrition Therapy for Diabetes and Renal Disease</li><li>-Preventive Dental</li><li>-Vision Care</li></ul>

---

## **SECTION 3      What types of benefits are not covered by the plan?**

---

<b>Section 3.1      Types of benefits we do <i>not</i> cover (exclusions)</b>
---

This section tells you what kinds of benefits are “excluded.” Excluded means that the plan does not cover these benefits.

The list below describes some services and items that are not covered under any conditions and some that are excluded only under specific conditions.

If you get benefits that are excluded, you must pay for them yourself. We will not pay for the medical benefits listed in this section (or elsewhere in this booklet), and neither will Original Medicare. The only exception: If a benefit on the exclusion list is found upon appeal to be a medical benefit that we should have paid for or covered because of your specific situation. (For information about appealing a decision we have made to not cover a medical service, go to Chapter 9, Section 5.3 in this booklet.)

In addition to any exclusions or limitations described in the Benefits Chart, or anywhere else in this *Evidence of Coverage* or addendum, **the following items and services are not covered under Original Medicare or by our plan:**

- 
- Services considered not reasonable and necessary, according to the standards of Original Medicare, unless these services are listed by our plan as a covered services.
  - Experimental medical and surgical procedures, equipment and medications, unless covered by Original Medicare. However, certain services may be covered under a Medicare-approved clinical research study. See Chapter 3, Section 5 for more information on clinical research studies.
  - Surgical treatment for morbid obesity, except when it is considered medically necessary and covered under Original Medicare.
  - Private room in a hospital, except when it is considered medically necessary.
  - Private duty nurses.
  - Personal items in your room at a hospital or a skilled nursing facility, such as a telephone or a television.
  - Full-time nursing care in your home.
  - Custodial care, unless it is provided with covered skilled nursing care and/or skilled rehabilitation services. Custodial care, or non-skilled care, is care that helps you with activities of daily living, such as bathing or dressing.
  - Homemaker services include basic household assistance, including light housekeeping or light meal preparation.
  - Fees charged by your immediate relatives or members of your household.
  - Meals delivered to your home.
  - Elective or voluntary enhancement procedures or services (including weight loss, hair growth, sexual performance, athletic performance, cosmetic purposes, anti-aging and mental performance), except when medically necessary.
  - Cosmetic surgery or procedures, unless because of an accidental injury or to improve a malformed part of the body. However, all stages of reconstruction are covered for a breast after a mastectomy, as well as for the unaffected breast to produce a symmetrical appearance.
  - Routine dental care, such as cleanings, fillings or dentures. However, non-routine dental care received at a hospital may be covered.
  - Chiropractic care, other than manual manipulation of the spine consistent with Medicare coverage guidelines.
  - Routine foot care, except for the limited coverage provided according to Medicare guidelines.
  - Orthopedic shoes, unless the shoes are part of a leg brace and are included in the cost of the brace or the shoes are for a person with diabetic foot disease.
  - Supportive devices for the feet, except for orthopedic or therapeutic shoes for people with diabetic foot disease.

- Hearing aids and routine hearing examinations.
- Eyeglasses, routine eye examinations, radial keratotomy, LASIK surgery, vision therapy and other low vision aids. However, eyeglasses are covered for people after cataract surgery.
- Outpatient prescription drugs including drugs for treatment of sexual dysfunction, including erectile dysfunction, impotence, and anorgasmia or hypogasmia.
- Reversal of sterilization procedures, sex change operations, and non-prescription contraceptive supplies.
- Acupuncture.
- Naturopath services (uses natural or alternative treatments).
- Services provided to veterans in Veterans Affairs (VA) facilities. However, when emergency services are received at VA hospital and the VA cost-sharing is more than the cost-sharing under our plan. We will reimburse veterans for the difference. Members are still responsible for our cost-sharing amounts.
- Any services listed above that are not covered will remain not covered even if received at an emergency facility.
- All Medicare limits apply unless otherwise noted in this EOC.
- Prescriptions filled by an out-of-network pharmacy are not covered unless otherwise noted in this EOC.

---

## **Chapter 5. Using the plan's coverage for your Part D prescription drugs**

<b>SECTION 1</b>	<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>60</b>
Section 1.1	This chapter describes your coverage for Part D drugs .....	60
Section 1.2	Basic rules for the plan's Part D drug coverage .....	61
<b>SECTION 2</b>	<b>Fill your prescription at a network pharmacy or through the plan's mail-order service .....</b>	<b>61</b>
Section 2.1	To have your prescription covered, use a network pharmacy .....	61
Section 2.2	Finding network pharmacies.....	61
Section 2.3	Using the plan's mail-order services.....	62
Section 2.4	How can you get a long-term supply of drugs? .....	63
Section 2.5	When can you use a pharmacy that is not in the plan's network? .....	63
<b>SECTION 3</b>	<b>Your drugs need to be on the plan's "Drug List" .....</b>	<b>64</b>
Section 3.1	The "Drug List" tells which Part D drugs are covered .....	64
Section 3.2	There are four (4) "cost-sharing tiers" for drugs on the Drug List .....	64
Section 3.3	How can you find out if a specific drug is on the Drug List?.....	65
<b>SECTION 4</b>	<b>There are restrictions on coverage for some drugs .....</b>	<b>65</b>
Section 4.1	Why do some drugs have restrictions? .....	65
Section 4.2	What kinds of restrictions? .....	65
Section 4.3	Do any of these restrictions apply to your drugs?.....	66
<b>SECTION 5</b>	<b>What if one of your drugs is not covered in the way you would like it to be covered? .....</b>	<b>66</b>
Section 5.1	There are things you can do if your drug is not covered in the way you would like it to be covered.....	66

---

Section 5.2	What can you do if your drug is not on the Drug List or if the drug is restricted in some way?.....	67
Section 5.3	What can you do if your drug is in a cost-sharing tier you think is too high?.....	69
<b>SECTION 6</b>	<b>What if your coverage changes for one of your drugs? .....</b>	<b>70</b>
Section 6.1	The Drug List can change during the year.....	70
Section 6.2	What happens if coverage changes for a drug you are taking?.....	70
<b>SECTION 7</b>	<b>What types of drugs are <i>not</i> covered by the plan? .....</b>	<b>71</b>
Section 7.1	Types of drugs we do not cover.....	71
<b>SECTION 8</b>	<b>Show your plan membership card when you fill a prescription .....</b>	<b>72</b>
Section 8.1	Show your membership card .....	72
Section 8.2	What if you do not have your membership card with you?.....	73
<b>SECTION 9</b>	<b>Part D drug coverage in special situations.....</b>	<b>73</b>
Section 9.1	What if you are in a hospital or a skilled nursing facility for a stay that is covered by the plan?.....	73
Section 9.2	What if you are a resident in a long-term care facility?.....	73
Section 9.3	What if you are also getting drug coverage from an employer or retiree group plan?.....	74
<b>SECTION 10</b>	<b>Programs on drug safety and managing medications.....</b>	<b>75</b>
Section 10.1	Programs to help members use drugs safely.....	75
Section 10.2	Programs to help members manage their medications .....	75



### **Did you know there are programs to help people pay for their drugs?**

There are programs to help people with limited resources pay for their drugs. These include “Extra Help” and State Pharmaceutical Assistance Programs. For more information, see Chapter 2, Section 7.

### **Are you currently getting help to pay for your drugs?**

If you are in a program that helps pay for your drugs, **some information in this Evidence of Coverage may not apply to you.** We have included a separate insert, called the “Evidence of Coverage Rider for People Who Get Extra Help Paying for Prescription Drugs” (LIS Rider), that tells you about your drug coverage. If you do not have this insert, please call Member Services and ask for the “Evidence of Coverage Rider for People Who Get Extra Help Paying for Prescription Drugs” (LIS Rider). Phone numbers for Member Services are on the front cover.

---

## **SECTION 1 Introduction**

---

<b>Section 1.1 This chapter describes your coverage for Part D drugs</b>
--

This chapter explains rules for using your coverage for Part D drugs. The next chapter tells what you pay for Part D drugs (Chapter 6, *What you pay for your Part D prescription drugs*).

In addition to your coverage for Part D drugs, *Vantage Medicare Advantage* also covers some drugs under the plan's medical benefits:

- The plan covers drugs you are given during covered stays in the hospital or in a skilled nursing facility. Chapter 4 (*Medical Benefits Chart, what is covered and what you pay*) tells about the benefits and costs for drugs during a covered hospital or skilled nursing facility stay.
- Medicare Part B also provides benefits for some drugs. Part B drugs include certain chemotherapy drugs, certain drug injections you are given during an office visit, and drugs you are given at a dialysis facility. Chapter 4 (*Medical Benefits Chart, what is covered and what you pay*) tells about the benefits and costs for Part B drugs.

The two examples of drugs described above are covered by the plan's medical benefits. The rest of your prescription drugs are covered under the plan's Part D benefits. **This chapter explains rules for using your coverage for Part D drugs.** The next chapter tells what you pay for Part D drugs (Chapter 6, *What you pay for your Part D prescription drugs*).

---

<b>Section 1.2</b>	<b>Basic rules for the plan's Part D drug coverage</b>
--------------------	--

The plan will generally cover your drugs as long as you follow these basic rules:

- You must use a network pharmacy to fill your prescription. (See Section 2, *Fill your prescriptions at a network pharmacy or through the plan's mail-order service.*)
- Your drug must be on the plan's *List of Covered Drugs (Formulary)* (we call it the "Drug List" for short). (See Section 3, *Your drugs need to be on the plan's "DrugList".*)
- Your drug must be considered "medically necessary," meaning reasonable and necessary for treatment of your injury or illness. It also needs to be an accepted treatment for your medical condition.

---

<b>SECTION 2</b>	<b>Fill your prescription at a network pharmacy or through the plan's mail-order service</b>
------------------	--

---

<b>Section 2.1</b>	<b>To have your prescription covered, use a network pharmacy</b>
--------------------	--

In most cases, your prescriptions are covered *only* if they are filled at the plan's network pharmacies. (See Section 3.5 for information about when we would cover prescriptions filled at out-of-network pharmacies.)

A network pharmacy is a pharmacy that has a contract with the plan to provide your covered prescription drugs. The term "covered drugs" means all of the Part D prescription drugs that are covered by the plan.

<b>Section 2.2</b>	<b>Finding network pharmacies</b>
--------------------	-----------------------------------

### **How do you find a network pharmacy in your area?**

To find a network pharmacy, you can look in your *Pharmacy Directory*, visit our website ([www.vhp-stategroup.com](http://www.vhp-stategroup.com)), or call Member Services (phone numbers are on the cover). Choose whatever is easiest for you.

You may go to any of our network pharmacies. If you switch from one network pharmacy to another, and you need a refill of a drug you have been taking, you can ask either to have a new prescription written by a doctor or to have your prescription transferred to your new network pharmacy.

## What if the pharmacy you have been using leaves the network?

If the pharmacy you have been using leaves the plan's network, you will have to find a new pharmacy that is in the network. To find another network pharmacy in your area, you can get help from Member Services (phone numbers are on the cover) or use the *Pharmacy Directory*.

## What if you need a specialized pharmacy?

Sometimes prescriptions must be filled at a specialized pharmacy. Specialized pharmacies include:

- Pharmacies that supply drugs for home infusion therapy.
- Pharmacies that supply drugs for residents of a long-term-care facility. Usually, a long-term care facility (such as a nursing home) has its own pharmacy. Residents may get prescription drugs through the facility's pharmacy as long as it is part of our network. If your long-term care pharmacy is not in our network, please contact Member Services.
- Pharmacies that serve the Indian Health Service / Tribal / Urban Indian Health Program (not available in Puerto Rico). Except in emergencies, only Native Americans or Alaska Natives have access to these pharmacies in our network.
- Pharmacies that dispense certain drugs that are restricted by the FDA to certain locations, require extraordinary handling, provider coordination, or education on its use. (Note: This scenario should happen rarely.)

To locate a specialized pharmacy, look in your *Pharmacy Directory* or call Member Services.

### Section 2.3 Using the plan's mail-order services

For certain kinds of drugs, you can use the plan's network mail-order services. Generally, the drugs available through mail order are drugs that you take on a regular basis, for a chronic or long-term medical condition. The drugs available through our plan's mail order service are marked as "**maintenance**" drugs in our Drug List.

Our plan's mail-order service requires you to order **no more than a 90-day supply**.

To get order forms and information about filling your prescriptions by mail call our Member Services department at (318) 361-0900, or (888) 823-1910, Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m. CST. TTY users should call (866) 524-5144. Please note that you must use our network mail-order pharmacies. If you use a mail-order pharmacy not in the plan's network, your prescription will not be covered.

Usually a mail-order pharmacy order will get to you in no more than 5 days. However, sometimes your mail-order may be delayed. Should your mail order be delayed, you may call Vantage Health Plan, Inc. at (318) 361-0900 or toll-free (888) 823-1910 (TTY (318) 361-

2131 or toll-free (866) 524-5144) to request authorization to obtain a supply of medication from a retail network pharmacy until your mail order is received.

### **Section 2.4      How can you get a long-term supply of drugs?**

When you get a long-term supply of drugs, your cost sharing may be lower. The plan offers a way to get a long-term supply of “maintenance” drugs on our plan’s Drug List. (Maintenance drugs are drugs that you take on a regular basis, for a chronic or long-term medical condition.)

1. For certain kinds of drugs, you can use the plan’s network **mail-order services**. These drugs are marked as maintenance drugs on our plan’s Drug List. Our plan’s mail-order service requires you to order *no more than* a 90-day supply. See Section 2.3 for more information about using our mail-order services.

### **Section 2.5      When can you use a pharmacy that is not in the plan’s network?**

#### **Your prescription may be covered in certain situations**

We have network pharmacies outside of our service area where you can get your prescriptions filled as a member of our plan. Generally, we cover drugs filled at an out-of-network pharmacy *only* when you are not able to use a network pharmacy. Here are the circumstances when we would cover prescriptions filled at an out-of-network pharmacy:

- The prescriptions are related to care for a medical emergency or urgently needed care.
- You are unable to get a covered drug in a timely manner within our service area because there are no network pharmacies within a reasonable driving distance that provide 24-hour service.
- You are trying to fill a covered prescription drug that is not regularly stocked at an eligible network retail or mail-order pharmacy (these drugs include orphan drugs or other specialty pharmaceuticals).
- Limited circumstances.
- The prescription is limited to no more than a 31-day supply or, less if written for fewer days, and requires authorization.

In these situations, **please check first with Member Services** to see if there is a network pharmacy nearby.

#### **How do you ask for reimbursement from the plan?**

If you must use an out-of-network pharmacy, you will generally have to pay the full cost (rather than paying your normal share of the cost) when you fill your prescription. You can ask us to reimburse you for our share of the cost. (Chapter 7, Section 2.1 explains how to ask the plan to pay you back.)

---

## **SECTION 3      Your drugs need to be on the plan's "Drug List"**

---

<b>Section 3.1      The "Drug List" tells which Part D drugs are covered</b>
--

The plan has a "*List of Covered Drugs (Formulary)*." In this *Evidence of Coverage*, we call it the "**Drug List**" for short.

The drugs on this list are selected by the plan with the help of a team of doctors and pharmacists. The list must meet requirements set by Medicare. Medicare has approved the plan's Drug List.

We will generally cover a drug on the plan's Drug List as long as you follow the other coverage rules explained in this chapter and the drug is medically necessary, meaning reasonable and necessary for treatment of your injury or illness. It also needs to be an accepted treatment for your medical condition.

### **The Drug List includes both brand-name and generic drugs**

A generic drug is a prescription drug that has the same active ingredients as the brand-name drug. It works just as well as the brand-name drug, but it costs less. There are generic drug substitutes available for many brand-name drugs.

### **What is *not* on the Drug list?**

The plan does not cover all prescription drugs.

- In some cases, the law does not allow any Medicare plan to cover certain types of drugs (for more information about this, see Section 7.1 in this chapter).
- In other cases, we have decided not to include a particular drug on the Drug List.

<b>Section 3.2      There are four (4) "cost-sharing tiers" for drugs on the Drug List</b>
--

Every drug on the plan's Drug List is in one of four cost-sharing tiers. In general, the higher the cost-sharing tier, the higher your cost for the drug:

- Tier 1 includes generic drugs and is the lowest tier.
- Tier 2 includes preferred drugs.
- Tier 3 includes non-preferred drugs.
- Tier 4 includes non-preferred drugs and is the highest tier.

To find out which cost-sharing tier your drug is in, look it up in the plan's *Drug List*.

The amount you pay for drugs in each cost-sharing tier is shown in Chapter 6 (*What you pay for your Part D prescription drugs*).

---

<b>Section 3.3</b>	<b>How can you find out if a specific drug is on the Drug List?</b>
--------------------	---

You have three ways to find out:

1. Check the most recent Drug List we sent you in the mail.
2. Visit the plan's website ([www.vhp-stategroup.com](http://www.vhp-stategroup.com)). The Drug List on the website is always the most current.
3. Call Member Services to find out if a particular drug is on the plan's Drug List or to ask for a copy of the list. Phone numbers for Member Services are on the front cover.

---

<b>SECTION 4</b>	<b>There are restrictions on coverage for some drugs</b>
------------------	--

<b>Section 4.1</b>	<b>Why do some drugs have restrictions?</b>
--------------------	---

For certain prescription drugs, special rules restrict how and when the plan covers them. A team of doctors and pharmacists developed these rules to help our members use drugs in the most effective ways. These special rules also help control overall drug costs, which keeps your drug coverage more affordable.

In general, our rules encourage you get a drug that works for your medical condition and is safe. Whenever a safe, lower-cost drug will work medically just as well as a higher-cost drug, the plan's rules are designed to encourage you and your doctor or other prescriber to use that lower-cost option. We also need to comply with Medicare's rules and regulations for drug coverage and cost sharing.

<b>Section 4.2</b>	<b>What kinds of restrictions?</b>
--------------------	------------------------------------

Our plan uses different types of restrictions to help our members use drugs in the most effective ways. The sections below tell you more about the types of restrictions we use for certain drugs.

### **Restricting brand-name drugs when a generic version is available**

A "generic" drug works the same as a brand-name drug, but usually costs less. **When a generic version of a brand-name drug is available, our network pharmacies will provide you the generic version.** We usually will not cover the brand-name drug when a generic version is available. However, if your doctor has told us the medical reason that the generic drug will not work for you *OR* has written "No substitutions" on your prescription for a brand-name drug, then we will cover the brand-name drug. (Your share of the cost may be greater for the brand-name drug than for the generic drug.)

---

## Getting plan approval in advance

For certain drugs, you or your doctor need to get approval from the plan before we will agree to cover the drug for you. This is called “**prior authorization.**” Sometimes plan approval is required so we can be sure that your drug is covered by Medicare rules. Sometimes the requirement for getting approval in advance helps guide appropriate use of certain drugs. If you do not get this approval, your drug might not be covered by the plan.

## Trying a different drug first

This requirement encourages you to try safer or more effective drugs before the plan covers another drug. For example, if Drug A and Drug B treat the same medical condition, the plan may require you to try Drug A first. If Drug A does not work for you, the plan will then cover Drug B. This requirement to try a different drug first is called “**Step Therapy.**”

## Quantity limits

For certain drugs, we limit the amount of the drug that you can have. For example, the plan might limit how many refills you can get, or how much of a drug you can get each time you fill your prescription. For example, if it is normally considered safe to take only one pill per day for a certain drug, we may limit coverage for your prescription to no more than one pill per day.

<b>Section 4.3</b>	<b>Do any of these restrictions apply to your drugs?</b>
--------------------	--

The plan's Drug List includes information about the restrictions described above. To find out if any of these restrictions apply to a drug you take or want to take, check the Drug List. For the most up-to-date information, call Member Services (phone numbers are on the front cover) or check our website ([www.vhp-stategroup.com](http://www.vhp-stategroup.com)).

---

## **SECTION 5**      **What if one of your drugs is not covered in the way you would like it to be covered?**

---

<b>Section 5.1</b>	<b>There are things you can do if your drug is not covered in the way you would like it to be covered</b>
--------------------	---

Suppose there is a prescription drug you are currently taking, or one that you and your doctor think you should be taking. We hope that your drug coverage will work well for you, but it's possible that you might have a problem. For example:

- **What if the drug you want to take is not covered by the plan?** For example, the drug might not be covered at all. Or maybe a generic version of the drug is covered but the brand-name version you want to take is not covered.

- **What if the drug is covered, but there are extra rules or restrictions on coverage for that drug?** As explained in Section 4, some of the drugs covered by the plan have extra rules to restrict their use. For example, you might be required to try a different drug first, to see if it will work, before the drug you want to take will be covered for you. Or there might be limits on what amount of the drug (number of pills, etc.) is covered during a particular time period.
- **What if the drug is covered, but it is in a cost-sharing tier that makes your cost sharing more expensive than you think it should be?** The plan puts each covered drug into one of four different cost-sharing tiers. How much you pay for your prescription depends in part on which cost-sharing tier your drug is in.

There are things you can do if your drug is not covered in the way that you would like it to be covered. Your options depend on what type of problem you have:

- If your drug is not on the Drug List or if your drug is restricted, go to Section 5.2 to learn what you can do.
- If your drug is in a cost-sharing tier that makes your cost more expensive than you think it should be, go to Section 5.3 to learn what you can do.

<b>Section 5.2</b>	<b>What can you do if your drug is not on the Drug List or if the drug is restricted in some way?</b>
--------------------	---

If your drug is not on the Drug List or is restricted, here are things you can do:

- You may be able to get a temporary supply of the drug (only members in certain situations can get a temporary supply). This will give you and your doctor time to change to another drug or to file an exception.
- You can change to another drug.
- You can request an exception and ask the plan to cover the drug or remove restrictions from the drug.

### **You may be able to get a temporary supply**

Under certain circumstances, the plan can offer a temporary supply of a drug to you when your drug is not on the Drug List or when it is restricted in some way. Doing this gives you time to talk with your doctor about the change in coverage and figure out what to do.

To be eligible for a temporary supply, you must meet the two requirements below:

#### **1. The change to your drug coverage must be one of the following types of changes:**

- The drug you have been taking is **no longer on the plan's Drug List**.

- -- or -- the drug you have been taking is **now restricted in some way** (Section 4 in this chapter tells about restrictions).

## 2. You must be in one of the situations described below:

- **For those members who were in the plan last year and are not in a long-term care facility:**

We will cover a temporary supply of your drug **one time only during the first 90 days of the calendar year**. This temporary supply will be for a maximum of a *30-day supply*, or less if your prescription is written for fewer days. The prescription must be filled at a network pharmacy.

- **For those members who are new to the plan and are not in a long-term care facility:**

We will cover a temporary supply of your drug **one time only during the first 90 days of your membership** in the plan. This temporary supply will be for a maximum of a *30-day*, or less if your prescription is written for fewer days. The prescription must be filled at a network pharmacy.

- **For those who are a new member and a resident in a long-term care facility:**

We will cover a temporary supply of your drug **during the first 90 days of your membership** in the plan. The first supply will be for a maximum of a *31-day supply*, or less if your prescription is written for fewer days. If needed, we will cover additional refills during your first *90 days* in the plan.

- **For those who have been a member of the plan for more than 90 days and are a resident of a long-term care facility and need a supply right away:**

We will cover one *31-day* supply, or less if your prescription is written for fewer days. This is in addition to the above long-term care transition supply.

- Our plan will cover a temporary 31-day supply of non-formulary drugs (unless the prescription is written for fewer days) for current members with level of care changes.

To ask for a temporary supply, call Member Services (phone numbers are on the front cover).

During the time when you are getting a temporary supply of a drug, you should talk with your doctor to decide what to do when your temporary supply runs out. Perhaps there is a different drug covered by the plan that might work just as well for you. Or you and your doctor can ask the plan to make an exception for you and cover the drug in the way you would like it to be covered. The sections below tell you more about these options.

## You can change to another drug

Start by talking with your doctor. Perhaps there is a different drug covered by the plan that might work just as well for you. You can call Member Services to ask for a list of covered drugs that treat the same medical condition. This list can help your doctor to find a covered drug that might work for you.

### **You can file an exception**

You and your doctor or other prescriber can ask the plan to make an exception for you and cover the drug in the way you would like it to be covered. If your doctor or other prescriber says that you have medical reasons that justify asking us for an exception, your doctor or other prescriber can help you request an exception to the rule. For example, you can ask the plan to cover a drug even though it is not on the plan's Drug List. Or you can ask the plan to make an exception and cover the drug without restrictions.

If you and your doctor or other prescriber want to ask for an exception, Chapter 9, Section 6.2 tells what to do. It explains the procedures and deadlines that have been set by Medicare to make sure your request is handled promptly and fairly.

<b>Section 5.3</b>	<b>What can you do if your drug is in a cost-sharing tier you think is too high?</b>
--------------------	--

If your drug is a cost-sharing tier you think is too high, here are things you can do:

### **You can change to another drug**

Start by talking with your doctor or other prescriber. Perhaps there is a different drug in a lower cost-sharing tier that might work just as well for you. You can call Member Services to ask for a list of covered drugs that treat the same medical condition. This list can help your doctor to find a covered drug that might work for you.

### **You can file an exception**

You and your doctor or other prescriber can ask the plan to make an exception in the cost-sharing tier for the drug so that you pay less for the drug. If your doctor or other prescriber says that you have medical reasons that justify asking us for an exception, your doctor or other prescriber can help you request an exception to the rule.

If you and your doctor or other prescriber want to ask for an exception, Chapter 9, Section 6.2 tells what to do. It explains the procedures and deadlines that have been set by Medicare to make sure your request is handled promptly and fairly.

---

## **SECTION 6      What if your coverage changes for one of your drugs?**

---

<b>Section 6.1      The Drug List can change during the year</b>
--

Most of the changes in drug coverage happen at the beginning of each year (January 1). However, during the year, the plan might make many kinds of changes to the Drug List. For example, the plan might:

- **Add or remove drugs from the Drug List.** New drugs become available, including new generic drugs. Perhaps the government has given approval to a new use for an existing drug. Sometimes, a drug gets recalled and we decide not to cover it. Or we might remove a drug from the list because it has been found to be ineffective.
- **Move a drug to a higher or lower cost-sharing tier.**
- **Add or remove a restriction on coverage for a drug** (for more information about restrictions to coverage, see Section 4 in this chapter).
- **Replace a brand-name drug with a generic drug.**

In almost all cases, we must get approval from Medicare for changes we make to the plan's Drug List.

<b>Section 6.2      What happens if coverage changes for a drug you are taking?</b>
---

### **How will you find out if your drug's coverage has been changed?**

If there is a change to coverage *for a drug you are taking*, the plan will send you a notice to tell you. Normally, **we will let you know at least 60 days ahead of time.**

Once in a while, a drug is **suddenly recalled** because it has been found to be unsafe or for other reasons. If this happens, the plan will immediately remove the drug from the Drug List. We will let you know of this change right away. Your doctor will also know about this change, and can work with you to find another drug for your condition.

### **Do changes to your drug coverage affect you right away?**

If any of the following types of changes affect a drug you are taking, the change will not affect you until January 1 of the next year if you stay in the plan:

- If we move your drug into a higher cost-sharing tier.
- If we put a new restriction on your use of the drug.
- If we remove your drug from the Drug List, but not because of a sudden recall or because a new generic drug has replaced it.

If any of these changes happens for a drug you are taking, then the change will not affect your use or what you pay as your share of the cost until January 1 of the next year. Until that date, you probably will not see any increase in your payments or any added restriction to your use of the drug. However, on January 1 of the next year, the changes will affect you.

In some cases, you will be affected by the coverage change before January 1:

- If a **brand-name drug you are taking is replaced by a new generic drug**, the plan must give you at least 60 days' notice or give you a 60-day refill of your brand-name drug at a network pharmacy.
  - During this 60-day period, you should be working with your doctor to switch to the generic or to a different drug that we cover.
  - Or you and your doctor or other prescriber can ask the plan to make an exception and continue to cover the brand-name drug for you. For information on how to ask for an exception, see Chapter 9 (*What to do if you have a problem or complaint*).
- Again, if a drug is **suddenly recalled** because it has been found to be unsafe or for other reasons, the plan will immediately remove the drug from the Drug List. We will let you know of this change right away.
  - Your doctor will also know about this change, and can work with you to find another drug for your condition.

---

## **SECTION 7      What types of drugs are *not* covered by the plan?**

---

<b>Section 7.1      Types of drugs we do not cover</b>
--

This section tells you what kinds of prescription drugs are “excluded.” This means Medicare does not pay for these drugs.

If you get drugs that are excluded, you must pay for them yourself. We will not pay for the drugs that are listed in this section (unless our plan covers certain excluded drugs). The only exception: If the requested drug is found upon appeal to be a drug that is not excluded under Part D and we should have paid for or covered because of your specific situation. (For information about appealing a decision we have made to not cover a drug, go to Chapter 9, Section 6.5 in this booklet.)

Here are three general rules about drugs that Medicare drug plans will not cover under Part D:

- Our plan's Part D drug coverage cannot cover a drug that would be covered under Medicare Part A or Part B.
- Our plan cannot cover a drug purchased outside the United States and its territories.

- Our plan usually cannot cover off-label use. “Off-label use” is any use of the drug other than those indicated on a drug’s label as approved by the Food and Drug Administration.
  - Generally, coverage for “off-label use” is allowed only when the use is supported by certain reference books. These reference books are the American Hospital Formulary Service Drug Information, the DRUGDEX Information System, and the USPDI or its successor. If the use is not supported by any of these reference books, then our plan cannot cover its “off-label use.”

Also, by law, these categories of drugs are not covered by Medicare drug plans unless we offer enhanced drug coverage, for which you may be charged additional premium:

- Non-prescription drugs (also called over-the-counter drugs)
- Drugs when used to promote fertility
- Drugs when used for the relief of cough or cold symptoms
- Drugs when used for cosmetic purposes or to promote hair growth
- Prescription vitamins and mineral products, except prenatal vitamins and fluoride preparations
- Drugs when used for the treatment of sexual or erectile dysfunction, such as Viagra, Cialis, Levitra, and Caverject
- Drugs when used for treatment of anorexia, weight loss, or weight gain
- Outpatient drugs for which the manufacturer seeks to require that associated tests or monitoring services be purchased exclusively from the manufacturer as a condition of sale
- Barbiturates and Benzodiazepines

**If you receive Extra Help paying for your drugs**, your state Medicaid program may cover some prescription drugs not normally covered in a Medicare drug plan. Please contact your state Medicaid program to determine what drug coverage may be available to you. (You can find phone numbers and contact information for Medicaid in Chapter 2, Section 6.)

---

## **SECTION 8      Show your plan membership card when you fill a prescription**

---

<b>Section 8.1      Show your membership card</b>
---

To fill your prescription, show your plan membership card at the network pharmacy you choose. When you show your plan membership card, the network pharmacy will automatically bill the plan for *our* share of your covered prescription drug cost. You will need to pay the pharmacy *your* share of the cost when you pick up your prescription.

---

<b>Section 8.2</b>	<b>What if you do not have your membership card with you?</b>
--------------------	---

If you do not have your plan membership card with you when you fill your prescription, ask the pharmacy to call the plan to get the necessary information.

If the pharmacy is not able to get the necessary information, **you may have to pay the full cost of the prescription when you pick it up.** (You can then **ask us to reimburse you** for our share. See Chapter 7, Section 2.1 for information about how to ask the plan for reimbursement.)

---

## **SECTION 9**      **Part D drug coverage in special situations**

---

<b>Section 9.1</b>	<b>What if you are in a hospital or a skilled nursing facility for a stay that is covered by the plan?</b>
--------------------	--

If you are admitted to a hospital or to a skilled nursing facility for a stay covered by the plan, we will generally cover the cost of your prescription drugs during your stay. Once you leave the hospital or skilled nursing facility, the plan will cover your drugs as long as the drugs meet all of our rules for coverage. See the previous parts of this section that tell about the rules for getting drug coverage. Chapter 6 (*What you pay for your Part D prescription drugs*) gives more information about drug coverage and what you pay.

**Please Note:** When you enter, live in, or leave a skilled nursing facility, you are entitled to a special enrollment period. During this time period, you can switch plans or change your coverage at any time. (Chapter 10, *Ending your membership in the plan*, tells you can leave our plan and join a different Medicare plan.)

<b>Section 9.2</b>	<b>What if you are a resident in a long-term care facility?</b>
--------------------	---

Usually, a long-term care facility (such as a nursing home) has its own pharmacy, or a pharmacy that supplies drugs for all of its residents. If you are a resident of a long-term care facility, you may get your prescription drugs through the facility's pharmacy as long as it is part of our network.

Check your *Pharmacy Directory* to find out if your long-term care facility's pharmacy is part of our network. If it is not, or if you need more information, please contact Member Services.

### **What if you are a resident in a long-term care facility and become a new member of the plan?**

If you need a drug that is not on our Drug List or is restricted in some way, the plan will cover a **temporary supply** of your drug during the first *90 days* of your membership. The first supply will be for a maximum of *a 31-day supply*, or less if your prescription is written for fewer days. If needed, we will cover additional refills during your first *90 days* in the plan.

If you have been a member of the plan for more than *90 days* and need a drug that is not on our Drug List or if the plan has any restriction on the drug's coverage, we will cover one *31-day* supply, or less if your prescription is written for fewer days.

During the time when you are getting a temporary supply of a drug, you should talk with your doctor or other prescriber to decide what to do when your temporary supply runs out. Perhaps there is a different drug covered by the plan that might work just as well for you. Or you and your doctor can ask the plan to make an exception for you and cover the drug in the way you would like it to be covered. If you and your doctor want to ask for an exception, Chapter 9, Section 6.2 tells what to do.

<b>Section 9.3</b>	<b>What if you are also getting drug coverage from an employer or retiree group plan?</b>
--------------------	---

Do you currently have other prescription drug coverage through your (or your spouse's) employer or retiree group? If so, please contact **that group's benefits administrator**. He or she can help you determine how your current prescription drug coverage will work with our plan.

In general, if you are currently employed, the prescription drug coverage you get from us will be *secondary* to your employer or retiree group coverage. That means your group coverage would pay first.

**Special note about 'creditable coverage':**

Each year your employer or retiree group should send you a notice by November 15 that tells if your prescription drug coverage for the next calendar year is "creditable" and the choices you have for drug coverage.

If the coverage from the group plan is "**creditable**," it means that it has drug coverage that pays, on average, at least as much as Medicare's standard drug coverage.

**Keep these notices about creditable coverage**, because you may need them later. If you enroll in a Medicare plan that includes Part D drug coverage, you may need these notices to show that you have maintained creditable coverage. If you did not get a notice about creditable coverage from your employer or retiree group plan, you can get a copy from your employer or retiree plan's benefits administrator or the employer or union.

---

---

## **SECTION 10      Programs on drug safety and managing medications**

---

<b>Section 10.1      Programs to help members use drugs safely</b>
--

We conduct drug use reviews for our members to help make sure that they are getting safe and appropriate care. These reviews are especially important for members who have more than one provider who prescribes their drugs.

We do a review each time you fill a prescription. We also review our records on a regular basis. During these reviews, we look for potential problems such as:

- Possible medication errors.
- Drugs that may not be necessary because you are taking another drug to treat the same medical condition.
- Drugs that may not be safe or appropriate because of your age or gender.
- Certain combinations of drugs that could harm you if taken at the same time.
- Prescriptions written for drugs that have ingredients you are allergic to.
- Possible errors in the amount (dosage) of a drug you are taking.

If we see a possible problem in your use of medications, we will work with your doctor to correct the problem.

<b>Section 10.2      Programs to help members manage their medications</b>
--

We have programs that can help our members with special situations. For example, some members have several complex medical conditions or they may need to take many drugs at the same time, or they could have very high drug costs.

These programs are voluntary and free to members. A team of pharmacists and doctors developed the programs for us. The programs can help make sure that our members are using the drugs that work best to treat their medical conditions and help us identify possible medication errors.

If we have a program that fits your needs, we will automatically enroll you in the program and send you information. If you decide not to participate, please notify us and we will withdraw your participation in the program.

---

## **Chapter 6. What you pay for your Part D prescription drugs**

<b>SECTION 1</b>	<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>78</b>
Section 1.1	Use this chapter together with other materials that explain your drug coverage .....	78
<b>SECTION 2</b>	<b>What you pay for a drug depends on which “drug payment stage” you are in when you get the drug .....</b>	<b>79</b>
Section 2.1	What are the three drug payment stages? .....	79
<b>SECTION 3</b>	<b>We send you reports that explain payments for your drugs and which payment stage you are in.....</b>	<b>79</b>
Section 3.1	We send you a monthly report called the “Explanation of Benefits” .....	79
Section 3.2	Help us keep our information about your drug payments up to date.....	80
<b>SECTION 4</b>	<b>During the Initial Coverage Stage, the plan pays its share of your drug costs and you pay your share .....</b>	<b>81</b>
Section 4.1	What you pay for a drug depends on the drug and where you fill your prescription .....	81
Section 4.2	A table that shows your costs for a one-month (31-day) supply of a drug .....	81
Section 4.3	A table that shows your costs for a long-term (90-day) supply of a drug .....	82
Section 4.4	You stay in the Initial Coverage Stage until your total drug costs for the year reach \$2,840 .....	83
<b>SECTION 5</b>	<b>During the Catastrophic Coverage Stage, the plan pays most of the cost for your drugs.....</b>	<b>84</b>
Section 5.1	Once you are in the Catastrophic Coverage Stage, you will stay in this stage for the rest of the year.....	84
<b>SECTION 6</b>	<b>What you pay for vaccinations depends on how and where you get them.....</b>	<b>84</b>

---

Section 6.1	Our plan has separate coverage for the vaccine medication itself and for the cost of giving you the vaccination shot.....	84
Section 6.2	You may want to call us at Member Services before you get a vaccination .....	86
<b>SECTION 7</b>	<b>Do you have to pay the Part D “late enrollment penalty”? .....</b>	<b>86</b>
Section 7.1	What is the Part D “late enrollment penalty”?.....	86
Section 7.2	How much is the Part D late enrollment penalty? .....	87
Section 7.3	In some situations, you can enroll late and not have to pay the penalty.....	87
Section 7.4	What can you do if you disagree about your late enrollment penalty?.....	88



### **Did you know there are programs to help people pay for their drugs?**

There are programs to help people with limited resources pay for their drugs. These include “Extra Help” and State Pharmaceutical Assistance Programs. For more information, see Chapter 2, Section 7.

### **Are you currently getting help to pay for your drugs?**

If you are in a program that helps pay for your drugs, **some information in this *Evidence of Coverage* may not apply to you.** We have included a separate insert, called the “Evidence of Coverage Rider for People Who Get Extra Help Paying for Prescription Drugs” (LIS Rider), that tells you about your drug coverage. If you do not have this insert, please call Member Services and ask for the “Evidence of Coverage Rider for People Who Get Extra Help Paying for Prescription Drugs” (LIS Rider). Phone numbers for Member Services are on the front cover.

---

## **SECTION 1 Introduction**

---

<b>Section 1.1 Use this chapter together with other materials that explain your drug coverage</b>
---

This chapter focuses on what you pay for your Part D prescription drugs. To keep things simple, we use “drug” in this chapter to mean a Part D prescription drug. As explained in Chapter 5, some drugs are covered under Original Medicare or are excluded by law.

To understand the payment information we give you in this chapter, you need to know the basics of what drugs are covered, where to fill your prescriptions, and what rules to follow when you get your covered drugs. Here are materials that explain these basics:

- **The plan’s *List of Covered Drugs (Formulary)*.** To keep things simple, we call this the “Drug List.”
  - This Drug List tells which drugs are covered for you.
  - It also tells which of the four “cost-sharing tiers” the drug is in and whether there are any restrictions on your coverage for the drug.
  - If you need a copy of the Drug List, call Member Services (phone numbers are on the cover of this booklet). You can also find the Drug List on our website at [www.vhp-stategroup.com](http://www.vhp-stategroup.com). The Drug List on the website is always the most current.
- **Chapter 5 of this booklet.** Chapter 5 gives the details about your prescription drug coverage, including rules you need to follow when you get your covered drugs. Chapter 5 also tells which types of prescription drugs are not covered by our plan.

- **The plan’s *Pharmacy Directory*.** In most situations you must use a network pharmacy to get your covered drugs (see Chapter 5 for the details). The *Pharmacy Directory* has a list of pharmacies in the plan’s network and it tells how you can use the plan’s mail-order service to get certain types of drugs. It also explains how you can get a long-term supply of a drug (such as filling a prescription for a three months’ supply).

---

## **SECTION 2      What you pay for a drug depends on which “drug payment stage” you are in when you get the drug**

---

<b>Section 2.1</b>	<b>What are the two drug payment stages?</b>
--------------------	--

As shown in the table below, there are two “drug payment stages” for your prescription drug coverage. How much you pay for a drug depends on which of these stages you are in at the time you get a prescription filled or refilled. Keep in mind you are always responsible for the plan’s monthly premium regardless of the drug payment stage.

<b>Stage 1</b> <i>Initial Coverage Stage</i>	<b>Stage 2</b> <i>Catastrophic Coverage Stage</i>
<p>The plan pays its share of the cost of your drugs and <b>you pay your share of the cost.</b></p> <p>You stay in this stage until your payments for the year plus the plan’s payments total \$4,550.</p> <p>(Details are in Section 4 of this chapter.)</p>	<p>Once you have paid enough (\$4,550) for your drugs to move on to this last payment stage, <b>the plan will pay most of the cost</b> of your drugs for the rest of the year.</p> <p>(Details are in Section 5 of this chapter.)</p>

---

## **SECTION 3      We send you reports that explain payments for your drugs and which payment stage you are in**

---

<b>Section 3.1</b>	<b>We send you a monthly report called the “Explanation of Benefits”</b>
--------------------	--

Our plan keeps track of the costs of your prescription drugs and the payments you have made when you get your prescriptions filled or refilled at the pharmacy. This way, we can tell you when you have moved from one drug payment stage to the next. In particular, there are two types of costs we keep track of:

- We keep track of how much you have paid. This is called your “**out-of-pocket**” cost.

- We keep track of your “**total drug costs.**” This is the amount you pay out-of-pocket or others pay on your behalf plus the amount paid by the plan.

Our plan will prepare a written report called the *Explanation of Benefits* (it is sometimes called the “EOB”) when you have had one or more prescriptions filled. It includes:

- **Information for that month.** This report gives the payment details about the prescriptions you have filled during the previous month. It shows the total drug costs, what the plan paid, and what you and others on your behalf paid.
- **Totals for the year since January 1.** This is called “year-to-date” information. It shows you the total drug costs and total payments for your drugs since the year began.

<b>Section 3.2</b>	<b>Help us keep our information about your drug payments up to date</b>
--------------------	---

To keep track of your drug costs and the payments you make for drugs, we use records we get from pharmacies. Here is how you can help us keep your information correct and up to date:

- **Show your membership card when you get a prescription filled.** To make sure we know about the prescriptions you are filling and what you are paying, show your plan membership card every time you get a prescription filled.
- **Make sure we have the information we need.** There are times you may pay for prescription drugs when we will not automatically get the information we need. To help us keep track of your out-of-pocket costs, you may give us copies of receipts for drugs that you have purchased. (If you are billed for a covered drug, you can ask our plan to pay our share of the cost. For instructions on how to do this, go to Chapter 7, Section 2 of this booklet.) Here are some types of situations when you may want to give us copies of your drug receipts to be sure we have a complete record of what you have spent for your drugs:
  - When you purchase a covered drug at a network pharmacy at a special price or using a discount card that is not part of our plan’s benefit.
  - When you made a copayment for drugs that are provided under a drug manufacturer patient assistance program.
  - Any time you have purchased covered drugs at out-of-network pharmacies or other times you have paid the full price for a covered drug under special circumstances.
- **Send us information about the payments others have made for you.** Payments made by certain other individuals and organizations also count toward your out-of-pocket costs and help qualify you for catastrophic coverage. For example, payments made by a State Pharmaceutical Assistance Program, an AIDS drug assistance program, the Indian Health Service, and most charities count toward your out-of-pocket costs. You should keep a record of these payments and send them to us so we can track your costs.

- **Check the written report we send you.** When you receive an *Explanation of Benefits* in the mail, please look it over to be sure the information is complete and correct. If you think something is missing from the report, or you have any questions, please call us at Member Services (phone numbers are on the cover of this booklet). Be sure to keep these reports. They are an important record of your drug expenses.

---

## **SECTION 4      During the Initial Coverage Stage, the plan pays its share of your drug costs and you pay your share**

---

<b>Section 4.1      What you pay for a drug depends on the drug and where you fill your prescription</b>
--

During the Initial Coverage Stage, the plan pays its share of the cost of your covered prescription drugs, and you pay your share. Your share of the cost will vary depending on the drug and where you fill your prescription.

### **The plan has four cost-sharing tiers**

Every drug on the plan's Drug List is in one of four cost-sharing tiers. In general, the higher the cost-sharing tier number, the higher your cost for the drug:

- Tier 1 includes generic drugs and is the lowest tier.
- Tier 2 includes preferred drugs.
- Tier 3 includes non-preferred drugs.
- Tier 4 includes non-preferred drugs and is the highest tier.

To find out which cost-sharing tier your drug is in, look it up in the plan's *Drug List*.

### **Your pharmacy choices**

How much you pay for a drug depends on whether you get the drug from:

- A retail pharmacy that is in our plan's network
- A pharmacy that is not in the plan's network
- The plan's mail-order pharmacy

For more information about these pharmacy choices and filling your prescriptions, see Chapter 5 in this booklet and the plan's *Pharmacy Directory*.

<b>Section 4.2      A table that shows your costs for a one-month (31-day) supply of a drug</b>
---

During the Initial Coverage Stage, your share of the cost of a covered drug will be either a copayment or coinsurance.

- **“Copayment”** means that you pay a fixed amount each time you fill a prescription.
- **“Coinsurance”** means that you pay a percent of the total cost of the drug each time you fill a prescription.

As shown in the table below, the amount of the copayment or coinsurance depends on which cost-sharing tier your drug is in.

**Your share of the cost when you get a one-month (31-day) supply (or less) of a covered Part D prescription drug from:**

	<b>Network pharmacy</b>	<b>The plan’s mail-order service</b>	<b>Network long-term care pharmacy</b>	<b>Out-of-network pharmacy</b> (coverage is limited to certain situations; see Chapter 5 for details)
<b>Tier 1</b> (generic drugs)	\$0 copay	\$0 copay	\$0 copay	\$0 copay plus cost differential*
<b>Tier 2</b> (preferred drugs)	\$20 copay	\$60 copay	\$20 copay	\$20 copay plus cost differential*
<b>Tier 3</b> (non-preferred drugs)	\$40 copay	\$120 copay	\$40 copay	\$40 copay plus cost differential*
<b>Tier 4</b> (specialty drugs)	25% coinsurance	25% coinsurance	25% coinsurance	25% coinsurance plus cost differential*

**\*Cost differential = difference between billed amount and contracted rate.**

**Section 4.3 A table that shows your costs for a long-term (90-day) supply of a drug**

For some drugs, you can get a long-term supply (also called an “extended supply”) when you fill your prescription. This can be up to a 90-day supply. (For details on where and how to get a long-term supply of a drug, see Chapter 5.)

The table below shows what you pay when you get a long-term 90-day supply of a drug.

**Your share of the cost when you get a long-term (90-day) supply of a covered Part D prescription drug from:**

	<b>Network pharmacy</b>	<b>The plan's mail-order service</b>
<b>Tier 1</b> (generic drugs)	\$0 copay	\$0 copay
<b>Tier 2</b> (preferred drugs)	\$60 copay	\$60 copay
<b>Tier 3</b> (non-preferred drugs)	\$120 copay	\$120 copay
<b>Tier 4</b> (specialty drugs)	25% coinsurance	25% coinsurance

<b>Section 4.4</b>	<b>You stay in the Initial Coverage Stage until your total drug costs for the year reach \$4,550</b>
--------------------	--

You stay in the Initial Coverage Stage until the total amount for the prescription drugs you have filled and refilled reaches the **\$4,550 limit for the Initial Coverage Stage**.

Your total drug cost is based on adding together what you have paid and what the plan has paid:

- **What you have paid** for all the covered drugs you have gotten since you started with your first drug purchase of the year. This includes:
  - The total you paid as your share of the cost for your drugs during the Initial Coverage Stage.
- **What the plan has paid** as its share of the cost for your drugs during the Initial Coverage Stage.

The *Explanation of Benefits* that we send to you will help you keep track of how much you and the plan have spent for your drugs during the year. Many people do not reach the \$4,550 limit in a year.

We will let you know if you reach this \$4,550 amount. If you do reach this amount, you will leave the Initial Coverage Stage and move on to the Coverage Gap Stage.

---

## **SECTION 5      During the Catastrophic Coverage Stage, the plan pays most of the cost for your drugs**

---

<b>Section 5.1      Once you are in the Catastrophic Coverage Stage, you will stay in this stage for the rest of the year</b>
---

You qualify for the Catastrophic Coverage Stage when your out-of-pocket costs have reached the \$4,550 limit for the calendar year. Once you are in the Catastrophic Coverage Stage, you will stay in this payment stage until the end of the calendar year.

During this stage, the plan will pay most of the cost for your drugs.

- **Your share** of the cost for a covered drug will be either coinsurance or a copayment, whichever is the *larger* amount:
  - *–either–* coinsurance of 5% of the cost of the drug
  - *–or–* \$2.50 copayment for a generic drug or a drug that is treated like a generic. Or a \$6.30 copayment for all other drugs.
- **Our plan pays the rest** of the cost.

---

## **SECTION 6      What you pay for vaccinations depends on how and where you get them**

---

<b>Section 6.1      Our plan has separate coverage for the vaccine medication itself and for the cost of giving you the vaccination shot</b>
--

Our plan provides coverage of a number of vaccines. There are two parts to our coverage of vaccinations:

- The first part of coverage is the cost of **the vaccine medication itself**. The vaccine is a prescription medication.
- The second part of coverage is for the cost of **giving you the vaccination shot**. (This is sometimes called the “administration” of the vaccine.)

### **What do you pay for a vaccination?**

What you pay for a vaccination depends on three things:

1. **The type of vaccine** (what you are being vaccinated for).

- Some vaccines are considered medical benefits. You can find out about your coverage of these vaccines by going to Chapter 4, *Medical Benefits Chart (what is covered and what you pay)*.
- Other vaccines are considered Part D drugs. You can find these vaccines listed in the plan's *List of Covered Drugs*.

**2. Where you get the vaccine medication.**

**3. Who gives you the vaccination shot.**

What you pay at the time you get the vaccination can vary depending on the circumstances. For example:

- Sometimes when you get your vaccination shot, you will have to pay the entire cost for both the vaccine medication and for getting the vaccination shot. You can ask our plan to pay you back for our share of the cost.
- Other times, when you get the vaccine medication or the vaccination shot, you will pay only your share of the cost.

To show how this works, here are three common ways you might get a vaccination shot. Remember you are responsible for all of the costs associated with vaccines (including their administration) during the Coverage Gap Stage of your benefit.

*Situation 1:* You buy the vaccine at the pharmacy and you get your vaccination shot at the network pharmacy. (Whether you have this choice depends on where you live. Some states do not allow pharmacies to administer a vaccination.)

- You will have to pay the pharmacy the amount of your coinsurance *OR* copayment for the vaccine itself.
- Our plan will pay for the cost of giving you the vaccination shot.

*Situation 2:* You get the vaccination at your doctor's office.

- When you get the vaccination, you will pay for the entire cost of the vaccine and its administration.
- You can then ask our plan to pay our share of the cost by using the procedures that are described in Chapter 7 of this booklet (*Asking the plan to pay its share of a bill you have received for medical services or drugs*).
- You will be reimbursed the amount you paid less your normal coinsurance *OR* copayment for the vaccine (including administration) less any difference between the amount the doctor charges and what we normally pay. (If you are in Extra Help, we will reimburse you for this difference.)

*Situation 3:* You buy the vaccine at your pharmacy, and then take it to your doctor's office where they give you the vaccination shot.

- You will have to pay the pharmacy the amount of your coinsurance *OR* copayment for the vaccine itself.
- When your doctor gives you the vaccination shot, you will pay the entire cost for this service. You can then ask our plan to pay our share of the cost by using the procedures described in Chapter 7 of this booklet.
- You will be reimbursed the amount charged by the doctor for administering the vaccine less any difference between the amount the doctor charges and what we normally pay. (If you are in Extra Help, we will reimburse you for this difference.)

<b>Section 6.2</b>	<b>You may want to call us at Member Services before you get a vaccination</b>
--------------------	--

The rules for coverage of vaccinations are complicated. We are here to help. We recommend that you call us first at Member Services whenever you are planning to get a vaccination (phone numbers are on the cover of this booklet).

- We can tell you about how your vaccination is covered by our plan and explain your share of the cost.
- We can tell you how to keep your own cost down by using providers and pharmacies in our network.
- If you are not able to use a network provider and pharmacy, we can tell you what you need to do to get payment from us for our share of the cost.

---

## **SECTION 7      Do you have to pay the Part D “late enrollment penalty”?**

---

<b>Section 7.1</b>	<b>What is the Part D “late enrollment penalty”?</b>
--------------------	--

You may pay a financial penalty if you did not enroll in a plan offering Medicare Part D drug coverage when you first became eligible for this drug coverage or you experienced a continuous period of 63 days or more when you did not keep your prescription drug coverage. The amount of the penalty depends on how long you waited before you enrolled in drug coverage after you became eligible or how many months after 63 days you went without drug coverage.

The penalty is added to your monthly premium. (Members who choose to pay their premium every three months will have the penalty added to their three-month premium.) When you first enroll in *Vantage Medicare Advantage*, we let you know the amount of the penalty.

Your late enrollment penalty is considered to be part of your plan premium.

### **Section 7.2      How much is the Part D late enrollment penalty?**

Medicare determines the amount of the penalty. Here is how it works:

- First count the number of full months that you delayed enrolling in a Medicare drug plan, after you were eligible to enroll. Or count the number of full months in which you did not have credible prescription drug coverage, if the break in coverage was 63 days or more. The penalty is 1% for every month that you did not have creditable coverage. For our example, let's say it is 14 months without coverage, which will be 14%.
- Then Medicare determines the amount of the average monthly premium for Medicare drug plans in the nation from the previous year. For 2011, this average premium amount is \$32.34.
- You multiply together the two numbers to get your monthly penalty and round it to the nearest 10 cents. In the example here it would be 14% times \$32.34, which equals \$4.53, which rounds to \$4.50. This amount would be added **to the monthly premium for someone with a late enrollment penalty.**

There are three important things to note about this monthly premium penalty:

- First, **the penalty may change each year**, because the average monthly premium can change each year. If the national average premium (as determined by Medicare) increases, your penalty will increase.
- Second, **you will continue to pay a penalty** every month for as long as you are enrolled in a plan that has Medicare Part D drug benefits.
- Third, if you are under 65 and currently receiving Medicare benefits, the late enrollment penalty will reset when you turn 65. After age 65, your late enrollment penalty will be based only on the months that you do not have coverage after your initial enrollment period for Medicare.

If you are eligible for Medicare and are under 65, any late enrollment penalty you are paying will be eliminated when you attain age 65. After age 65, your late enrollment penalty is based only on the months you do not have coverage after your Age 65 Initial Enrollment Period.

### **Section 7.3      In some situations, you can enroll late and not have to pay the penalty**

Even if you have delayed enrolling in a plan offering Medicare Part D coverage when you were first eligible, sometimes you do not have to pay the late enrollment penalty.

**You will not have to pay a premium penalty for late enrollment if you are in any of these situations:**

- You already have prescription drug coverage at least as good as Medicare’s standard drug coverage. Medicare calls this “**creditable drug coverage.**” Creditable coverage could include drug coverage from a former employer or union, TRICARE, or the Department of Veterans Affairs. Speak with your insurer or your human resources department to find out if your current drug coverage is as at least as good as Medicare’s.
- If you were without creditable coverage, you can avoid paying the late enrollment penalty if you were without it for less than 63 days in a row.
- If you did not receive enough information to know whether or not your previous drug coverage was creditable.
- You lived in an area affected by Hurricane Katrina at the time of the hurricane (August 2005) – *and* – you signed up for a Medicare prescription drug plan by December 31, 2006 – *and* – you have stayed in a Medicare prescription drug plan.
- You are receiving “Extra Help” from Medicare.

<b>Section 7.4</b>	<b>What can you do if you disagree about your late enrollment penalty?</b>
--------------------	--

If you disagree about your late enrollment penalty, you can ask us to review the decision about your late enrollment penalty. Call Member Services at the number on the front of this booklet to find out more about how to do this.

**Chapter 7. Asking the plan to pay its share of a bill you have received for covered services or drugs**

<b>SECTION 1</b>	<b>Situations in which you should ask our plan to pay our share of the cost of your covered services or drugs .....</b>	<b>90</b>
Section 1.1	If you pay our plan’s share of the cost of your covered services or drugs, or if you receive a bill, you can ask us for payment .....	90
<b>SECTION 2</b>	<b>How to ask us to pay you back or to pay a bill you have received .....</b>	<b>92</b>
Section 2.1	How and where to send us your request for payment.....	92
<b>SECTION 3</b>	<b>We will consider your request for payment and say yes or no.....</b>	<b>92</b>
Section 3.1	We check to see whether we should cover the service or drug and how much we owe .....	92
Section 3.2	If we tell you that we will not pay for the medical care or drug, you can make an appeal .....	93
<b>SECTION 4</b>	<b>Other situations in which you should save your receipts and send them to the plan .....</b>	<b>93</b>
Section 4.1	In some cases, you should send your receipts to the plan to help us track your out-of-pocket drug costs .....	93

---

**SECTION 1**      **Situations in which you should ask our plan to pay our share of the cost of your covered services or drugs**

---

<b>Section 1.1</b>	<b>If you pay our plan's share of the cost of your covered services or drugs, or if you receive a bill, you can ask us for payment</b>
--------------------	--

Sometimes when you get medical care or a prescription drug, you may need to pay the full cost right away. Other times, you may find that you have paid more than you expected under the coverage rules of the plan. In either case, you can ask our plan to pay you back (paying you back is often called “reimbursing” you). It is your right to be paid back by our plan whenever you have paid more than your share of the cost for medical services or drugs that are covered by our plan.

There may also be times when you get a bill from a provider for the full cost of medical care you have received. In many cases, you should send this bill to us instead of paying it. We will look at the bill and decide whether the services should be covered. If we decide they should be covered, we will pay the provider directly.

Here are examples of situations in which you may need to ask our plan to pay you back or to pay a bill you have received.

**1. When you have received emergency or urgently needed medical care from a provider who is not in our plan's network**

You can receive emergency services from any provider, whether or not the provider is a part of our network. When you receive emergency or urgently needed care from a provider who is not part of our network, you are only responsible for paying your share of the cost, not for the entire cost. You should ask the provider to bill the plan for our share of the cost.

- If you pay the entire amount yourself at the time you receive the care, you need to ask us to pay you back for our share of the cost. Send us the bill, along with documentation of any payments you have made.
- At times you may get a bill from the provider asking for payment that you think you do not owe. Send us this bill, along with documentation of any payments you have already made.
  - If the provider is owed anything, we will pay the provider directly.
  - If you have already paid more than your share of the cost of the service, we will determine how much you owed and pay you back for our share of the cost.

## **2. When a network provider sends you a bill you think you should not pay**

Network providers should always bill the plan directly, and ask you only for your share of the cost. But sometimes they make mistakes, and ask you to pay more than your share.

- Whenever you get a bill from a network provider that you think is more than you should pay, send us the bill. We will contact the provider directly and resolve the billing problem.
- If you have already paid a bill to a network provider, but you feel that you paid too much, send us the bill along with documentation of any payment you have made and ask us to pay you back the difference between the amount you paid and the amount you owed under the plan.

## **3. When you use an out-of-network pharmacy to get a prescription filled**

If you go to an out-of-network pharmacy and try to use your membership card to fill a prescription, the pharmacy may not be able to submit the claim directly to us. When that happens, you will have to pay the full cost of your prescription.

- Save your receipt and send a copy to us when you ask us to pay you back for our share of the cost.

## **4. When you pay the full cost for a prescription because you do not have your plan membership card with you**

If you do not have your plan membership card with you, you can ask the pharmacy to call the plan or to look up your plan enrollment information. However, if the pharmacy cannot get the enrollment information they need right away, you may need to pay the full cost of the prescription yourself.

- Save your receipt and send a copy to us when you ask us to pay you back for our share of the cost.

## **5. When you pay the full cost for a prescription in other situations**

You may pay the full cost of the prescription because you find that the drug is not covered for some reason.

- For example, the drug may not be on the plan's *List of Covered Drugs (Formulary)*; or it could have a requirement or restriction that you did not know about or do not think should apply to you. If you decide to get the drug immediately, you may need to pay the full cost for it.
- Save your receipt and send a copy to us when you ask us to pay you back. In some situations, we may need to get more information from your doctor in order to pay you back for our share of the cost.

All of the examples above are types of coverage decisions. This means that if we deny your request for payment, you can appeal our decision. Chapter 9 of this booklet (*What to do if you have a problem or complaint (coverage decisions, appeals, complaints)*) has information about how to make an appeal.

---

## **SECTION 2      How to ask us to pay you back or to pay a bill you have received**

---

<b>Section 2.1      How and where to send us your request for payment</b>
---

Send us your request for payment, along with your bill and documentation of any payment you have made. It is a good idea to make a copy of your bill and receipts for your records.

To make sure you are giving us all the information we need to make a decision, you can fill out our claim form to make your request for payment.

- You do not have to use the form, but it is helpful for our plan to process the information faster.
- Either download a copy of the form from our website ([www.vhp-medicare.com](http://www.vhp-medicare.com)) or call Member Services and ask for the form. The phone numbers for Member Services are on the cover of this booklet.

Mail your request for payment together with any bills or receipts to us at this address:

130 DeSiard Street, Suite 300, Monroe, LA 71201

Please be sure to contact Member Services if you have any questions. If you do not know what you owe, or you receive bills and you do not know what to do about those bills, we can help. You can also call if you want to give us more information about a request for payment you have already sent to us.

---

## **SECTION 3      We will consider your request for payment and say yes or no**

---

<b>Section 3.1      We check to see whether we should cover the service or drug and how much we owe</b>
---

When we receive your request for payment, we will let you know if we need any additional information from you. Otherwise, we will consider your request and decide whether to pay it and how much we owe.

- If we decide that the medical care or drug is covered and you followed all the rules for getting the care or drug, we will pay for our share of the cost. If you have already paid for

the service or drug, we will mail your reimbursement of our share of the cost to you. If you have not paid for the service or drug yet, we will mail the payment directly to the provider. (Chapter 3 explains the rules you need to follow for getting your medical services. Chapter 5 explains the rules you need to follow for getting your Part D prescription drugs.)

- If we decide that the medical care or drug is *not* covered, or you did *not* follow all the rules, we will not pay for our share of the cost. Instead, we will send you a letter that explains the reasons why we are not sending the payment you have requested and your rights to appeal that decision.

<b>Section 3.2</b>	<b>If we tell you that we will not pay for the medical care or drug, you can make an appeal</b>
--------------------	---

If you think we have made a mistake in turning you down your request for payment, you can make an appeal. If you make an appeal, it means you are asking us to change the decision we made when we turned down your request for payment.

For the details on how to make this appeal, go to Chapter 9 of this booklet (*What to do if you have a problem or complaint (coverage decisions, appeals, complaints)*). The appeals process is a legal process with detailed procedures and important deadlines. If making an appeal is new to you, you will find it helpful to start by reading Section 4 of Chapter 9. Section 4 is an introductory section that explains the process for coverage decisions and appeals and gives definitions of terms such as “appeal.” Then after you have read Section 4, you can go to the section in Chapter 9 that tells what to do for your situation:

- If you want to make an appeal about getting paid back for a medical service, go to Section 5.4 in Chapter 9.
- If you want to make an appeal about getting paid back for a drug, go to Section 6.6 of Chapter 9.

---

<b>SECTION 4</b>	<b>Other situations in which you should save your receipts and send them to the plan</b>
------------------	--

---

<b>Section 4.1</b>	<b>In some cases, you should send your receipts to the plan to help us track your out-of-pocket drug costs</b>
--------------------	--

There are some situations when you should let us know about payments you have made for your drugs. In these cases, you are not asking us for payment. Instead, you are telling us about your payments so that we can calculate your out-of-pocket costs correctly. This may help you to qualify for the Catastrophic Coverage Stage more quickly.

Here are two situations when you should send us receipts to let us know about payments you have made for your drugs:

## 1. When you buy the drug for a price that is lower than the plan's price

Sometimes when you are in the Coverage Gap Stage you can buy your drug **at a network pharmacy** for a price that is lower than the plan's price.

- For example, a pharmacy might offer a special price on the drug. Or you may have a discount card that is outside the plan's benefit that offers a lower price.
- Unless special conditions apply, you must use a network pharmacy in these situations and your drug must be on our Drug List.
- Save your receipt and send a copy to us so that we can have your out-of-pocket expenses count toward qualifying you for the Catastrophic Coverage Stage.
- **Please note:** If you are in the Coverage Gap Stage, the plan will not pay for any share of these drug costs. But sending the receipt allows us to calculate your out-of-pocket costs correctly and may help you qualify for the Catastrophic Coverage Stage more quickly.

## 2. When you get a drug through a patient assistance program offered by a drug manufacturer

Some members are enrolled in a patient assistance program offered by a drug manufacturer that is outside the plan benefits. If you get any drugs through a program offered by a drug manufacturer, you may pay a copayment to the patient assistance program.

- Save your receipt and send a copy to us so that we can have your out-of-pocket expenses count toward qualifying you for the Catastrophic Coverage Stage.
- **Please note:** Because you are getting your drug through the patient assistance program and not through the plan's benefits, the plan will not pay for any share of these drug costs. But sending the receipt allows us to calculate your out-of-pocket costs correctly and may help you qualify for the Catastrophic Coverage Stage more quickly.

Since you are not asking for payment in the two cases described above, these situations are not considered coverage decisions. Therefore, you cannot make an appeal if you disagree with our decision.

---

## **Chapter 8. Your rights and responsibilities**

<b>SECTION 1</b>	<b>Our plan must honor your rights as a member of the plan .....</b>	<b>96</b>
Section 1.1	We must provide information in a way that works for you (in large print).....	96
Section 1.2	We must treat you with fairness and respect at all times .....	96
Section 1.3	We must ensure that you get timely access to your covered services and drugs.....	96
Section 1.4	We must protect the privacy of your personal health information .....	97
Section 1.5	We must give you information about the plan, its network of providers, and your covered services.....	103
Section 1.6	We must support your right to make decisions about your care.....	105
Section 1.7	You have the right to make complaints and to ask us to reconsider decisions we have made.....	106
Section 1.8	What can you do if you think you are being treated unfairly or your rights are not being respected?.....	107
Section 1.9	How to get more information about your rights .....	107
<b>SECTION 2</b>	<b>You have some responsibilities as a member of the plan.....</b>	<b>108</b>
Section 2.1	What are your responsibilities?.....	108

---

## **SECTION 1      Our plan must honor your rights as a member of the plan**

---

<b>Section 1.1      We must provide information in a way that works for you (in large print)</b>
--

To get information from us in a way that works for you, please call Member Services (phone numbers are on the front cover).

Our plan has people and translation services available to answer questions from non-English speaking members. We can also give you information in Braille, in large print, or other alternate formats if you need it. If you are eligible for Medicare because of disability, we are required to give you information about the plan's benefits that is accessible and appropriate for you.

If you have any trouble getting information from our plan because of problems related to language or disability, please call Medicare at 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227), 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and tell them that you want to file a complaint. TTY users call 1-877-486-2048.

<b>Section 1.2      We must treat you with fairness and respect at all times</b>
--

Our plan must obey laws that protect you from discrimination or unfair treatment. **We do not discriminate** based on a person's race, disability, religion, sex, health, ethnicity, creed (beliefs), age, or national origin.

If you want more information or have concerns about discrimination or unfair treatment, please call the Department of Health and Human Services' **Office for Civil Rights** 1-800-368-1019 (TTY 1-800-537-7697) or your local Office for Civil Rights.

If you have a disability and need help with access to care, please call us at Member Services (phone numbers are on the cover of this booklet). If you have a complaint, such as a problem with wheelchair access, Member Services can help.

<b>Section 1.3      We must ensure that you get timely access to your covered services and drugs</b>
--

As a member of our plan, you have the right to choose a primary care provider (PCP) in the plan's network to provide and arrange for your covered services (Chapter 3 explains more about this). Call Member Services to learn which doctors are accepting new patients (phone numbers are on the cover of this booklet). You also have the right to go to a women's health specialist (such as a gynecologist) without a referral.

As a plan member, you have the right to get appointments and covered services from the plan's network of providers *within a reasonable amount of time*. This includes the right to get timely services from specialists when you need that care. You also have the right to get your prescriptions filled or refilled at any of our network pharmacies without long delays.

If you think that you are not getting your medical care or Part D drugs within a reasonable amount of time, Chapter 9 of this booklet tells what you can do.

<b>Section 1.4</b>	<b>We must protect the privacy of your personal health information</b>
--------------------	--

Federal and state laws protect the privacy of your medical records and personal health information. We protect your personal health information as required by these laws.

- Your “personal health information” includes the personal information you gave us when you enrolled in this plan as well as your medical records and other medical and health information.
- The laws that protect your privacy give you rights related to getting information and controlling how your health information is used. We give you a written notice, called a “Notice of Privacy Practice”, that tells about these rights and explains how we protect the privacy of your health information.

### **How do we protect the privacy of your health information?**

- We make sure that unauthorized people do not see or change your records.
- In most situations, if we give your health information to anyone who is not providing your care or paying for your care, *we are required to get written permission from you first*. Written permission can be given by you or by someone you have given legal power to make decisions for you.
- There are certain exceptions that do not require us to get your written permission first. These exceptions are allowed or required by law.
  - For example, we are required to release health information to government agencies that are checking on quality of care.
  - Because you are a member of our plan through Medicare, we are required to give Medicare your health information including information about your Part D prescription drugs. If Medicare releases your information for research or other uses, this will be done according to Federal statutes and regulations.

### **You can see the information in your records and know how it has been shared with others**

You have the right to look at your medical records held at the plan, and to get a copy of your records. We are allowed to charge you a fee for making copies. You also have the right to ask us

to make additions or corrections to your medical records. If you ask us to do this, we will consider your request and decide whether the changes should be made.

You have the right to know how your health information has been shared with others for any purposes that are not routine.

If you have questions or concerns about the privacy of your personal health information, please call Member Services (phone numbers are on the cover of this booklet).

## **NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICE**

**This notice describes how medical information about you may be used and disclosed and how you can get access to this information. Please review it carefully.**

At Vantage Health Plan, Inc., we respect the confidentiality of your health information and will protect it in a responsible and professional manner. We consider this information private and confidential and have policies and procedures in place to protect the information against unlawful use and disclosure.

This notice describes what types of information we collect, explains when and to whom we may disclose it, and provides you with additional important information. We are allowed by law to use and disclose your health information to carry out the operations of our business. We are required by law to maintain the privacy of your health information, to provide you with this notice and abide by the notice in effect. It also informs you of your rights with respect to your health information and how you can exercise those rights.

### **What is Protected Health Information or PHI?**

When we talk about “information” or “health information” in this notice we mean Protected Health Information or PHI. PHI is information that identifies an individual enrolled in our Plan. It relates to the person’s participation in the plan, the person’s physical or mental health or condition, the provision of health care to that person, or payment for the provision of health care to that person. It does not include publicly available information, or information that is available or reported in a summarized fashion that does not identify any individual person.

### **What types of personal information do we collect?**

Like all health benefits companies, we collect the following types of information about you:

- Information we receive directly or indirectly from you or your employer through applications, surveys, or other forms, in writing, in person, by telephone, or electronically, including our web site (e.g., name, address, social security number, date of birth, marital status, dependent information, employment information, medical history).
- Information about your relationship and transactions with us, our affiliates, our providers, our agents, and others (e.g., health care claims and encounters, medical history, eligibility information, payment information, service request, and appeal and grievance information).
- Information we receive from the Centers for Medicare and Medicare Services (CMS).

## How do we protect this information?

We have policies that limit internal and external sharing of PHI to only persons who have a need for it to provide benefit services to you and your dependents. We maintain physical, electronic and procedural safeguards to protect PHI against unauthorized access and use. For example, access to our facilities is limited to authorized personnel and we protect information electronically through a variety of technical tools. We also have established a Privacy Committee, which has overall responsibility for the development, implementation, training, oversight and enforcement of policies and procedures to safeguard PHI against inappropriate access, use and disclosure, consistent with applicable law.

## How may we use or share your information?

To effectively operate your health benefit plan, we may use and share PHI about you to:

- Perform certain duties, which may involve claims review and payment or denial; coordination of benefits; utilization review; medical necessity review; coordination of care; response to member inquiries or requests for services; conduct of grievance, appeals, and external review programs; benefits and program analysis and reporting; risk management; detection and investigation of fraud and other unlawful conduct; auditing; underwriting; administration and coordination of reinsurance contracts.
- Operate preventive health programs, disease early detection programs, disease management programs and case management programs in which we or our affiliates or contractors send educational materials and screening reminders to eligible members and providers; perform health risk assessments; identify and contact members who may benefit from participation in disease or case management programs; and send relevant information to those members who enroll in the programs, and their providers.
- Conduct quality improvement activities, such as the credentialing of participating network providers; and accreditation by the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA), Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), and/or other independent organizations, where applicable.
- Conduct performance measurement and outcomes assessment; health claims analysis and reporting.
- Provide data to outside contractors who help us conduct our business operations. **We will not share your PHI with these outside contractors unless they agree in writing to keep it protected.**
- Manage data and information systems.
- Perform mandatory licensing, regulatory compliance/reporting, and public health activities; responding to requests for information from regulatory authorities, responding to government agency or court subpoenas as required by law, reporting suspected or actual fraud or other criminal activity; conducting litigation, arbitration, or similar dispute resolution proceedings; and performing third-party liability and subrogation activities.
- Change policies or contracts from and to other insurers, HMOs, or third party administrators.
- Provide data to the employer that sponsors the benefit plan through which you receive health benefits. **We will not share your PHI with your benefit plan sponsor except for deidentified summary health information, enrollment and disenrollment**

---

**information, specific information authorized by you and any information necessary to administer the plan.**

We consider the activities described above as essential for the operation of our Plan. For example, we may feature:

- Cancer screening reminder programs that promote early detection of breast, ovarian, and colorectal cancer, when these illnesses are most treatable.
- Disease management programs that help members work with their physicians to effectively manage chronic conditions like asthma, diabetes, and heart disease to improve quality of life and avoid preventable emergencies and hospitalizations.
- Quality assessment programs that help us review and improve the services we provide.
- A variety of outreach programs that help us educate members about the programs and services that are available to them, and let members know how they can make the most of their health benefits.

There are also state and federal laws that may require us to release your health information to others. We may be required to provide information as follows:

- To state and federal agencies that regulate us such as the US Department of Health and Human Services and the Louisiana Department of Insurance.
- For public health activities. For example, we may report information to the Food and Drug Administration for investigating or tracking of prescription drug and medical device problems.
- To public health agencies if we believe there is a serious health or safety threat.
- With a health oversight agency for certain oversight activities (for example, audits, inspections, licensure, and disciplinary actions.)
- To a court or administrative agency (for example, pursuant to a court order, search warrant or subpoena).
- For law enforcement purposes. For example, we may give information to a law enforcement official for purposes of identifying or locating a suspect, fugitive, material witness or missing person.
- To a government authority regarding child abuse, neglect or domestic violence.
- To a coroner or medical examiner to identify a deceased person, determine a cause of death, or as authorized by law. We may also share information with funeral directors as necessary to carry out their duties.
- For procurement, banking or transplantation of organs, eyes or tissue.
- To specialized government functions, such as military and veteran activities, national security and intelligence activities, and the protective services for the President and others.
- For on-the-job-related injuries because of requirements of state workers' compensation laws.

We do not share PHI for any purpose other than those listed above. If one of the above reasons does not apply, **we must get your written authorization to use or disclose your health information.** In the event that you are unable to provide the authorization (for example, if you

are medically unable to give consent), we accept authorization from any person legally authorized to give consent on your behalf, such as a parent or guardian. If you give us written authorization and change your mind, you may revoke your written authorization at any time.

### **What are your rights?**

The following are your rights with respect to your PHI. If you would like to exercise any of these rights, please contact us at the address or phone numbers listed at the end of this notice. We will require that you make your request in writing and will provide you with the appropriate forms.

***You have the right to inspect and/or obtain a copy or summary of information*** that we maintain about you in your designated record set. A “designated record set” is a group of records maintained by or for us that are your enrollment, payment, claims determination, and case or medical management records or a group of records, used in whole or in part, by us to make decisions about you, such as appeals and grievance records. We may charge you a reasonable administrative fee for copying, postage or summary preparation depending on your specific request.

*However*, you do not have the right to inspect certain types of information and we can not provide you with copies of the following information:

- contained in psychotherapy notes;
- compiled in reasonable anticipation of, or for use in a civil criminal or administrative action or proceeding; or
- subject to certain federal laws governing biological products and clinical laboratories.

We will respond to your request no later than 30 days after we receive it or if the information requested is not accessible or maintained on site, no later than 60 days after we receive it.

*Additionally*, in certain other situations, we may deny your request to inspect or obtain a copy of your information. If we deny your request, we will notify you in writing and may provide you with a right to have the denial reviewed.

***You have the right to ask us to amend information*** we maintain about you in your designated record set. We will require that your request be in writing and that you provide a reason for your request. We will respond to your request no later than 60 days after we receive it. If we are unable to act within 60 days, we may extend that time by no more than an additional 30 days. If we need to extend this time, we will notify you of the delay and the date by which we will complete action on your request.

If we make the amendment, we will notify you that it was made. In addition, we will provide the amendment to any person that we know has received your health information. We will also provide the amendment to other persons identified by you.

If we deny your request to amend, we will notify you in writing of the reason for the denial. The denial will explain your right to file a written statement of disagreement. We have a right to dispute your statement. However, you have the right to request that your written request, our

written denial and your statement of disagreement be included with your information for any future disclosures.

**NOTE:** If you want to access or amend information about yourself, you should first go to your provider (e.g., doctor, pharmacy, hospital or other caregiver) that generated the original records, which are more complete than any we maintain.

***You have the right to receive an accounting of certain disclosures*** of your information made by us during the six years prior to your request. Please note that we are not required to provide you with an accounting of the following information:

- Any information collected prior to April 14, 2003.
- Information disclosed or used for treatment, payment, and health care operations purposes.
- Information disclosed to you or pursuant to your authorization;
- Information that is incident to a use or disclosure otherwise permitted.
- Information disclosed for a facility's directory or to persons involved in your care or other notification purposes;
- Information disclosed for national security or intelligence purposes;
- Information disclosed to correctional institutions, law enforcement officials or health oversight agencies;
- Information that was disclosed or used as part of a limited data set for research, public health, or health care operations purposes.

We will act on your request for an accounting within 60 days. We may need additional time to act on your request, and therefore may take up to an additional 30 days. Your first accounting will be free, and we will continue to provide to you one free accounting upon request every 12 months. However, if you request an additional accounting within 12 months of receiving your free accounting, we may charge you a fee. We will inform you in advance of the fee and provide you with an opportunity to withdraw or modify your request.

***You have the right to ask us to restrict*** how we use or disclose your information for treatment, payment, or health care operations. You also have the right to ask us to restrict information that we have been asked to give to family members or to others who are involved in your health care or payment for your health care.

***You have the right to ask to receive confidential communications*** of information, if you believe that you would be harmed if we send your information to your current mailing address. For example, in situations involving domestic disputes or violence, you can ask us to send the information by alternative means (for example by fax) or to an alternative address. We will try to accommodate a reasonable request made by you.

### **What do we do with member PHI when the member is no longer enrolled in a our Plan?**

We do not destroy PHI when individuals terminate their coverage. The information is necessary and used for many purposes as described in this document, even after the individual leaves a

plan. However, the policies and procedures that protect that information against inappropriate use and disclosure apply regardless of the status of any individual member. In many cases, PHI is subject to legal retention requirements, and after that requirement for record maintenance, PHI is destroyed in a confidential process.

**Exercising your rights:**

- **You have a right to receive a copy of this notice upon request at any time.** We provide this notice to our subscribers upon enrollment in a VHP group health plan. You can also view a copy of the notice on our web site at [www.vhp-stategroup.com](http://www.vhp-stategroup.com). Should any of our privacy practices change, **we reserve the right to change the terms of this notice and to make the new notice effective for all protected health information that we maintain.** Once revised, we will provide the new notice to you and post it on our web site.
- If you have any questions about this notice or about how we use or share information, please write to the Privacy Officer at 130 DeSiard Street, Suite 300, Monroe, LA 71201 or email **Privacy.Officer@vhpla.com**. Or you can contact our Member Services Department at the phone numbers listed on the front cover.

If you are concerned that your privacy rights may have been violated, you may file a complaint with us. You also have the right to complain to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. If you have any questions about the complaint process, including the address of the Secretary of Health and Human Services, please write to our Privacy Officer at the address mentioned above or contact our Member Services Department (phone numbers are on the cover of this booklet).

**VHP will not take any action against you for filing a complaint.**

<b>Section 1.5</b>	<b>We must give you information about the plan, its network of providers, and your covered services</b>
--------------------	---

As a member of our plan, you have the right to get several kinds of information from us. (As explained above in Section 1.1, you have the right to get information from us in a way that works for you. This includes getting the information in large print.)

If you want any of the following kinds of information, please call Member Services (phone numbers are on the cover of this booklet):

- **Information about our plan.** This includes, for example, information about the plan's financial condition. It also includes information about the number of appeals made by members and the plan's performance ratings, including how it has been rated by plan members and how it compares to other Medicare Advantage health plans.
- **Information about our network providers including our network pharmacies.**

- 
- For example, you have the right to get information from us about the qualifications of the providers and pharmacies in our network and how we pay the providers in our network.
  - For a list of the providers in the plan's network, see the *Provider Directory*.
  - For a list of the pharmacies in the plan's network, see the *Pharmacy Directory*.
  - For more detailed information about our providers or pharmacies, you can call Member Services (phone numbers are on the cover of this booklet) or visit our website at [www.vhp-stategroup.com](http://www.vhp-stategroup.com).
  - **Information about your coverage and rules you must follow in using your coverage.**
    - In Chapters 3 and 4 of this booklet, we explain what medical services are covered for you, any restrictions to your coverage, and what rules you must follow to get your covered medical services.
    - To get the details on your Part D prescription drug coverage, see Chapters 5 and 6 of this booklet plus the plan's *List of Covered Drugs (Formulary)*. These chapters, together with the *List of Covered Drugs*, tell you what drugs are covered and explain the rules you must follow and the restrictions to your coverage for certain drugs.
    - If you have questions about the rules or restrictions, please call Member Services (phone numbers are on the cover of this booklet).
  - **Information about why something is not covered and what you can do about it.**
    - If a medical service or Part D drug is not covered for you, or if your coverage is restricted in some way, you can ask us for a written explanation. You have the right to this explanation even if you received the medical service or drug from an out-of-network provider or pharmacy.
    - If you are not happy or if you disagree with a decision we make about what medical care or Part D drug is covered for you, you have the right to ask us to change the decision. For details on what to do if something is not covered for you in the way you think it should be covered, see Chapter 9 of this booklet. It gives you the details about how to ask the plan for a decision about your coverage and how to make an appeal if you want us to change our decision. (Chapter 9 also tells about how to make a complaint about quality of care, waiting times, and other concerns.)
    - If you want to ask our plan to pay our share of a bill you have received for medical care or a Part D prescription drug, see Chapter 7 of this booklet.

**Section 1.6 We must support your right to make decisions about your care**

**You have the right to know your treatment options and participate in decisions about your health care**

You have the right to get full information from your doctors and other health care providers when you go for medical care. Your providers must explain your medical condition and your treatment choices *in a way that you can understand*.

You also have the right to participate fully in decisions about your health care. To help you make decisions with your doctors about what treatment is best for you, your rights include the following:

- **To know about all of your choices.** This means that you have the right to be told about all of the treatment options that are recommended for your condition, no matter what they cost or whether they are covered by our plan. It also includes being told about programs our plan offers to help members manage their medications and use drugs safely.
- **To know about the risks.** You have the right to be told about any risks involved in your care. You must be told in advance if any proposed medical care or treatment is part of a research experiment. You always have the choice to refuse any experimental treatments.
- **The right to say “no.”** You have the right to refuse any recommended treatment. This includes the right to leave a hospital or other medical facility, even if your doctor advises you not to leave. You also have the right to stop taking your medication. Of course, if you refuse treatment or stop taking medication, you accept full responsibility for what happens to your body as a result.
- **To receive an explanation if you are denied coverage for care.** You have the right to receive an explanation from us if a provider has denied care that you believe you should receive. To receive this explanation, you will need to ask us for a coverage decision. Chapter 9 of this booklet tells how to ask the plan for a coverage decision.

**You have the right to give instructions about what is to be done if you are not able to make medical decisions for yourself**

Sometimes people become unable to make health care decisions for themselves due to accidents or serious illness. You have the right to say what you want to happen if you are in this situation. This means that, *if you want to*, you can:

- Fill out a written form to give **someone the legal authority to make medical decisions for you** if you ever become unable to make decisions for yourself.
- **Give your doctors written instructions** about how you want them to handle your medical care if you become unable to make decisions for yourself.

The legal documents that you can use to give your directions in advance in these situations are called “**advance directives**.” There are different types of advance directives and different names

for them. Documents called “**living will**” and “**power of attorney for health care**” are examples of advance directives.

If you want to use an “advance directive” to give your instructions, here is what to do:

- **Get the form.** If you want to have an advance directive, you can get a form from your lawyer, from a social worker, or from some office supply stores. You can sometimes get advance directive forms from organizations that give people information about Medicare. You can also contact Member Services to ask for the forms (phone numbers are on the cover of this booklet).
- **Fill it out and sign it.** Regardless of where you get this form, keep in mind that it is a legal document. You should consider having a lawyer help you prepare it.
- **Give copies to appropriate people.** You should give a copy of the form to your doctor and to the person you name on the form as the one to make decisions for you if you cannot. You may want to give copies to close friends or family members as well. Be sure to keep a copy at home.

If you know ahead of time that you are going to be hospitalized, and you have signed an advance directive, **take a copy with you to the hospital.**

- If you are admitted to the hospital, they will ask you whether you have signed an advance directive form and whether you have it with you.
- If you have not signed an advance directive form, the hospital has forms available and will ask if you want to sign one.

**Remember, it is your choice whether you want to fill out an advance directive** (including whether you want to sign one if you are in the hospital). According to law, no one can deny you care or discriminate against you based on whether or not you have signed an advance directive.

### **What if your instructions are not followed?**

If you have signed an advance directive, and you believe that a doctor or hospital has not followed the instructions in it, you may file a complaint with Louisiana Department of Health & Hospitals, 628 N. 4<sup>th</sup> Street, P.O. Box 629 (Zip 70821-0629), Baton Rouge, LA 70802, Phone: 225-342-9500, Fax: 225-342-5568.

<b>Section 1.7</b>	<b>You have the right to make complaints and to ask us to reconsider decisions we have made</b>
--------------------	---

If you have any problems or concerns about your covered services or care, Chapter 9 of this booklet tells what you can do. It gives the details about how to deal with all types of problems and complaints.

As explained in Chapter 9, what you need to do to follow up on a problem or concern depends on the situation. You might need to ask our plan to make a coverage decision for you, make an appeal to us to change a coverage decision, or make a complaint. Whatever you do – ask for a coverage decision, make an appeal, or make a complaint – **we are required to treat you fairly.**

You have the right to get a summary of information about the appeals and complaints that other members have filed against our plan in the past. To get this information, please call Member Services (phone numbers are on the cover of this booklet).

<b>Section 1.8</b>	<b>What can you do if you think you are being treated unfairly or your rights are not being respected?</b>
--------------------	--

**If it is about discrimination, call the Office for Civil Rights**

If you think you have been treated unfairly or your rights have not been respected due to your race, disability, religion, sex, health, ethnicity, creed (beliefs), age, or national origin, you should call the Department of Health and Human Services' **Office for Civil Rights** at 1-800-368-1019 or TTY 1-800-537-7697, or call your local Office for Civil Rights.

**Is it about something else?**

If you think you have been treated unfairly or your rights have not been respected, *and* it is *not* about discrimination, you can get help dealing with the problem you are having:

- You can **call Member Services** (phone numbers are on the cover of this booklet).
- You can **call the State Health Insurance Assistance Program**. For details about this organization and how to contact it, go to Chapter 2, Section 3.

<b>Section 1.9</b>	<b>How to get more information about your rights</b>
--------------------	--

There are several places where you can get more information about your rights:

- You can **call Member Services** (phone numbers are on the cover of this booklet).
- You can **call the State Health Insurance Assistance Program**. For details about this organization and how to contact it, go to Chapter 2 Section 3.
- You can contact **Medicare**.
  - You can visit the Medicare website (<http://www.medicare.gov>) to read or download the publication “Your Medicare Rights & Protections.”
  - Or, you can call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227), 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. TTY users should call 1-877-486-2048.

---

## **SECTION 2      You have some responsibilities as a member of the plan**

---

<b>Section 2.1      What are your responsibilities?</b>
---

Things you need to do as a member of the plan are listed below. If you have any questions, please call Member Services (phone numbers are on the cover of this booklet). We are here to help. See addendum for additional information.

- ***Get familiar with your covered services and the rules you must follow to get these covered services.*** Use this Evidence of Coverage booklet to learn what is covered for you and the rules you need to follow to get your covered services.
  - Chapters 3 and 4 give the details about your medical services, including what is covered, what is not covered, rules to follow, and what you pay.
  - Chapters 5 and 6 give the details about your coverage for Part D prescription drugs.
  
- ***If you have any other health insurance coverage or prescription drug coverage in addition to our plan, you are required to tell us.*** Please call Member Services to let us know.
  - We are required to follow rules set by Medicare to make sure that you are using all of your coverage in combination when you get your covered services from our plan. This is called “**coordination of benefits**” because it involves coordinating the health and drug benefits you get from our plan with any other health and drug benefits available to you. We will help you with it.
  
- ***Tell your doctor and other health care providers that you are enrolled in our plan.*** Show your plan membership card whenever you get your medical care or Part D prescription drugs.
  
- ***Help your doctors and other providers help you by giving them information, asking questions, and following through on your care.***
  - To help your doctors and other health providers give you the best care, learn as much as you are able to about your health problems and give them the information they need about you and your health. Follow the treatment plans and instructions that you and your doctors agree upon.
  - If you have any questions, be sure to ask. Your doctors and other health care providers are supposed to explain things in a way you can understand. If you ask a question and you do not understand the answer you are given, ask again.

- **Be considerate.** *We expect all our members to respect the rights of other patients. We also expect you to act in a way that helps the smooth running of your doctor's office, hospitals, and other offices.*
- **Pay what you owe.** *As a plan member, you are responsible for these payments:*
  - You must pay your plan premiums to continue being a member of our plan.
  - In order to be eligible for our plan, you must maintain your eligibility for Medicare Part A and Part B. For that reason, some plan members must pay a premium for Medicare Part A and most plan members must pay a premium for Medicare Part B to remain a member of the plan.
  - For some of your medical services or drugs covered by the plan, you must pay your share of the cost when you get the service or drug. This will be a copayment (a fixed amount) or coinsurance (a percentage of the total cost). Chapter 4 tells what you must pay for your medical services. Chapter 6 tells what you must pay for your Part D prescription drugs.
  - If you get any medical services or drugs that are not covered by our plan or by other insurance you may have, you must pay the full cost.
- **Tell us if you move.** *If you are going to move, it is important to tell us right away. Call Member Services (phone numbers are on the cover of this booklet).*
  - **If you move *outside* of our plan service area, you cannot remain a member of our plan.** (Chapter 1 tells about our service area.) We can help you figure out whether you are moving outside our service area. If you are leaving our service area, we can let you know if we have a plan in your new area.
  - **If you move *within* our service area, we still need to know** so we can keep your membership record up to date and know how to contact you.
- **Call member services for help if you have questions or concerns.** *We also welcome any suggestions you may have for improving our plan.*
  - Phone numbers and calling hours for Member Services are on the cover of this booklet.
  - For more information on how to reach us, including our mailing address, please see Chapter 2.
- **Notify us of third party liability coverage (subrogation).** *See Chapter 11, Section 4 for more information.*

## **Chapter 9. What to do if you have a problem or complaint (coverage decisions, appeals, complaints)**

### **BACKGROUND**

<b>SECTION 1</b>	<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>113</b>
Section 1.1	What to do if you have a problem or concern.....	113
Section 1.2	What about the legal terms?.....	113
<b>SECTION 2</b>	<b>You can get help from government organizations that are not connected with us .....</b>	<b>114</b>
Section 2.1	Where to get more information and personalized assistance.....	114
<b>SECTION 3</b>	<b>To deal with your problem, which process should you use? .....</b>	<b>114</b>
Section 3.1	Should you use the process for coverage decisions and appeals? Or should you use the process for making complaints?.....	114
<b>SECTION 4</b>	<b>A guide to the basics of coverage decisions and appeals .....</b>	<b>116</b>
Section 4.1	Asking for coverage decisions and making appeals: the big picture .....	116
Section 4.2	How to get help when you are asking for a coverage decision or making an appeal .....	117
Section 4.3	Which section of this chapter gives the details for <u>your</u> situation? .....	117
<b>SECTION 5</b>	<b>Your medical care: How to ask for a coverage decision or make an appeal .....</b>	<b>118</b>
Section 5.1	This section tells what to do if you have problems getting coverage for medical care or if you want us to pay you back for our share of the cost of your care .....	118
Section 5.2	Step-by-step: How to ask for a coverage decision (how to ask our plan to authorize or provide the medical care coverage you want) .....	120
Section 5.3	Step-by-step: How to make a Level 1 Appeal (how to ask for a review of a medical care coverage decision made by our plan) .....	122

Section 5.4	Step-by-step: How to make a Level 2 Appeal .....	125
Section 5.5	What if you are asking our plan to pay you for our share of a bill you have received for medical care?.....	127
<b>SECTION 6</b>	<b>Your Part D prescription drugs: How to ask for a coverage decision or make an appeal .....</b>	<b>128</b>
Section 6.1	This section tells you what to do if you have problems getting a Part D drug or you want us to pay you back for a Part D drug.....	128
Section 6.2	What is an exception?.....	130
Section 6.3	Important things to know about asking for exceptions.....	132
Section 6.4	Step-by-step: How to ask for a coverage decision, including an exception.....	132
Section 6.5	Step-by-step: How to make a Level 1 Appeal (how to ask for a review of a coverage decision made by our plan) .....	135
Section 6.6	Step-by-step: How to make a Level 2 Appeal .....	137
<b>SECTION 7</b>	<b>How to ask us to cover a longer hospital stay if you think the doctor is discharging you too soon .....</b>	<b>139</b>
Section 7.1	During your hospital stay, you will get a written notice from Medicare that tells about your rights.....	140
Section 7.2	Step-by-step: How to make a Level 1 Appeal to change your hospital discharge date.....	141
Section 7.3	Step-by-step: How to make a Level 2 Appeal to change your hospital discharge date.....	143
Section 7.4	What if you miss the deadline for making your Level 1 Appeal? .....	145
<b>SECTION 8</b>	<b>How to ask us to keep covering certain medical services if you think your coverage is ending too soon .....</b>	<b>148</b>
Section 8.1	<i>This section is about three services only:</i> Home health care, skilled nursing facility care, and Comprehensive Outpatient Rehabilitation Facility (CORF) services .....	148
Section 8.2	We will tell you in advance when your coverage will be ending .....	148

Section 8.3	Step-by-step: How to make a Level 1 Appeal to have our plan cover your care for a longer time.....	149
Section 8.4	Step-by-step: How to make a Level 2 Appeal to have our plan cover your care for a longer time.....	151
Section 8.5	What if you miss the deadline for making your Level 1 Appeal? .....	153
<b>SECTION 9</b>	<b>Taking your appeal to Level 3 and beyond.....</b>	<b>155</b>
Section 9.1	Levels of Appeal 3, 4, and 5 for Medical Service Appeals .....	155
Section 9.2	Levels of Appeal 3, 4, and 5 for Part D Drug Appeals.....	157
<b>SECTION 10</b>	<b>How to make a complaint about quality of care, waiting times, customer service, or other concerns .....</b>	<b>159</b>
Section 10.1	What kinds of problems are handled by the complaint process?.....	159
Section 10.2	The formal name for “making a complaint” is “filing a grievance” .....	162
Section 10.3	Step-by-step: Making a complaint .....	162
Section 10.4	You can also make complaints about quality of care to the Quality Improvement Organization .....	163

## BACKGROUND

---

### SECTION 1 Introduction

---

<b>Section 1.1</b>	<b>What to do if you have a problem or concern</b>
--------------------	--

This chapter explains two types of processes for handling problems and concerns:

- For some types of problems, you need to use the **process for coverage decisions and making appeals**.
- For other types of problems you need to use the **process for making complaints**.

Both of these processes have been approved by Medicare. To ensure fairness and prompt handling of your problems, each process has a set of rules, procedures, and deadlines that must be followed by us and by you.

Which one do you use? That depends on the type of problem you are having. The guide in Section 3 will help you identify the right process to use.

<b>Section 1.2</b>	<b>What about the legal terms?</b>
--------------------	------------------------------------

There are technical legal terms for some of the rules, procedures, and types of deadlines explained in this chapter. Many of these terms are unfamiliar to most people and can be hard to understand.

To keep things simple, this chapter explains the legal rules and procedures using simpler words in place of certain legal terms. For example, this chapter generally says “making a complaint” rather than “filing a grievance,” “coverage decision” rather than “organization determination” or “coverage determination,” and “Independent Review Organization” instead of “Independent Review Entity.” It also uses abbreviations as little as possible.

However, it can be helpful – and sometimes quite important – for you to know the correct legal terms for the situation you are in. Knowing which terms to use will help you communicate more clearly and accurately when you are dealing with your problem and get the right help or information for your situation. To help you know which terms to use, we include legal terms when we give the details for handling specific types of situations.

---

## **SECTION 2      You can get help from government organizations that are not connected with us**

---

<b>Section 2.1      Where to get more information and personalized assistance</b>
---

Sometimes it can be confusing to start or follow through the process for dealing with a problem. This can be especially true if you do not feel well or have limited energy. Other times, you may not have the knowledge you need to take the next step. Perhaps both are true for you.

### **Get help from an independent government organization**

We are always available to help you. But in some situations you may also want help or guidance from someone who is not connected with us. You can always contact your **State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP)**. This government program has trained counselors in every state. The program is not connected with our plan or with any insurance company or health plan. The counselors at this program can help you understand which process you should use to handle a problem you are having. They can also answer your questions, give you more information, and offer guidance on what to do.

The services of SHIP counselors are free. You will find phone numbers in Chapter 2, Section 3 of this booklet.

### **You can also get help and information from Medicare**

For more information and help in handling a problem, you can also contact Medicare. Here are two ways to get information directly from Medicare:

- You can call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227), 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. TTY users should call 1-877-486-2048.
- You can visit the Medicare website (<http://www.medicare.gov>).

---

## **SECTION 3      To deal with your problem, which process should you use?**

---

<b>Section 3.1      Should you use the process for coverage decisions and appeals? Or should you use the process for making complaints?</b>
---

If you have a problem or concern and you want to do something about it, you do not need to read this whole chapter. You just need to find and read the parts of this chapter that apply to your situation. The guide that follows will help.

To figure out which part of this chapter tells what to do for your problem or concern,  
**START HERE**

**Is your problem or concern about your benefits and coverage?**

(This includes problems about whether particular medical care or prescription drugs are covered or not, the way in which they are covered, and problems related to payment for medical care or prescription drugs.)

**Yes**

**No**

Go on to the next section of this chapter, **Section 4: “A guide to the basics of coverage decisions and making appeals.”**

Skip ahead to **Section 10** at the end of this chapter: **“How to make a complaint about quality of care, waiting times, customer service or other concerns.”**

## **COVERAGE DECISIONS AND APPEALS**

---

### **SECTION 4      A guide to the basics of coverage decisions and appeals**

---

<b>Section 4.1</b>	<b>Asking for coverage decisions and making appeals: the big picture</b>
--------------------	--

The process for coverage decisions and making appeals deals with problems related to your benefits and coverage for medical services and prescription drugs, including problems related to payment. This is the process you use for issues such as whether something is covered or not and the way in which something is covered.

#### **Asking for coverage decisions**

A coverage decision is a decision we make about your benefits and coverage or about the amount we will pay for your medical services or drugs. We and/or your doctor make a coverage decision for you whenever you go to a doctor for medical care. You can also contact the plan and ask for a coverage decision. For example, if you want to know if we will cover a medical service before you receive it, you can ask us to make a coverage decision for you.

We are making a coverage decision for you whenever we decide what is covered for you and how much we pay. In some cases we might decide a service or drug is not covered or is no longer covered by Medicare for you. If you disagree with this coverage decision, you can make an appeal.

#### **Making an appeal**

If we make a coverage decision and you are not satisfied with this decision, you can “appeal” the decision. An appeal is a formal way of asking us to review and change a coverage decision we have made.

When you make an appeal, we review the coverage decision we have made to check to see if we were following all of the rules properly. When we have completed the review we give you our decision.

If we say no to all or part of your Level 1 Appeal, you can go on to a Level 2 Appeal. The Level 2 Appeal is conducted by an independent organization that is not connected to our plan. If you are not satisfied with the decision at the Level 2 Appeal, you may be able to continue through several more levels of appeal.

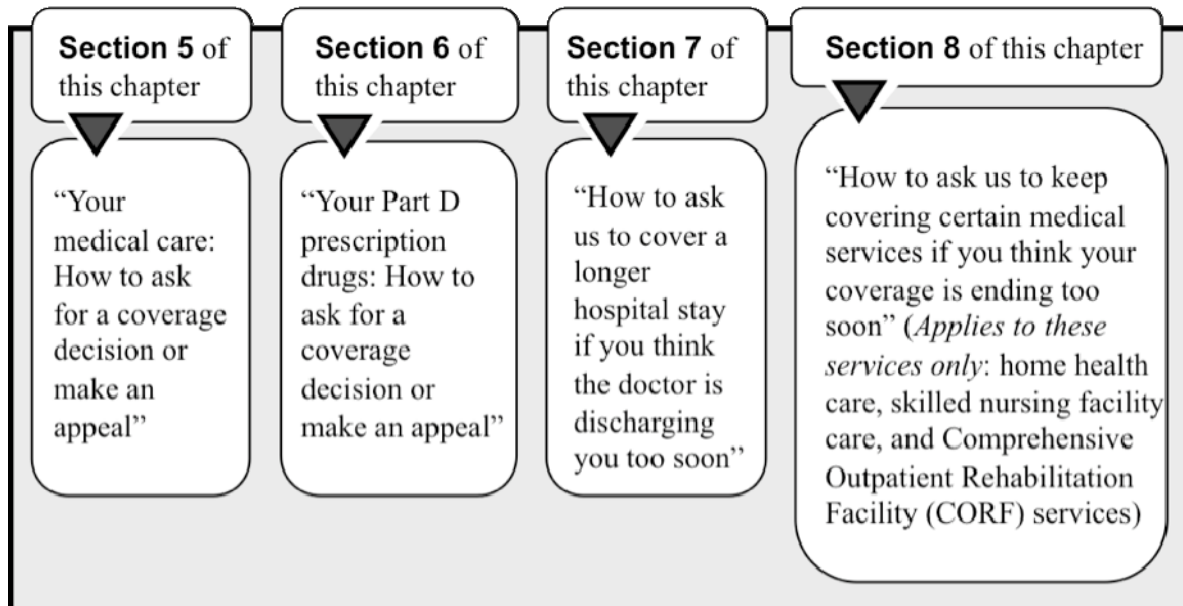
<b>Section 4.2</b>	<b>How to get help when you are asking for a coverage decision or making an appeal</b>
--------------------	--

Would you like some help? Here are resources you may wish to use if you decide to ask for any kind of coverage decision or appeal a decision:

- You **can call us at Member Services** (phone numbers are on the cover).
- To **get free help from an independent organization** that is not connected with our plan, contact your State Health Insurance Assistance Program (see Section 2 of this chapter).
- **Your doctor or other provider can make a request for you.** Your doctor or other provider can request a coverage decision or a Level 1 Appeal on your behalf. To request any appeal after Level 1, your doctor or other provider must be appointed as your representative.
- **You can ask someone to act on your behalf.** If you want to, you can name another person to act for you as your “representative” to ask for a coverage decision or make an appeal.
  - There may be someone who is already legally authorized to act as your representative under State law.
  - If you want a friend, relative, your doctor or other provider, or other person to be your representative, call Member Services and ask for the form to give that person permission to act on your behalf. The form must be signed by you and by the person who you would like to act on your behalf. You must give our plan a copy of the signed form.
- **You also have the right to hire a lawyer to act for you.** You may contact your own lawyer, or get the name of a lawyer from your local bar association or other referral service. There are also groups that will give you free legal services if you qualify. However, **you are not required to hire a lawyer** to ask for any kind of coverage decision or appeal a decision.

<b>Section 4.3</b>	<b>Which section of this chapter gives the details for <u>your</u> situation?</b>
--------------------	---

There are four different types of situations that involve coverage decisions and appeals. Since each situation has different rules and deadlines, we give the details for each one in a separate section:



If you are still not sure which section you should be using, please call Member Services (phone numbers are on the front cover). You can also get help or information from government organizations such as your State Health Insurance Assistance Program (Chapter 2, Section 3, of this booklet has the phone numbers for this program).

---

## **SECTION 5      Your medical care: How to ask for a coverage decision or make an appeal**

---



Have you read Section 4 of this chapter (*A guide to “the basics” of coverage decisions and appeals*)? If not, you may want to read it before you start this section.

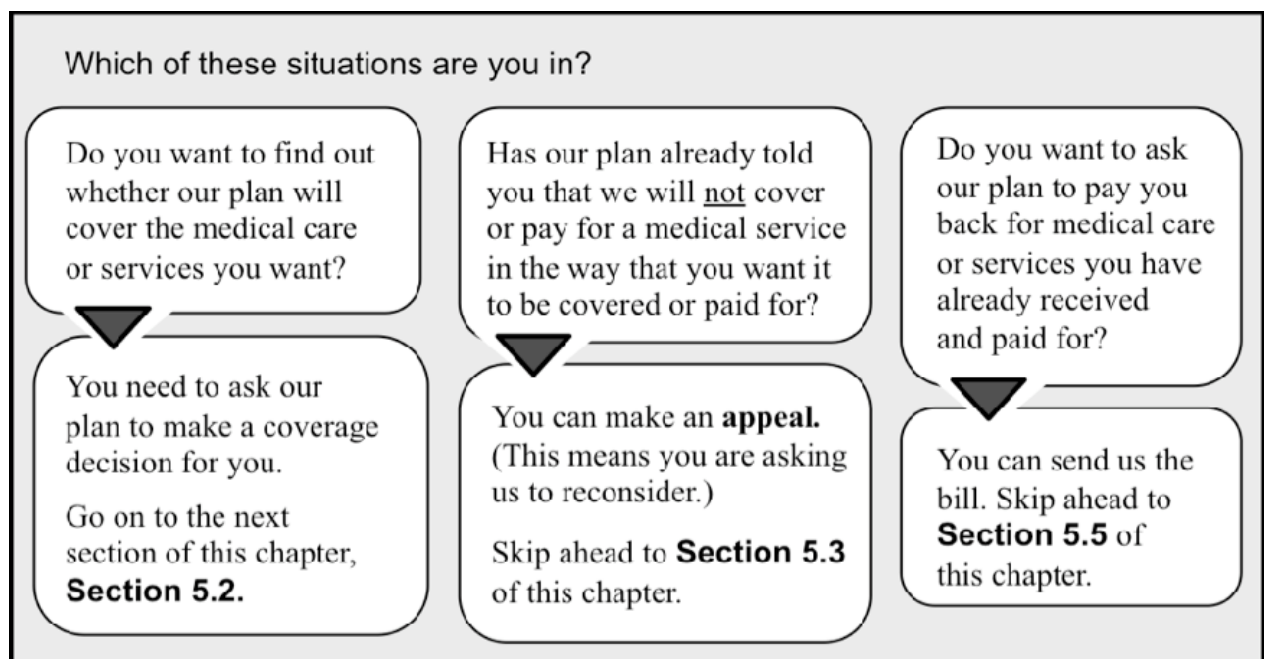
<b>Section 5.1</b>	<b>This section tells what to do if you have problems getting coverage for medical care or if you want us to pay you back for our share of the cost of your care</b>
--------------------	--

This section is about your benefits for medical care and services. These are the benefits described in Chapter 4 of this booklet: *Medical Benefits Chart (what is covered and what you pay)*. To keep things simple, we generally refer to “medical care coverage” or “medical care” in the rest of this section, instead of repeating “medical care or treatment or services” every time.

This section tells what you can do if you are in any of the five following situations:

1. You are not getting certain medical care you want, and you believe that this care is covered by our plan.

2. Our plan will not approve the medical care your doctor or other medical provider wants to give you, and you believe that this care is covered by the plan.
3. You have received medical care or services that you believe should be covered by the plan, but we have said we will not pay for this care.
4. You have received and paid for medical care or services that you believe should be covered by the plan, and you want to ask our plan to reimburse you for this care.
5. You are being told that coverage for certain medical care you have been getting will be reduced or stopped, and you believe that reducing or stopping this care could harm your health.
  - **NOTE: If the coverage that will be stopped is for hospital care, home health care, skilled nursing facility care, or Comprehensive Outpatient Rehabilitation Facility (CORF) services,** you need to read a separate section of this chapter because special rules apply to these types of care. Here is what to read in those situations:
    - Chapter 9, Section 7: *How to ask us to cover a longer hospital stay if you think the doctor is discharging you too soon.*
    - Chapter 9, Section 8: *How to ask our plan to keep covering certain medical services if you think your coverage is ending too soon.* This section is about three services only: home health care, skilled nursing facility care, and Comprehensive Outpatient Rehabilitation Facility (CORF) services.
  - For *all other* situations that involve being told that medical care you have been getting will be stopped, use this section (Section 5) as your guide for what to do.



<b>Section 5.2</b>	<b>Step-by-step: How to ask for a coverage decision</b> (how to ask our plan to authorize or provide the medical care coverage you want)
--------------------	---

<b>Legal Terms</b>	When a coverage decision involves your medical care, it is called an “ <b>organization determination.</b> ”
--------------------	---

**Step 1: You ask our plan to make a coverage decision on the medical care you are requesting.** If your health requires a quick response, you should ask us to make a “**fast decision.**”

<b>Legal Terms</b>	A “fast decision” is called an “ <b>expedited decision.</b> ”
--------------------	---

*How to request coverage for the medical care you want*

- Start by calling, writing, or faxing our plan to make your request for us to provide coverage for the medical care you want. You, or your doctor, or your representative can do this.
- For the details on how to contact us, go to Chapter 2, Section 1 and look for the section called, *How to contact our plan when you are asking for a coverage decision about your medical care or Part D prescription drugs.*

*Generally we use the standard deadlines for giving you our decision*

When we give you our decision, we will use the “standard” deadlines unless we have agreed to use the “fast” deadlines. **A standard decision means we will give you an answer within 14 days** after we receive your request.

- **However, we can take up to 14 more days** if you ask for more time, or if we need information (such as medical records) that may benefit you. If we decide to take extra days to make the decision, we will tell you in writing.
- If you believe we should *not* take extra days, you can file a “fast complaint” about our decision to take extra days. When you file a fast complaint, we will give you an answer to your complaint within 24 hours. (The process for making a complaint is different from the process for coverage decisions and appeals. For more information about the process for making complaints, including fast complaints, see Section 10 of this chapter.)

*If your health requires it, ask us to give you a “fast decision”*

- **A fast decision means we will answer within 72 hours.**

- **However, we can take up to 14 more days** if we find that some information is missing that may benefit you, or if you need to get information to us for the review. If we decide to take extra days, we will tell you in writing.
- If you believe we should *not* take extra days, you can file a “fast complaint” about our decision to take extra days. (For more information about the process for making complaints, including fast complaints, see Section 10 of this chapter.) We will call you as soon as we make the decision.
- **To get a fast decision, you must meet two requirements:**
  - You can get a fast decision only if you are asking for coverage for medical care *you have not yet received*. (You cannot get a fast decision if your request is about payment for medical care you have already received.)
  - You can get a fast decision *only* if using the standard deadlines could *cause serious harm to your health or hurt your ability to function*.
- **If your doctor tells us that your health requires a “fast decision,” we will automatically agree to give you a fast decision.**
- If you ask for a fast decision on your own, without your doctor’s support, our plan will decide whether your health requires that we give you a fast decision.
  - If we decide that your medical condition does not meet the requirements for a fast decision, we will send you a letter that says so (and we will use the standard deadlines instead).
  - This letter will tell you that if your doctor asks for the fast decision, we will automatically give a fast decision.
  - The letter will also tell how you can file a “fast complaint” about our decision to give you a standard decision instead of the fast decision you requested. (For more information about the process for making complaints, including fast complaints, see Section 10 of this chapter.)

**Step 2: Our plan considers your request for medical care coverage and we give you our answer.**

*Deadlines for a “fast” coverage decision*

- Generally, for a fast decision, we will give you our answer **within 72 hours**.
  - As explained above, we can take up to 14 more days under certain circumstances. If we decide to take extra days to make the decision, we will tell you in writing. If we take extra days, it is called “an extended time period.”
  - If we do not give you our answer within 72 hours (or if there is an extended time period, by the end of that period), you have the right to appeal. Section 5.3 below tells how to make an appeal.
- **If our answer is yes to part or all of what you requested**, we must authorize or provide the medical care coverage we have agreed to provide within 72 hours after

we received your request. If we extended the time needed to make our decision, we will provide the coverage by the end of that extended period.

- **If our answer is no to part or all of what you requested,** we will send you a written statement that explains why we said no.

#### *Deadlines for a “standard” coverage decision*

- Generally, for a standard decision, we will give you our answer **within 14 days of receiving your request.**
  - We can take up to 14 more days (“an extended time period”) under certain circumstances. If we decide to take extra days to make the decision, we will tell you in writing.
  - If we do not give you our answer within 14 days (or if there is an extended time period, by the end of that period), you have the right to appeal. Section 5.3 below tells how to make an appeal.
- **If our answer is yes to part or all of what you requested,** we must authorize or provide the coverage we have agreed to provide within 14 days after we received your request. If we extended the time needed to make our decision, we will provide the coverage by the end of that extended period.
- **If our answer is no to part or all of what you requested,** we will send you a written statement that explains why we said no.

#### **Step 3: If we say no to your request for coverage for medical care, you decide if you want to make an appeal.**

- If our plan says no, you have the right to ask us to reconsider – and perhaps change – this decision by making an appeal. Making an appeal means making another try to get the medical care coverage you want.
- If you decide to make appeal, it means you are going on to Level 1 of the appeals process (see Section 5.3 below).

#### **Section 5.3**

#### **Step-by-step: How to make a Level 1 Appeal**

(how to ask for a review of a medical care coverage decision made by our plan)

#### **Legal Terms**

When you start the appeal process by making an appeal, it is called the “first level of appeal” or a “Level 1 Appeal.”

An appeal to the plan about a medical care coverage decision is called a plan “**reconsideration.**”

**Step 1: You contact our plan and make your appeal.** If your health requires a quick response, you must ask for a “fast appeal.”

*What to do*

- **To start an appeal you, your representative, or in some cases your doctor must contact our plan.** For details on how to reach us for any purpose related to your appeal, go to Chapter 2, Section 1 look for section called, *How to contact our plan when you are making an appeal about your medical care or Part D prescription drugs.*
- **If you are asking for a standard appeal, make your standard appeal in writing by submitting a signed request.**
- **If you are asking for a fast appeal, make your appeal in writing or call us** at the phone number shown in Chapter 2, Section 1 (*How to contact our plan when you are making an appeal about your medical care or Part D prescription drugs*).
- **You must make your appeal request within 60 calendar days** from the date on the written notice we sent to tell you our answer to your request for a coverage decision. If you miss this deadline and have a good reason for missing it, we may give you more time to make your appeal.
- **You can ask for a copy of the information regarding your medical decision and add more information to support your appeal.**
  - You have the right to ask us for a copy of the information regarding your appeal. We are allowed to charge a fee for copying and sending this information to you.
  - If you wish, you and your doctor may give us additional information to support your appeal.

*If your health requires it, ask for a “fast appeal” (you can make an oral request)*

<b>Legal Terms</b>	A “fast appeal” is also called an “expedited appeal.”
--------------------	---

- If you are appealing a decision our plan made about coverage for care you have not yet received, you and/or your doctor will need to decide if you need a “fast appeal.”
- The requirements and procedures for getting a “fast appeal” are the same as those for getting a “fast decision.” To ask for a fast appeal, follow the instructions for asking for a fast decision. (These instructions are given earlier in this section.)
- If your doctor tells us that your health requires a “fast appeal,” we will give you a fast appeal.

## **Step 2: Our plan considers your appeal and we give you our answer.**

- When our plan is reviewing your appeal, we take another careful look at all of the information about your request for coverage of medical care. We check to see if we were following all the rules when we said no to your request.
- We will gather more information if we need it. We may contact you or your doctor to get more information.

### *Deadlines for a “fast” appeal*

- When we are using the fast deadlines, we must give you our answer **within 72 hours after we receive your appeal**. We will give you our answer sooner if your health requires us to do so.
  - However, if you ask for more time, or if we need to gather more information that may benefit you, we **can take up to 14 more calendar days**. If we decide to take extra days to make the decision, we will tell you in writing.
  - If we do not give you an answer within 72 hours (or by the end of the extended time period if we took extra days), we are required to automatically send your request on to Level 2 of the appeals process, where it will be reviewed by an independent organization. Later in this section, we tell you about this organization and explain what happens at Level 2 of the appeals process.
- **If our answer is yes to part or all of what you requested**, we must authorize or provide the coverage we have agreed to provide within 72 hours after we receive your appeal.
- **If our answer is no to part or all of what you requested**, we will send you a written denial notice informing you that we have automatically sent your appeal to the Independent Review Organization for a Level 2 Appeal.

### *Deadlines for a “standard” appeal*

- If we are using the standard deadlines, we must give you our answer **within 30 calendar days** after we receive your appeal if your appeal is about coverage for services you have not yet received. We will give you our decision sooner if your health condition requires us to.
  - However, if you ask for more time, or if we need to gather more information that may benefit you, we **can take up to 14 more calendar days**.
  - If we do not give you an answer by the deadline above (or by the end of the extended time period if we took extra days), we are required to send your request on to Level 2 of the appeals process, where it will be reviewed by an independent outside organization. Later in this section, we tell about this review organization and explain what happens at Level 2 of the appeals process.

- **If our answer is yes to part or all of what you requested**, we must authorize or provide the coverage we have agreed to provide within 30 days after we receive your appeal.
- **If our answer is no to part or all of what you requested**, we will send you a written denial notice informing you that we have automatically sent your appeal to the Independent Review Organization for a Level 2 Appeal.

**Step 3: If our plan says no to part or all of your appeal, your case will *automatically* be sent on to the next level of the appeals process.**

- To make sure we were following all the rules when we said no to your appeal, **our plan is required to send your appeal to the “Independent Review Organization.”** When we do this, it means that your appeal is going on to the next level of the appeals process, which is Level 2.

<b>Section 5.4</b>	<b>Step-by-step: How to make a Level 2 Appeal</b>
--------------------	---

If our plan says no to your Level 1 Appeal, your case will *automatically* be sent on to the next level of the appeals process. During the Level 2 Appeal, the **Independent Review Organization** reviews the decision our plan made when we said no to your first appeal. This organization decides whether the decision we made should be changed.

<b>Legal Terms</b>	The formal name for the “Independent Review Organization” is the <b>“Independent Review Entity.”</b> It is sometimes called the <b>“IRE.”</b>
--------------------	---

**Step 1: The Independent Review Organization reviews your appeal.**

- **The Independent Review Organization is an outside, independent organization that is hired by Medicare.** This organization is not connected with our plan and it is not a government agency. This organization is a company chosen by Medicare to handle the job of being the Independent Review Organization. Medicare oversees its work.
- We will send the information about your appeal to this organization. This information is called your “case file.” **You have the right to ask us for a copy of your case file.** We are allowed to charge you a fee for copying and sending this information to you.
- You have a right to give the Independent Review Organization additional information to support your appeal.
- Reviewers at the Independent Review Organization will take a careful look at all of the information related to your appeal.

*If you had a “fast” appeal at Level 1, you will also have a “fast” appeal at Level 2*

- If you had a fast appeal to our plan at Level 1, you will automatically receive a fast appeal at Level 2. The review organization must give you an answer to your Level 2 Appeal **within 72 hours** of when it receives your appeal.
- However, if the Independent Review Organization needs to gather more information that may benefit you, **it can take up to 14 more calendar days**.

*If you had a “standard” appeal at Level 1, you will also have a “standard” appeal at Level 2*

- If you had a standard appeal to our plan at Level 1, you will automatically receive a standard appeal at Level 2. The review organization must give you an answer to your Level 2 Appeal **within 30 calendar days** of when it receives your appeal.
- However, if the Independent Review Organization needs to gather more information that may benefit you, **it can take up to 14 more calendar days**.

### **Step 2: The Independent Review Organization gives you their answer.**

The Independent Review Organization will tell you its decision in writing and explain the reasons for it.

- **If the review organization says yes to part or all of what you requested**, we must authorize the medical care coverage within 72 hours or provide the service within 14 calendar days after we receive the decision from the review organization.
- **If this organization says no to part or all of your appeal**, it means they agree with our plan that your request (or part of your request) for coverage for medical care should not be approved. (This is called “upholding the decision.” It is also called “turning down your appeal.”)
  - The notice you get from the Independent Review Organization will tell you in writing if your case meets the requirements for continuing with the appeals process. For example, to continue and make another appeal at Level 3, the dollar value of the medical care coverage you are requesting must meet a certain minimum. If the dollar value of the coverage you are requesting is too low, you cannot make another appeal, which means that the decision at Level 2 is final.

### **Step 3: If your case meets the requirements, you choose whether you want to take your appeal further.**

- There are three additional levels in the appeals process after Level 2 (for a total of five levels of appeal).
- If your Level 2 Appeal is turned down and you meet the requirements to continue with the appeals process, you must decide whether you want to go on to Level 3 and make a third appeal. The details on how to do this are in the written notice you got after your Level 2 Appeal.

- The Level 3 Appeal is handled by an administrative law judge. Section 9 in this chapter tells more about Levels 3, 4, and 5 of the appeals process.

<b>Section 5.5</b>	<b>What if you are asking our plan to pay you for our share of a bill you have received for medical care?</b>
--------------------	---

If you want to ask our plan for payment for medical care, start by reading Chapter 7 of this booklet: *Asking the plan to pay its share of a bill you have received for covered services or drugs*. Chapter 7 describes the situations in which you may need to ask for reimbursement or to pay a bill you have received from a provider. It also tells how to send us the paperwork that asks us for payment.

### **Asking for reimbursement is asking for a coverage decision from our plan**

If you send us the paperwork that asks for reimbursement, you are asking us to make a coverage decision (for more information about coverage decisions, see Section 4.1 of this chapter). To make this coverage decision, we will check to see if the medical care you paid for is a covered service (see Chapter 4: *Medical Benefits Chart (what is covered and what you pay)*). We will also check to see if you followed all the rules for using your coverage for medical care (these rules are given in Chapter 3 of this booklet: *Using the plan's coverage for your medical services*).

### **We will say yes or no to your request**

- If the medical care you paid for is covered and you followed all the rules, we will send you the payment for our share of the cost of your medical care within 60 calendar days after we receive your request. Or, if you have not paid for the services, we will send the payment directly to the provider. When we send the payment, it is the same as saying *yes* to your request for a coverage decision.)
- If the medical care is *not* covered, or you did *not* follow all the rules, we will not send payment. Instead, we will send you a letter that says we will not pay for the services and the reasons why. (When we turn down your request for payment, it is the same as saying *no* to your request for a coverage decision.)

### **What if you ask for payment and we say that we will not pay?**

If you do not agree with our decision to turn you down, **you can make an appeal**. If you make an appeal, it means you are asking us to change the coverage decision we made when we turned down your request for payment.

**To make this appeal, follow the process for appeals that we describe in part 5.3 of this section.** Go to this part for step-by-step instructions. When you are following these instructions, please note:

- If you make an appeal for reimbursement, we must give you our answer within 60 calendar days after we receive your appeal. (If you are asking us to pay you back for medical care you have already received and paid for yourself, you are not allowed to ask for a fast appeal.)
- If the Independent Review Organization reverses our decision to deny payment, we must send the payment you have requested to you or to the provider within 30 calendar days. If the answer to your appeal is yes at any stage of the appeals process after Level 2, we must send the payment you requested to you or to the provider within 60 calendar days.

---

## SECTION 6 Your Part D prescription drugs: How to ask for a coverage decision or make an appeal

---



Have you read Section 4 of this chapter (*A guide to “the basics” of coverage decisions and appeals*)? If not, you may want to read it before you start this section.

<b>Section 6.1</b>	<b>This section tells you what to do if you have problems getting a Part D drug or you want us to pay you back for a Part D drug</b>
--------------------	--

Your benefits as a member of our plan include coverage for many outpatient prescription drugs. Medicare calls these outpatient prescription drugs “Part D drugs.” You can get these drugs as long as they are included in our plan’s *List of Covered Drugs (Formulary)* and they are medically necessary for you, as determined by your primary care doctor or other provider.

- **This section is about your Part D drugs only.** To keep things simple, we generally say “drug” in the rest of this section, instead of repeating “covered outpatient prescription drug” or “Part D drug” every time.
- For details about what we mean by Part D drugs, the *List of Covered Drugs*, rules and restrictions on coverage, and cost information, see Chapter 5 (*Using our plan’s coverage for your Part D prescription drugs*) and Chapter 6 (*What you pay for your Part D prescription drugs*).

### Part D coverage decisions and appeals

As discussed in Section 4 of this chapter, a coverage decision is a decision we make about your benefits and coverage or about the amount we will pay for your drugs.

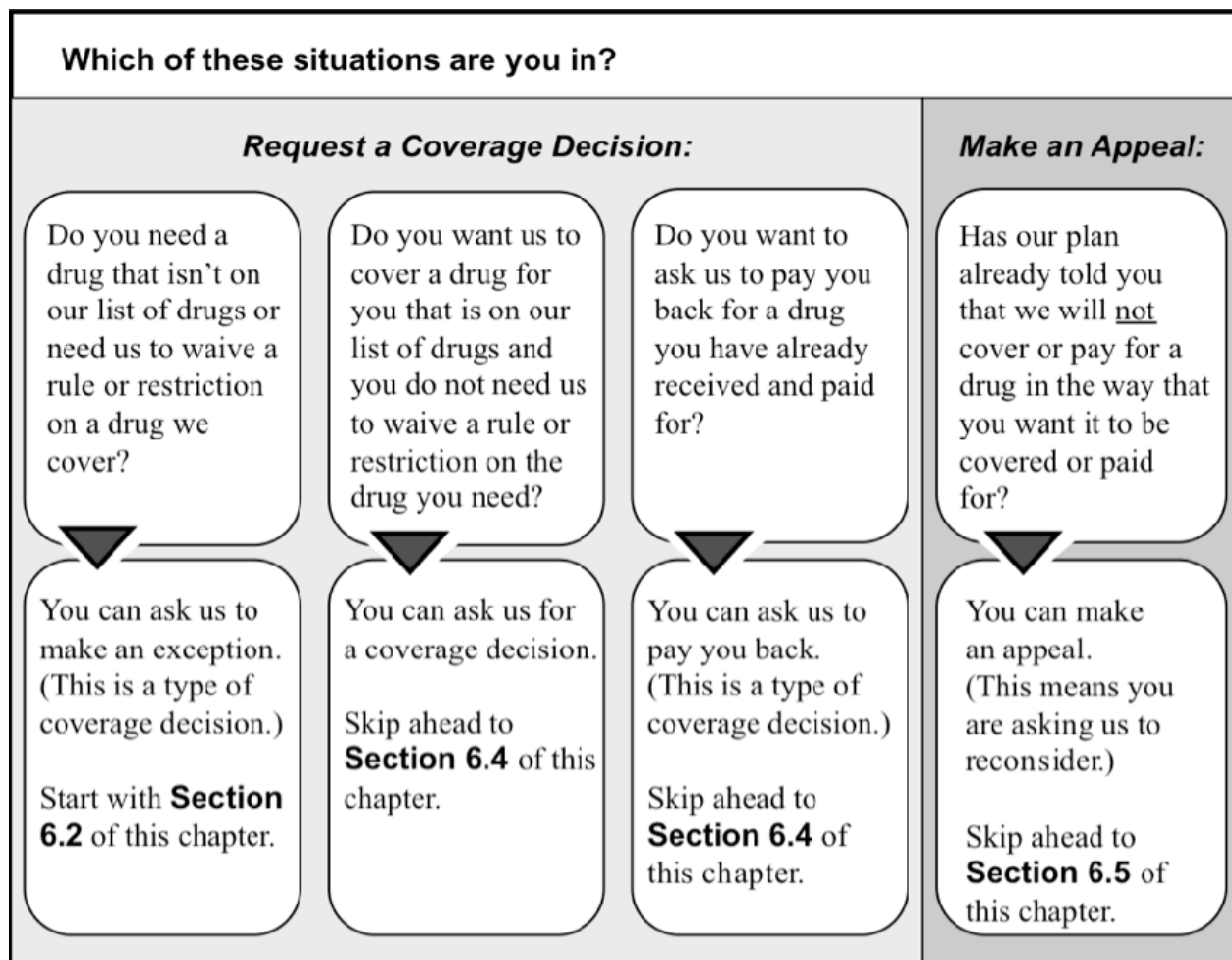
<b>Legal Terms</b>	A coverage decision is often called an “ <b>initial determination</b> ” or “initial decision.” When the coverage decision is about your Part D drugs, the initial determination is called a “ <b>coverage determination</b> .”
--------------------	--

Here are examples of coverage decisions you ask us to make about your Part D drugs:

- You ask us to make an exception, including:
  - Asking us to cover a Part D drug that is not on the plan's *List of Covered Drugs*
  - Asking us to waive a restriction on the plan's coverage for a drug (such as limits on the amount of the drug you can get)
  - Asking to pay a lower cost-sharing amount for a covered non-preferred drug
- You ask us whether a drug is covered for you and whether you satisfy any applicable coverage rules. (For example, when your drug is on the plan's *List of Covered Drugs* but we require you to get approval from us before we will cover it for you.)
- You ask us to pay for a prescription drug you already bought. This is a request for a coverage decision about payment.

If you disagree with a coverage decision we have made, you can appeal our decision.

This section tells you both how to ask for coverage decisions and how to request an appeal. Use this guide to help you determine which part has information for your situation:



**Section 6.2 What is an exception?**

If a drug is not covered in the way you would like it to be covered, you can ask the plan to make an “exception.” An exception is a type of coverage decision. Similar to other types of coverage decisions, if we turn down your request for an exception, you can appeal our decision.

When you ask for an exception, your doctor or other prescriber will need to explain the medical reasons why you need the exception approved. We will then consider your request. Here are three examples of exceptions that you or your doctor or other prescriber can ask us to make:

- 1. Covering a Part D drug for you that is not on our plan’s *List of Covered Drugs (Formulary)*.** (We call it the “Drug List” for short.)

<b>Legal Terms</b>	Asking for coverage of a drug that is not on the Drug List is sometimes called asking for a “ <b>formulary exception.</b> ”
--------------------	---

- If we agree to make an exception and cover a drug that is not on the Drug List, you will need to pay the cost-sharing amount that applies to drugs in Tier 3. You cannot ask for an exception to the copayment or co-insurance amount we require you to pay for the drug.
- You cannot ask for coverage of any “excluded drugs” or other non-Part D drugs which Medicare does not cover. (For more information about excluded drugs, see Chapter 5.)

**2. Removing a restriction on the plan’s coverage for a covered drug.** There are extra rules or restrictions that apply to certain drugs on the plan’s *List of Covered Drugs* (for more information, go to Chapter 5 and look for Section 5).

<b>Legal Terms</b>	Asking for removal of a restriction on coverage for a drug is sometimes called asking for a “ <b>formulary exception.</b> ”
--------------------	---

- The extra rules and restrictions on coverage for certain drugs include:
  - *Being required to use the generic version* of a drug instead of the brand-name drug.
  - *Getting plan approval in advance* before we will agree to cover the drug for you. (This is sometimes called “prior authorization.”)
  - *Being required to try a different drug first* before we will agree to cover the drug you are asking for. (This is sometimes called “step therapy.”)
  - *Quantity limits.* For some drugs, there are restrictions on the amount of the drug you can have.
- If our plan agrees to make an exception and waive a restriction for you, you can ask for an exception to the copayment or co-insurance amount we require you to pay for the drug.

**3. Changing coverage of a drug to a lower cost-sharing tier.** Every drug on the plan’s Drug List is in one of four cost-sharing tiers. In general, the lower the cost-sharing tier number, the less you will pay as your share of the cost of the drug.

<b>Legal Terms</b>	Asking to pay a lower preferred price for a covered non-preferred drug is sometimes called asking for a “ <b>tiering exception.</b> ”
--------------------	---

- If your drug is in Tier 3 you can ask us to cover it at the cost-sharing amount that applies to drugs in Tier 2. This would lower your share of the cost for the drug.
- You cannot ask us to change the cost-sharing tier for any drug in Tier 4.

### Section 6.3 Important things to know about asking for exceptions

#### Your doctor must tell us the medical reasons

Your doctor or other prescriber must give us a written statement that explains the medical reasons for requesting an exception. For a faster decision, include this medical information from your doctor or other prescriber when you ask for the exception.

Typically, our Drug List includes more than one drug for treating a particular condition. These different possibilities are called “alternative” drugs. If an alternative drug would be just as effective as the drug you are requesting and would not cause more side effects or other health problems, we will generally *not* approve your request for an exception.

#### Our plan can say yes or no to your request

- If we approve your request for an exception, our approval usually is valid until the end of the plan year. This is true as long as your doctor continues to prescribe the drug for you and that drug continues to be safe and effective for treating your condition.
- If we say no to your request for an exception, you can ask for a review of our decision by making an appeal. Section 6.5 tells how to make an appeal if we say no.

The next section tells you how to ask for a coverage decision, including an exception.

### Section 6.4 Step-by-step: How to ask for a coverage decision, including an exception

**Step 1:** You ask our plan to make a coverage decision about the drug(s) or payment you need. If your health requires a quick response, you must ask us to make a “fast decision.” You cannot ask for a fast decision if you are asking us to pay you back for a drug you already bought.

#### *What to do*

- **Request the type of coverage decision you want.** Start by calling, writing, or faxing our plan to make your request. You, your representative, or your doctor (or other prescriber) can do this. For the details, go to Chapter 2, Section 1 and look for the section called, *How to contact us when you are asking for a coverage decision about your medical care or Part D prescription drugs*. Or if you are asking us to pay you back for a drug, go to the section called, *Where to send a request that asks us to pay for our share of the cost for medical care or a drug you have received*.
- **You or your doctor or someone else who is acting on your behalf** can ask for a coverage decision. Section 4 of this chapter tells how you can give written permission to someone else to act as your representative. You can also have a lawyer act on your behalf.

- **If you want to ask our plan to pay you back for a drug,** start by reading Chapter 7 of this booklet: *Asking the plan to pay its share of a bill you have received for medical services or drugs.* Chapter 7 describes the situations in which you may need to ask for reimbursement. It also tells how to send us the paperwork that asks us to pay you back for our share of the cost of a drug you have paid for.
- **If you are requesting an exception, provide the “doctor’s statement.”** Your doctor or other prescriber must give us the medical reasons for the drug exception you are requesting. (We call this the “doctor’s statement.”) Your doctor or other prescriber can fax or mail the statement to our plan. Or your doctor or other prescriber can tell us on the phone and follow up by faxing or mailing the signed statement. See Sections 6.2 and 6.3 for more information about exception requests.

*If your health requires it, ask us to give you a “fast decision”*

<b>Legal Terms</b>	A “fast decision” is called an <b>“expedited decision.”</b>
--------------------	---

- When we give you our decision, we will use the “standard” deadlines unless we have agreed to use the “fast” deadlines. A standard decision means we will give you an answer within 72 hours after we receive your doctor’s statement. A fast decision means we will answer within 24 hours.
- **To get a fast decision, you must meet two requirements:**
  - You can get a fast decision only if you are asking for a *drug you have not yet received.* (You cannot get a fast decision if you are asking us to pay you back for a drug you are already bought.)
  - You can get a fast decision *only* if using the standard deadlines could *cause serious harm to your health or hurt your ability to function.*
- **If your doctor or other prescriber tells us that your health requires a “fast decision,” we will automatically agree to give you a fast decision.**
- If you ask for a fast decision on your own (without your doctor’s or other prescriber’s support), our plan will decide whether your health requires that we give you a fast decision.
  - If we decide that your medical condition does not meet the requirements for a fast decision, we will send you a letter that says so (and we will use the standard deadlines instead).
  - This letter will tell you that if your doctor or other prescriber asks for the fast decision, we will automatically give a fast decision.
  - The letter will also tell how you can file a complaint about our decision to give you a standard decision instead of the fast decision you requested. It tells how to file a “fast” complaint, which means you would get our answer to your complaint within 24 hours. (The process for making a complaint is different

from the process for coverage decisions and appeals. For more information about the process for making complaints, see Section 10 of this chapter.)

## **Step 2: Our plan considers your request and we give you our answer.**

### *Deadlines for a “fast” coverage decision*

- If we are using the fast deadlines, we must give you our answer **within 24 hours**.
  - Generally, this means within 24 hours after we receive your request. If you are requesting an exception, we will give you our answer within 24 hours after we receive your doctor’s statement supporting your request. We will give you our answer sooner if your health requires us to.
  - If we do not meet this deadline, we are required to send your request on to Level 2 of the appeals process, where it will be reviewed by an independent outside organization. Later in this section, we tell about this review organization and explain what happens at Appeal Level 2.
- **If our answer is yes to part or all of what you requested**, we must provide the coverage we have agreed to provide within 24 hours after we receive your request or doctor’s statement supporting your request.
- **If our answer is no to part or all of what you requested**, we will send you a written statement that explains why we said no.

### *Deadlines for a “standard” coverage decision about a drug you have not yet received*

- If we are using the standard deadlines, we must give you our answer **within 72 hours**.
  - Generally, this means within 72 hours after we receive your request. If you are requesting an exception, we will give you our answer within 72 hours after we receive your doctor’s statement supporting your request. We will give you our answer sooner if your health requires us to.
  - If we do not meet this deadline, we are required to send your request on to Level 2 of the appeals process, where it will be reviewed by an independent organization. Later in this section, we tell about this review organization and explain what happens at Appeal Level 2.
- **If our answer is yes to part or all of what you requested –**
  - If we approve your request for coverage, we must **provide the coverage** we have agreed to provide **within 72 hours** after we receive your request or doctor’s statement supporting your request.
- **If our answer is no to part or all of what you requested**, we will send you a written statement that explains why we said no.

*Deadlines for a “standard” coverage decision about payment for a drug you have already bought*

- We must give you our answer **within 14 calendar days** after we receive your request.
  - If we do not meet this deadline, we are required to send your request on to Level 2 of the appeals process, where it will be reviewed by an independent organization. Later in this section, we tell about this review organization and explain what happens at Appeal Level 2.
- **If our answer is yes to part or all of what you requested**, we are also required to make payment to you within 14 calendar days after we receive your request.
- **If our answer is no to part or all of what you requested**, we will send you a written statement that explains why we said no.

**Step 3: If we say no to your coverage request, you decide if you want to make an appeal.**

- If our plan says no, you have the right to request an appeal. Requesting an appeal means asking us to reconsider – and possibly change – the decision we made.

**Section 6.5**

**Step-by-step: How to make a Level 1 Appeal**

(how to ask for a review of a coverage decision made by our plan)

**Legal Terms** When you start the appeals process by making an appeal, it is called the “first level of appeal” or a “Level 1 Appeal.”

An appeal to the plan about a Part D drug coverage decision is called a plan “redetermination.”

**Step 1: You contact our plan and make your Level 1 Appeal.** If your health requires a quick response, you must ask for a “fast appeal.”

*What to do*

- **To start your appeal, you (or your representative or your doctor or other prescriber) must contact our plan.**
  - For details on how to reach us by phone, fax, or mail for any purpose related to your appeal, go to Chapter 2, Section 1, and look for the section called, *How to contact us when you are making an appeal about your medical services or Part D prescription drugs.*
- **If you are asking for a standard appeal, make your appeal by submitting a written request.**

- **If you are asking for a fast appeal, you may make your appeal in writing or you may call us at the phone number shown in Chapter 2, Section 1** (How to contact us when you are making an appeal about your medical services or Part D prescription drugs).
- **You must make your appeal request within 60 calendar days** from the date on the written notice we sent to tell you our answer to your request for a coverage decision. If you miss this deadline and have a good reason for missing it, we may give you more time to make your appeal.
- **You can ask for a copy of the information in your appeal and add more information.**
  - You have the right to ask us for a copy of the information regarding your appeal. We are allowed to charge a fee for copying and sending this information to you.
  - If you wish, you and your doctor or other prescriber may give us additional information to support your appeal.

*If your health requires it, ask for a “fast appeal”*

<b>Legal Terms</b>	A “fast appeal” is also called an “ <b>expedited appeal.</b> ”
--------------------	--

- If you are appealing a decision our plan made about a drug you have not yet received, you and your doctor or other prescriber will need to decide if you need a “fast appeal.”
- The requirements for getting a “fast appeal” are the same as those for getting a “fast decision” in Section 6.4 of this chapter.

## **Step 2: Our plan considers your appeal and we give you our answer.**

- When our plan is reviewing your appeal, we take another careful look at all of the information about your coverage request. We check to see if we were following all the rules when we said no to your request. We may contact you or your doctor or other prescriber to get more information.

### *Deadlines for a “fast” appeal*

- If we are using the fast deadlines, we must give you our answer **within 72 hours after we receive your appeal.** We will give you our answer sooner if your health requires it.
  - If we do not give you an answer within 72 hours, we are required to send your request on to Level 2 of the appeals process, where it will be reviewed by an Independent Review Organization. Later in this section, we tell about this review organization and explain what happens at Level 2 of the appeals process.

- **If our answer is yes to part or all of what you requested**, we must provide the coverage we have agreed to provide within 72 hours after we receive your appeal.
- **If our answer is no to part or all of what you requested**, we will send you a written statement that explains why we said no and how to appeal our decision.

### *Deadlines for a “standard” appeal*

- If we are using the standard deadlines, we must give you our answer **within 7 calendar days** after we receive your appeal. We will give you our decision sooner if you have not received the drug yet and your health condition requires us to do so.
  - If we do not give you a decision within 7 calendar days, we are required to send your request on to Level 2 of the appeals process, where it will be reviewed by an Independent Review Organization. Later in this section, we tell about this review organization and explain what happens at Level 2 of the appeals process.
- **If our answer is yes to part or all of what you requested –**
  - If we approve a request for coverage, we must **provide the coverage** we have agreed to provide as quickly as your health requires, but **no later than 7 calendar days** after we receive your appeal.
  - If we approve a request to pay you back for a drug you already bought, we are required to **send payment to you within 30 calendar days** after we receive your appeal request.
- **If our answer is no to part or all of what you requested**, we will send you a written statement that explains why we said no and how to appeal our decision.

### **Step 3: If we say no to your appeal, you decide if you want to continue with the appeals process and make *another* appeal.**

- If our plan says no to your appeal, you then choose whether to accept this decision or continue by making another appeal.
  - If you decide to make another appeal, it means your appeal is going on to Level 2 of the appeals process (see below).

<b>Section 6.6</b>	<b>Step-by-step: How to make a Level 2 Appeal</b>
--------------------	---

If our plan says no to your appeal, you then choose whether to accept this decision or continue by making another appeal. If you decide to go on to a Level 2 Appeal, the **Independent Review Organization** reviews the decision our plan made when we said no to your first appeal. This organization decides whether the decision we made should be changed.

<b>Legal Terms</b>	The formal name for the “Independent Review Organization” is the “ <b>Independent Review Entity.</b> ” It is sometimes called the “ <b>IRE.</b> ”
--------------------	---

**Step 1: To make a Level 2 Appeal, you must contact the Independent Review Organization and ask for a review of your case.**

- If our plan says no to your Level 1 Appeal, the written notice we send you will include **instructions on how to make a Level 2 Appeal** with the Independent Review Organization. These instructions will tell who can make this Level 2 Appeal, what deadlines you must follow, and how to reach the review organization.
- When you make an appeal to the Independent Review Organization, we will send the information we have about your appeal to this organization. This information is called your “case file.” **You have the right to ask us for a copy of your case file.** We are allowed to charge you a fee for copying and sending this information to you.
- You have a right to give the Independent Review Organization additional information to support your appeal.

**Step 2: The Independent Review Organization does a review of your appeal and gives you an answer.**

- **The Independent Review Organization is an outside, independent organization that is hired by Medicare.** This organization is not connected with our plan and it is not a government agency. This organization is a company chosen by Medicare to review our decisions about your Part D benefits with our plan.
- Reviewers at the Independent Review Organization will take a careful look at all of the information related to your appeal. The organization will tell you its decision in writing and explain the reasons for it.

*Deadlines for “fast” appeal at Level 2*

- If your health requires it, ask the Independent Review Organization for a “fast appeal.”
- If the review organization agrees to give you a “fast appeal,” the review organization must give you an answer to your Level 2 Appeal **within 72 hours** after it receives your appeal request.
- **If the Independent Review Organization says yes to part or all of what you requested,** we must provide the drug coverage that was approved by the review organization **within 24 hours** after we receive the decision from the review organization.

*Deadlines for “standard” appeal at Level 2*

- If you have a standard appeal at Level 2, the review organization must give you an answer to your Level 2 Appeal **within 7 calendar days** after it receives your appeal.
- **If the Independent Review Organization says yes to part or all of what you requested –**

- If the Independent Review Organization approves a request for coverage, we must **provide the drug coverage** that was approved by the review organization **within 72 hours** after we receive the decision from the review organization.
- If the Independent Review Organization approves a request to pay you back for a drug you already bought, we are required to **send payment to you within 30 calendar days** after we receive the decision from the review organization.

### **What if the review organization says no to your appeal?**

If this organization says no to your appeal, it means the organization agrees with our decision not to approve your request. (This is called “upholding the decision.” It is also called “turning down your appeal.”)

To continue and make another appeal at Level 3, the dollar value of the drug coverage you are requesting must meet a minimum amount. If the dollar value of the coverage you are requesting is too low, you cannot make another appeal and the decision at Level 2 is final. The notice you get from the Independent Review Organization will tell you if the dollar value of the coverage you are requesting is high enough to continue with the appeals process.

### **Step 3: If the dollar value of the coverage you are requesting meets the requirement, you choose whether you want to take your appeal further.**

- There are three additional levels in the appeals process after Level 2 (for a total of five levels of appeal).
- If your Level 2 Appeal is turned down and you meet the requirements to continue with the appeals process, you must decide whether you want to go on to Level 3 and make a third appeal. If you decide to make a third appeal, the details on how to do this are in the written notice you got after your second appeal.
- The Level 3 Appeal is handled by an administrative law judge. Section 9 in this chapter tells more about Levels 3, 4, and 5 of the appeals process.

---

## **SECTION 7      How to ask us to cover a longer hospital stay if you think the doctor is discharging you too soon**

---

When you are admitted to a hospital, you have the right to get all of your covered hospital services that are necessary to diagnose and treat your illness or injury. For more information about our coverage for your hospital care, including any limitations on this coverage, see Chapter 4 of this booklet: *Medical Benefits Chart (what is covered and what you pay)*.

During your hospital stay, your doctor and the hospital staff will be working with you to prepare for the day when you will leave the hospital. They will also help arrange for care you may need after you leave.

- The day you leave the hospital is called your “**discharge date.**” Our plan’s coverage of your hospital stay ends on this date.
- When your discharge date has been decided, your doctor or the hospital staff will let you know.
- If you think you are being asked to leave the hospital too soon, you can ask for a longer hospital stay and your request will be considered. This section tells you how to ask.

<b>Section 7.1</b>	<b>During your hospital stay, you will get a written notice from Medicare that tells about your rights</b>
--------------------	--

During your hospital stay, you will be given a written notice called *An Important Message from Medicare about Your Rights*. Everyone with Medicare gets a copy of this notice whenever they are admitted to a hospital. Someone at the hospital is supposed to give it to you within two days after you are admitted.

- 1. Read this notice carefully and ask questions if you do not understand it.** It tells you about your rights as a hospital patient, including:
  - Your right to receive Medicare-covered services during and after your hospital stay, as ordered by your doctor. This includes the right to know what these services are, who will pay for them, and where you can get them.
  - Your right to be involved in any decisions about your hospital stay, and know who will pay for it.
  - Where to report any concerns you have about quality of your hospital care.
  - What to do if you think you are being discharged from the hospital too soon.

<b>Legal Terms</b>	The written notice from Medicare tells you how you can “ <b>make an appeal.</b> ” Making an appeal is a formal, legal way to ask for a delay in your discharge date so that your hospital care will be covered for a longer time. (Section 7.2 below tells how to make this appeal.)
--------------------	--

- 2. You must sign the written notice to show that you received it and understand your rights.**
  - You or someone who is acting on your behalf must sign the notice. (Section 4 of this chapter tells how you can give written permission to someone else to act as your representative.)
  - Signing the notice shows *only* that you have received the information about your rights. The notice does not give your discharge date (your doctor or hospital staff will tell you your discharge date). Signing the notice **does not mean** you are agreeing on a discharge date.

3. **Keep your copy** of the signed notice so you will have the information about making an appeal (or reporting a concern about quality of care) handy if you need it.
  - If you sign the notice more than 2 days before the day you leave the hospital, you will get another copy before you are scheduled to be discharged.
  - To look at a copy of this notice in advance, you can call Member Services or 1-800 MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227), 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. TTY users should call 1-877-486-2048. You can also see it online at <http://www.cms.hhs.gov>.

<b>Section 7.2</b>	<b>Step-by-step: How to make a Level 1 Appeal to change your hospital discharge date</b>
--------------------	--

If you want to ask for your hospital services to be covered by our plan for a longer time, you will need to use the appeals process to make this request. Before you start, understand what you need to do and what the deadlines are.

- **Follow the process.** Each step in the first two levels of the appeals process is explained below.
- **Meet the deadlines.** The deadlines are important. Be sure that you understand and follow the deadlines that apply to things you must do.
- **Ask for help if you need it.** If you have questions or need help at any time, please call Member Services (phone numbers are on the front cover of this booklet). Or call your State Health Insurance Assistance Program, a government organization that provides personalized assistance (see Section 2 of this chapter).

**During a Level 1 Appeal, the Quality Improvement Organization reviews your appeal.** It checks to see if your planned discharge date is medically appropriate for you.

<b>Legal Terms</b>	When you start the appeal process by making an appeal, it is called the “first level of appeal” or a “Level 1 Appeal.”
--------------------	--

**Step 1: Contact the Quality Improvement Organization in your state and ask for a “fast review” of your hospital discharge. You must act quickly.**

<b>Legal Terms</b>	A “fast review” is also called an “ <b>immediate review</b> ” or an “ <b>expedited review.</b> ”
--------------------	--

*What is the Quality Improvement Organization?*

- This organization is a group of doctors and other health care professionals who are paid by the Federal government. These experts are not part of our plan. This organization is paid by Medicare to check on and help improve the quality of care for people with Medicare. This includes reviewing hospital discharge dates for people with Medicare.

### *How can you contact this organization?*

- The written notice you received (*An Important Message from Medicare*) tells you how to reach this organization. (Or find the name, address, and phone number of the Quality Improvement Organization for your state in Chapter 2, Section 4, of this booklet.)

### *Act quickly:*

- To make your appeal, you must contact the Quality Improvement Organization *before* you leave the hospital and **no later than your planned discharge date**. (Your “planned discharge date” is the date that has been set for you to leave the hospital.)
  - If you meet this deadline, you are allowed to stay in the hospital *after* your discharge date *without paying for it* while you wait to get the decision on your appeal from the Quality Improvement Organization.
  - If you do *not* meet this deadline, and you decide to stay in the hospital after your planned discharge date, *you may have to pay all of the costs* for hospital care you receive after your planned discharge date.
- If you miss the deadline for contacting the Quality Improvement Organization about your appeal, you can make your appeal directly to our plan instead. For details about this other way to make your appeal, see Section 7.4.

### *Ask for a “fast review”:*

- You must ask the Quality Improvement Organization for a **“fast review”** of your discharge. Asking for a “fast review” means you are asking for the organization to use the “fast” deadlines for an appeal instead of using the standard deadlines.

<b>Legal Terms</b>	A “fast review” is also called an “ <b>immediate review</b> ” or an “ <b>expedited review</b> .”
--------------------	--

## **Step 2: The Quality Improvement Organization conducts an independent review of your case.**

### *What happens during this review?*

- Health professionals at the Quality Improvement Organization (we will call them “the reviewers” for short) will ask you (or your representative) why you believe coverage for the services should continue. You do not have to prepare anything in writing, but you may do so if you wish.
- The reviewers will also look at your medical information, talk with your doctor, and review information that the hospital and our plan has given to them.
- By noon of the day after the reviewers informed our plan of your appeal, you will also get a written notice that gives your planned discharge date and explains the reasons why your doctor, the hospital, and our plan think it is right (medically appropriate) for you to be discharged on that date.

<b>Legal Terms</b>	This written explanation is called the “ <b>Detailed Notice of Discharge.</b> ” You can get a sample of this notice by calling Member Services or 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. TTY users should call 1-877-486-2048.) Or you can get see a sample notice online at <a href="http://www.cms.hhs.gov/BNI/">http://www.cms.hhs.gov/BNI/</a>
--------------------	--

**Step 3: Within one full day after it has all the needed information, the Quality Improvement Organization will give you its answer to your appeal.**

*What happens if the answer is yes?*

- If the review organization says *yes* to your appeal, **our plan must keep providing your covered hospital services for as long as these services are medically necessary.**
- You will have to keep paying your share of the costs (such as deductibles or copayments, if these apply). In addition, there may be limitations on your covered hospital services. (See Chapter 4 of this booklet).

*What happens if the answer is no?*

- If the review organization says *no* to your appeal, they are saying that your planned discharge date is medically appropriate. (Saying *no* to your appeal is also called *turning down* your appeal.) If this happens, **our plan’s coverage for your hospital services will end** at noon on the day *after* the Quality Improvement Organization gives you its answer to your appeal.
- If the review organization says *no* to your appeal and you decide to stay in the hospital, then **you may have to pay the full cost** of hospital care you receive after noon on the day after the Quality Improvement Organization gives you its answer to your appeal.

**Step 4: If the answer to your Level 1 Appeal is no, you decide if you want to make another appeal.**

- If the Quality Improvement Organization has turned down your appeal, *and* you stay in the hospital after your planned discharge date, then you can make another appeal. Making another appeal means you are going on to “Level 2” of the appeals process.

<b>Section 7.3</b>	<b>Step-by-step: How to make a Level 2 Appeal to change your hospital discharge date</b>
--------------------	--

If the Quality Improvement Organization has turned down your appeal, *and* you stay in the hospital after your planned discharge date, then you can make a Level 2 Appeal. During a Level

2 Appeal, you ask the Quality Improvement Organization to take another look at the decision they made on your first appeal.

Here are the steps for Level 2 of the appeal process:

**Step 1: You contact the Quality Improvement Organization again and ask for another review.**

- You must ask for this review **within 60 calendar days** after the day when the Quality Improvement Organization said *no* to your Level 1 Appeal. You can ask for this review only if you stayed in the hospital after the date that your coverage for the care ended.

**Step 2: The Quality Improvement Organization does a second review of your situation.**

- Reviewers at the Quality Improvement Organization will take another careful look at all of the information related to your appeal.

**Step 3: Within 14 calendar days, the Quality Improvement Organization reviewers will decide on your appeal and tell you their decision.**

*If the review organization says yes:*

- **Our plan must reimburse you** for our share of the costs of hospital care you have received since noon on the day after the date your first appeal was turned down by the Quality Improvement Organization. **Our plan must continue providing coverage for your hospital care for as long as it is medically necessary.**
- You must continue to pay your share of the costs and coverage limitations may apply.

*If the review organization says no:*

- It means they agree with the decision they made to your Level 1 Appeal and will not change it. This is called “upholding the decision.” It is also called “turning down your appeal.”
- The notice you get will tell you in writing what you can do if you wish to continue with the review process. It will give you the details about how to go on to the next level of appeal, which is handled by a judge.

**Step 4: If the answer is no, you will need to decide whether you want to take your appeal further by going on to Level 3.**

- There are three additional levels in the appeals process after Level 2 (for a total of five levels of appeal). If the review organization turns down your Level 2 Appeal, you can

choose whether to accept that decision or whether to go on to Level 3 and make another appeal. At Level 3, your appeal is reviewed by a judge.

- Section 9 in this chapter tells more about Levels 3, 4, and 5 of the appeals process.

## **Section 7.4      What if you miss the deadline for making your Level 1 Appeal?**

### **You can appeal to our plan instead**

As explained above in Section 7.2, you must act quickly to contact the Quality Improvement Organization to start your first appeal of your hospital discharge. (“Quickly” means before you leave the hospital and no later than your planned discharge date). If you miss the deadline for contacting this organization, there is another way to make your appeal.

If you use this other way of making your appeal, *the first two levels of appeal are different.*

### **Step-by-Step: How to make a Level 1 Alternate Appeal**

If you miss the deadline for contacting the Quality Improvement Organization, you can make an appeal to our plan, asking for a “fast review.” A fast review is an appeal that uses the fast deadlines instead of the standard deadlines.

<b>Legal Terms</b>	A “fast” review (or “fast appeal”) is also called an “ <b>expedited</b> ” review (or “ <b>expedited appeal</b> ”).
--------------------	--

#### **Step 1: Contact our plan and ask for a “fast review.”**

- For details on how to contact our plan, go to Chapter 2, Section 1 and look for the section called, *How to contact us when you are making an appeal about your medical care or Part D prescription drugs.*
- **Be sure to ask for a “fast review.”** This means you are asking us to give you an answer using the “fast” deadlines rather than the “standard” deadlines.

#### **Step 2: Our plan does a “fast” review of your planned discharge date, checking to see if it was medically appropriate.**

- During this review, our plan takes a look at all of the information about your hospital stay. We check to see if your planned discharge date was medically appropriate. We will check to see if the decision about when you should leave the hospital was fair and followed all the rules.
- In this situation, we will use the “fast” deadlines rather than the standard deadlines for giving you the answer to this review.

**Step 3: Our plan gives you our decision within 72 hours after you ask for a “fast review” (“fast appeal”).**

- **If our plan says yes to your fast appeal**, it means we have agreed with you that you still need to be in the hospital after the discharge date, and will keep providing your covered services for as long as it is medically necessary. It also means that we have agreed to reimburse you for our share of the costs of care you have received since the date when we said your coverage would end. (You must pay your share of the costs and there may be coverage limitations that apply.)
- **If our plan says no to your fast appeal**, we are saying that your planned discharge date was medically appropriate. Our coverage for your hospital services ends as of the day we said coverage would end.
- If you stayed in the hospital *after* your planned discharge date, then **you may have to pay the full cost** of hospital care you received after the planned discharge date.

**Step 4: If our plan says *no* to your fast appeal, your case will *automatically* be sent on to the next level of the appeals process.**

- To make sure we were following all the rules when we said no to your fast appeal, **our plan is required to send your appeal to the “Independent Review Organization.”** When we do this, it means that you are *automatically* going on to Level 2 of the appeals process.

**Step-by-Step: How to make a Level 2 Alternate Appeal**

If our plan says no to your Level 1 Appeal, your case will *automatically* be sent on to the next level of the appeals process. During the Level 2 Appeal, the **Independent Review Organization** reviews the decision our plan made when we said no to your “fast appeal.” This organization decides whether the decision we made should be changed.

<b>Legal Terms</b>	The formal name for the “Independent Review Organization” is the <b>“Independent Review Entity.”</b> It is sometimes called the <b>“IRE.”</b>
--------------------	---

**Step 1: We will automatically forward your case to the Independent Review Organization.**

- We are required to send the information for your Level 2 Appeal to the Independent Review Organization within 24 hours of when we tell you that we are saying no to your first appeal. (If you think we are not meeting this deadline or other deadlines, you can make a complaint. The complaint process is different from the appeal process. Section 10 of this chapter tells how to make a complaint.)

**Step 2: The Independent Review Organization does a “fast review” of your appeal. The reviewers give you an answer within 72 hours.**

- **The Independent Review Organization is an outside, independent organization that is hired by Medicare.** This organization is not connected with our plan and it is not a government agency. This organization is a company chosen by Medicare to handle the job of being the Independent Review Organization. Medicare oversees its work.
- Reviewers at the Independent Review Organization will take a careful look at all of the information related to your appeal of your hospital discharge.
- **If this organization says *yes* to your appeal,** then our plan must reimburse you (pay you back) for our share of the costs of hospital care you have received since the date of your planned discharge. We must also continue the plan’s coverage of your hospital services for as long as it is medically necessary. You must continue to pay your share of the costs. If there are coverage limitations, these could limit how much we would reimburse or how long we would continue to cover your services.
- **If this organization says *no* to your appeal,** it means they agree with our plan that your planned hospital discharge date was medically appropriate. (This is called “upholding the decision.” It is also called “turning down your appeal.”)
  - The notice you get from the Independent Review Organization will tell you in writing what you can do if you wish to continue with the review process. It will give you the details about how to go on to a Level 3 Appeal, which is handled by a judge.

**Step 3: If the Independent Review Organization turns down your appeal, you choose whether you want to take your appeal further.**

- There are three additional levels in the appeals process after Level 2 (for a total of five levels of appeal). If reviewers say no to your Level 2 Appeal, you decide whether to accept their decision or go on to Level 3 and make a third appeal.
- Section 9 in this chapter tells more about Levels 3, 4, and 5 of the appeals process.

---

## **SECTION 8      How to ask us to keep covering certain medical services if you think your coverage is ending too soon**

---

<b>Section 8.1</b>	<i>This section is about three services <u>only</u>:</i> <b>Home health care, skilled nursing facility care, and Comprehensive Outpatient Rehabilitation Facility (CORF) services</b>
--------------------	--

This section is about the following types of care *only*:

- **Home health care services** you are getting.
- **Skilled nursing care** you are getting as a patient in a skilled nursing facility. (To learn about requirements for being considered a “skilled nursing facility,” see Chapter 12, *Definitions of important words*.)
- **Rehabilitation care** you are getting as an outpatient at a Medicare-approved Comprehensive Outpatient Rehabilitation Facility (CORF). Usually, this means you are getting treatment for an illness or accident, or you are recovering from a major operation. (For more information about this type of facility, see Chapter 12, *Definitions of important words*.)

When you are getting any of these types of care, you have the right to keep getting your covered services for that type of care for as long as the care is needed to diagnose and treat your illness or injury. For more information on your covered services, including your share of the cost and any limitations to coverage that may apply, see Chapter 4 of this booklet: *Medical Benefits Chart (what is covered and what you pay)*.

When our plan decides it is time to stop covering any of the three types of care for you, we are required to tell you in advance. When your coverage for that care ends, *our plan will stop paying its share of the cost for your care*.

If you think we are ending the coverage of your care too soon, **you can appeal or decision**. This section tells you how to ask.

<b>Section 8.2</b>	<b>We will tell you in advance when your coverage will be ending</b>
--------------------	--

1. **You receive a notice in writing.** At least two days before our plan is going to stop covering your care, the agency or facility that is providing your care will give you a notice.
  - The written notice tells you the date when our plan will stop covering the care for you.

<b>Legal Terms</b>	In this written notice, we are telling you about a “ <b>coverage decision</b> ” we have made about when to stop covering your care. (For more information about coverage decisions, see Section 4 in this chapter.)
--------------------	---

- The written notice also tells what you can do if you want to ask our plan to change this decision about when to end your care, and keep covering it for a longer period of time.

<b>Legal Terms</b>	In telling what you can do, the written notice is telling how you can “ <b>make an appeal.</b> ” Making an appeal is a formal, legal way to ask our plan to change the coverage decision we have made about when to stop your care. (Section 8.3 below tells how you can make an appeal.)
--------------------	---

<b>Legal Terms</b>	The written notice is called the “ <b>Notice of Medicare Non-Coverage.</b> ” To get a sample copy, call Member Services or 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. TTY users should call 1-877-486-2048.). Or see a copy online at <a href="http://www.cms.hhs.gov/BNI/">http://www.cms.hhs.gov/BNI/</a>
--------------------	---

## 2. You must sign the written notice to show that you received it.

- You or someone who is acting on your behalf must sign the notice. (Section 4 tells how you can give written permission to someone else to act as your representative.)
- Signing the notice shows *only* that you have received the information about when your coverage will stop. **Signing it does not mean you agree** with the plan that it is time to stop getting the care.

<b>Section 8.3</b>	<b>Step-by-step: How to make a Level 1 Appeal to have our plan cover your care for a longer time</b>
--------------------	--

If you want to ask us to cover your care for a longer period of time, you will need to use the appeals process to make this request. Before you start, understand what you need to do and what the deadlines are.

- **Follow the process.** Each step in the first two levels of the appeals process is explained below.
- **Meet the deadlines.** The deadlines are important. Be sure that you understand and follow the deadlines that apply to things you must do. There are also deadlines our plan must follow. (If you think we are not meeting our deadlines, you can file a complaint. Section 10 of this chapter tells you how to file a complaint.)

- **Ask for help if you need it.** If you have questions or need help at any time, please call Member Services (phone numbers are on the front cover of this booklet). Or call your State Health Insurance Assistance Program, a government organization that provides personalized assistance (see Section 2 of this chapter).

**During a Level 1 Appeal, the Quality Improvement Organization reviews your appeal and decides whether to change the decision made by our plan.**

<b>Legal Terms</b>	When you start the appeal process by making an appeal, it is called the “first level of appeal” or “Level 1 Appeal.”
--------------------	--

**Step 1: Make your Level 1 Appeal: contact the Quality Improvement Organization in your state and ask for a review. You must act quickly.**

*What is the Quality Improvement Organization?*

- This organization is a group of doctors and other health care experts who are paid by the Federal government. These experts are not part of our plan. They check on the quality of care received by people with Medicare and review plan decisions about when it is time to stop covering certain kinds of medical care.

*How can you contact this organization?*

- The written notice you received tells you how to reach this organization. (Or find the name, address, and phone number of the Quality Improvement Organization for your state in Chapter 2, Section 4, of this booklet.)

*What should you ask for?*

- Ask this organization to do an independent review of whether it is medically appropriate for our plan to end coverage for your medical services.

*Your deadline for contacting this organization.*

- You must contact the Quality Improvement Organization to start your appeal *no later than noon of the day after you receive the written notice telling you when we will stop covering your care.*
- If you miss the deadline for contacting the Quality Improvement Organization about your appeal, you can make your appeal directly to our plan instead. For details about this other way to make your appeal, see Section 8.4.

**Step 2: The Quality Improvement Organization conducts an independent review of your case.**

*What happens during this review?*

- Health professionals at the Quality Improvement Organization (we will call them “the reviewers” for short) will ask you (or your representative) why you believe coverage

for the services should continue. You do not have to prepare anything in writing, but you may do so if you wish.

- The review organization will also look at your medical information, talk with your doctor, and review information that our plan has given to them.
- By the end of the day the reviewers informed our plan of your appeal, you will also get a written notice from the plan that gives our reasons for wanting to end the plan's coverage for your services.

<b>Legal Terms</b>	This notice explanation is called the “ <b>Detailed Explanation of Non-Coverage.</b> ”
--------------------	--

**Step 3: Within one full day after they have all the information they need, the reviewers will tell you their decision.**

*What happens if the reviewers say yes to your appeal?*

- If the reviewers say *yes* to your appeal, then **our plan must keep providing your covered services for as long as it is medically necessary.**
- You will have to keep paying your share of the costs (such as deductibles or copayments, if these apply). In addition, there may be limitations on your covered services (see Chapter 4 of this booklet).

*What happens if the reviewers say no to your appeal?*

- If the reviewers say *no* to your appeal, then **your coverage will end on the date we have told you.** Our plan will stop paying its share of the costs of this care.
- If you decide to keep getting the home health care, or skilled nursing facility care, or Comprehensive Outpatient Rehabilitation Facility (CORF) services *after* this date when your coverage ends, then **you will have to pay the full cost** of this care yourself.

**Step 4: If the answer to your Level 1 Appeal is no, you decide if you want to make another appeal.**

- This first appeal you make is “Level 1” of the appeals process. If reviewers say *no* to your Level 1 Appeal – and you choose to continue getting care after your coverage for the care has ended – then you can make another appeal.
- Making another appeal means you are going on to “Level 2” of the appeals process.

<b>Section 8.4</b>	<b>Step-by-step: How to make a Level 2 Appeal to have our plan cover your care for a longer time</b>
--------------------	--

If the Quality Improvement Organization has turned down your appeal and you choose to continue getting care after your coverage for the care has ended, then you can make a Level 2

Appeal. During a Level 2 Appeal, you ask the Quality Improvement Organization to take another look at the decision they made on your first appeal.

Here are the steps for Level 2 of the appeal process:

**Step 1: You contact the Quality Improvement Organization again and ask for another review.**

- You must ask for this review **within 60 days** after the day when the Quality Improvement Organization said *no* to your Level 1 Appeal. You can ask for this review only if you continued getting care after the date that your coverage for the care ended.

**Step 2: The Quality Improvement Organization does a second review of your situation.**

- Reviewers at the Quality Improvement Organization will take another careful look at all of the information related to your appeal.

**Step 3: Within 14 days, the Quality Improvement Organization reviewers will decide on your appeal and tell you their decision.**

*What happens if the review organization says yes to your appeal?*

- **Our plan must reimburse you** for our share of the costs of care you have received since the date when we said your coverage would end. **Our plan must continue providing coverage** for the care for as long as it is medically necessary.
- You must continue to pay your share of the costs and there may be coverage limitations that apply.

*What happens if the review organization says no?*

- It means they agree with the decision they made to your Level 1 Appeal and will not change it. (This is called “upholding the decision.” It is also called “turning down your appeal.”)
- The notice you get will tell you in writing what you can do if you wish to continue with the review process. It will give you the details about how to go on to the next level of appeal, which is handled by a judge.

**Step 4: If the answer is no, you will need to decide whether you want to take your appeal further.**

- There are three additional levels of appeal after Level 2, for a total of five levels of appeal. If reviewers turn down your Level 2 Appeal, you can choose whether to accept that decision or to go on to Level 3 and make another appeal. At Level 3, your appeal is reviewed by a judge.

- Section 9 in this chapter tells more about Levels 3, 4, and 5 of the appeals process.

## Section 8.5 What if you miss the deadline for making your Level 1 Appeal?

### You can appeal to our plan instead

As explained above in Section 9.3, you must act quickly to contact the Quality Improvement Organization to start your first appeal (within a day or two, at the most). If you miss the deadline for contacting this organization, there is another way to make your appeal. If you use this other way of making your appeal, *the first two levels of appeal are different*.

### Step-by-Step: How to make a Level 1 Alternate Appeal

If you miss the deadline for contacting the Quality Improvement Organization, you can make an appeal to our plan, asking for a “fast review.” A fast review is an appeal that uses the fast deadlines instead of the standard deadlines.

Here are the steps for a Level 1 Alternate Appeal:

<b>Legal Terms</b>	A “fast” review (or “fast appeal”) is also called an “ <b>expedited</b> ” review (or “ <b>expedited appeal</b> ”).
--------------------	--

#### **Step 1: Contact our plan and ask for a “fast review.”**

- For details on how to contact our plan, go to Chapter 2, Section 1 and look for the section called, *How to contact us when you are making an appeal about your medical care or Part D prescription drugs*.
- **Be sure to ask for a “fast review.”** This means you are asking us to give you an answer using the “fast” deadlines rather than the “standard” deadlines.

#### **Step 2: Our plan does a “fast” review of the decision we made about when to end coverage for your services.**

- During this review, our plan takes another look at all of the information about your case. We check to see if we were following all the rules when we set the date for ending the plan’s coverage for services you were receiving.
- We will use the “fast” deadlines rather than the standard deadlines for giving you the answer to this review. (Usually, if you make an appeal to our plan and ask for a “fast review,” we are allowed to decide whether to agree to your request and give you a “fast review.” But in this situation, the rules require us to give you a fast response if you ask for it.)

**Step 3: Our plan gives you our decision within 72 hours after you ask for a “fast review” (“fast appeal”).**

- **If our plan says yes to your fast appeal**, it means we have agreed with you that you need services longer, and will keep providing your covered services for as long as it is medically necessary. It also means that we have agreed to reimburse you for our share of the costs of care you have received since the date when we said your coverage would end. (You must pay your share of the costs and there may be coverage limitations that apply.)
- **If our plan says no to your fast appeal**, then your coverage will end on the date we have told you and our plan will not pay after this date. Our plan will stop paying its share of the costs of this care.
- If you continued to get home health care, or skilled nursing facility care, or Comprehensive Outpatient Rehabilitation Facility (CORF) services *after* the date when we said your coverage would your coverage ends, then **you will have to pay the full cost** of this care yourself.

**Step 4: If our plan says *no* to your fast appeal, your case will *automatically* go on to the next level of the appeals process.**

- To make sure we were following all the rules when we said no to your fast appeal, **our plan is required to send your appeal to the “Independent Review Organization.”** When we do this, it means that you are *automatically* going on to Level 2 of the appeals process.

**Step-by-Step: How to make a Level 2 *Alternate* Appeal**

If our plan says no to your Level 1 Appeal, your case will *automatically* be sent on to the next level of the appeals process. During the Level 2 Appeal, the **Independent Review Organization** reviews the decision our plan made when we said no to your “fast appeal.” This organization decides whether the decision we made should be changed.

<b>Legal Terms</b>	The formal name for the “Independent Review Organization” is the <b>“Independent Review Entity.”</b> It is sometimes called the <b>“IRE.”</b>
--------------------	---

**Step 1: We will automatically forward your case to the Independent Review Organization.**

- We are required to send the information for your Level 2 Appeal to the Independent Review Organization within 24 hours of when we tell you that we are saying no to your first appeal. (If you think we are not meeting this deadline or other deadlines, you can make a complaint. The complaint process is different from the appeal process. Section 10 of this chapter tells how to make a complaint.)

**Step 2: The Independent Review Organization does a “fast review” of your appeal. The reviewers give you an answer within 72 hours.**

- **The Independent Review Organization is an outside, independent organization that is hired by Medicare.** This organization is not connected with our plan and it is not a government agency. This organization is a company chosen by Medicare to handle the job of being the Independent Review Organization. Medicare oversees its work.
- Reviewers at the Independent Review Organization will take a careful look at all of the information related to your appeal.
- **If this organization says *yes* to your appeal,** then our plan must reimburse you (pay you back) for our share of the costs of care you have received since the date when we said your coverage would end. We must also continue to cover the care for as long as it is medically necessary. You must continue to pay your share of the costs. If there are coverage limitations, these could limit how much we would reimburse or how long we would continue to cover your services.
- **If this organization says *no* to your appeal,** it means they agree with the decision our plan made to your first appeal and will not change it. (This is called “upholding the decision.” It is also called “turning down your appeal.”)
  - The notice you get from the Independent Review Organization will tell you in writing what you can do if you wish to continue with the review process. It will give you the details about how to go on to a Level 3 Appeal.

**Step 3: If the Independent Review Organization turns down your appeal, you choose whether you want to take your appeal further.**

- There are three additional levels of appeal after Level 2, for a total of five levels of appeal. If reviewers say no to your Level 2 Appeal, you can choose whether to accept that decision or whether to go on to Level 3 and make another appeal. At Level 3, your appeal is reviewed by a judge.
- Section 9 in this chapter tells more about Levels 3, 4, and 5 of the appeals process.

---

**SECTION 9 Taking your appeal to Level 3 and beyond**

---

<b>Section 9.1 Levels of Appeal 3, 4, and 5 for Medical Service Appeals</b>
---

This section may be appropriate for you if you have made a Level 1 Appeal and a Level 2 Appeal, and both of your appeals have been turned down.

If the dollar value of the item or medical service you have appealed meets certain minimum levels, you may be able to go on to additional levels of appeal. If the dollar value is less than the minimum level, you cannot appeal any further. If the dollar value is high enough, the written

response you receive to your Level 2 Appeal will explain who to contact and what to do to ask for a Level 3 Appeal.

For most situations that involve appeals, the last three levels of appeal work in much the same way. Here is who handles the review of your appeal at each of these levels.

**Level 3 Appeal** A judge who works for the Federal government will review your appeal and give you an answer. This judge is called an “Administrative Law Judge.”

- **If the Administrative Law Judge says yes to your appeal, the appeals process *may* or *may not* be over** - We will decide whether to appeal this decision to Level 4. Unlike a decision at Level 2 (Independent Review Organization), we have the right to appeal a Level 3 decision that is favorable to you.
  - If we decide *not* to appeal the decision, we must authorize or provide you with the service within 60 days after receiving the judge’s decision.
  - If we decide to appeal the decision, we will send you a copy of the Level 4 Appeal request with any accompanying documents. We may wait for the Level 4 Appeal decision before authorizing or providing the service in dispute.
- **If the Administrative Law Judge says no to your appeal, the appeals process *may* or *may not* be over.**
  - If you decide to accept this decision that turns down your appeal, the appeals process is over.
  - If you do not want to accept the decision, you can continue to the next level of the review process. If the administrative law judge says no to your appeal, the notice you get will tell you what to do next if you choose to continue with your appeal.

**Level 4 Appeal** The Medicare Appeals Council will review your appeal and give you an answer. The Medicare Appeals Council works for the Federal government.

- **If the answer is yes, or if the Medicare Appeals Council denies our request to review a favorable Level 3 Appeal decision, the appeals process *may* or *may not* be over** - We will decide whether to appeal this decision to Level 5. Unlike a decision at Level 2 (Independent Review Organization), we have the right to appeal a Level 4 decision that is favorable to you.
  - If we decide *not* to appeal the decision, we must authorize or provide you with the service within 60 days after receiving the Medicare Appeals Council’s decision.
  - If we decide to appeal the decision, we will let you know in writing.
- **If the answer is no or if the Medicare Appeals Council denies the review request, the appeals process *may* or *may not* be over.**

- If you decide to accept this decision that turns down your appeal, the appeals process is over.
- If you do not want to accept the decision, you might be able to continue to the next level of the review process.. If the Medicare Appeals Council says no to your appeal, the notice you get will tell you whether the rules allow you to go on to a Level 5 Appeal. If the rules allow you to go on, the written notice will also tell you who to contact and what to do next if you choose to continue with your appeal.

**Level 5 Appeal** A judge at the **Federal District Court** will review your appeal.

- This is the last step of the administrative appeals process.

## **Section 9.2 Levels of Appeal 3, 4, and 5 for Part D Drug Appeals**

This section may be appropriate for you if you have made a Level 1 Appeal and a Level 2 Appeal, and both of your appeals have been turned down.

If the dollar value of the drug you have appealed meets certain minimum levels, you may be able to go on to additional levels of appeal. If the dollar value is less than the minimum level, you cannot appeal any further. If the dollar value is high enough, the written response you receive to your Level 2 Appeal will explain who to contact and what to do to ask for a Level 3 Appeal.

For most situations that involve appeals, the last three levels of appeal work in much the same way. Here is who handles the review of your appeal at each of these levels.

**Level 3 Appeal** A judge who works for the **Federal government** will review your appeal and give you an answer. This judge is called an “Administrative Law Judge.”

- **If the answer is yes, the appeals process is over.** What you asked for in the appeal has been approved.
- **If the answer is no, the appeals process *may or may not* be over.**
  - If you decide to accept this decision that turns down your appeal, the appeals process is over.
  - If you do not want to accept the decision, you can continue to the next level of the review process. If the administrative law judge says no to your appeal, the notice you get will tell you what to do next if you choose to continue with your appeal.

**Level 4 Appeal** The **Medicare Appeals Council** will review your appeal and give you an answer. The Medicare Appeals Council works for the Federal government.

- **If the answer is yes, the appeals process is over.** What you asked for in the appeal has been approved.
- **If the answer is no, the appeals process *may* or *may not* be over.**
  - If you decide to accept this decision that turns down your appeal, the appeals process is over.
  - If you do not want to accept the decision, you might be able to continue to the next level of the review process. It depends on your situation. Whenever the reviewer says no to your appeal, the notice you get will tell you whether the rules allow you to go on to another level of appeal. If the rules allow you to go on, the written notice will also tell you who to contact and what to do next if you choose to continue with your appeal.

<b>Level 5 Appeal</b> A judge at the <b>Federal District Court</b> will review your appeal. This is the last stage of the appeals process.
---

- This is the last step of the administrative appeals process.

## MAKING COMPLAINTS

---

### SECTION 10      **How to make a complaint about quality of care, waiting times, customer service, or other concerns**

---



If your problem is about decisions related to benefits, coverage, or payment, then this section is *not for you*. Instead, you need to use the process for coverage decisions and appeals. Go to Section 4 of this chapter.

<b>Section 10.1      What kinds of problems are handled by the complaint process?</b>
---

This section explains how to use the process for making complaints. The complaint process is used for certain types of problems *only*. This includes problems related to quality of care, waiting times, and the customer service you receive. Here are examples of the kinds of problems handled by the complaint process.

**If you have any of these kinds of problems, you can “make a complaint”**

**Quality of your medical care**

- Are you unhappy with the quality of the care you have received (including care in the hospital)?

**Respecting your privacy**

- Do you believe that someone did not respect your right to privacy or shared information about you that you feel should be confidential?

**Disrespect, poor customer service, or other negative behaviors**

- Has someone been rude or disrespectful to you?
- Are you unhappy with how our Member Services has dealt with you?
- Do you feel you are being encouraged to leave our plan?

**Waiting times**


- Are you having trouble getting an appointment, or waiting too long to get it?
- Have you been kept waiting too long by doctors, pharmacists, or other health professionals? Or by Member Services or other staff at our plan?
- Examples include waiting too long on the phone, in the waiting room, in the exam room, or when getting a prescription.

**Cleanliness**

- Are you unhappy with the cleanliness or condition of a clinic, hospital, or doctor’s office?

**Information you get from our plan**

- Do you believe we have not given you a notice that we are required to give?
- Do you think written information we have given you is hard to understand?



*The next page has more examples of possible reasons for making a complaint*

### **Possible complaints (continued)**

**These types of complaints are all related to the *timeliness* of our actions related to coverage decisions and appeals**

The process of asking for a coverage decision and making appeals is explained in sections 4-9 of this chapter. If you are asking for a decision or making an appeal, you use that process, not the complaint process.

However, if you have already asked for a coverage decision or made an appeal, and you think that our plan is not responding quickly enough, you can also make a complaint about our slowness. Here are examples:

- If you have asked us to give you a “fast response” for a coverage decision or appeal, and we have said we will not, you can make a complaint.
- If you believe our plan is not meeting the deadlines for giving you a coverage decision or an answer to an appeal you have made, you can make a complaint.
- When a coverage decision we made is reviewed and our plan is told that we must cover or reimburse you for certain medical services or drugs, there are deadlines that apply. If you think we are not meeting these deadlines, you can make a complaint.
- When our plan does not give you a decision on time, we are required to forward your case to the Independent Review Organization. If we do not do that within the required deadline, you can make a complaint.

<b>Section 10.2</b>	<b>The formal name for “making a complaint” is “filing a grievance”</b>
---------------------	---

<b>Legal Terms</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What this section calls a “<b>complaint</b>” is also called a “<b>grievance.</b>”</li><li>• Another term for “<b>making a complaint</b>” is “<b>filing a grievance.</b>”</li><li>• Another way to say “<b>using the process for complaints</b>” is “<b>using the process for filing a grievance.</b>”</li></ul>
--------------------	---



<b>Section 10.3</b>	<b>Step-by-step: Making a complaint</b>
---------------------	---

**Step 1: Contact us promptly – either by phone or in writing.**

Usually, calling Member Services is the first step. If there is anything else you need to do, Member Services will let you know.

**Local** (318) 361-0900 (**Toll-Free** (888) 823-1910))

**TTY Local** (318) 361-2131 (**TTY Toll-Free** (866) 524-5144))

Call Monday – Friday 8:00 A.M. - 8:00 P.M. CST

- **If you do not wish to call (or you called and were not satisfied), you can put your complaint in writing and send it to us.** If you do this, it means that we will use our *formal procedure* for answering grievances. Here is how it works:
  - A grievance may be filed by submitting the completed details in writing to Vantage Health Plan, Inc. at the following location: ATTN: Medical Director, 130 DeSiard Street, Suite 300, Monroe, LA 71201. The grievance must be submitted within 60 days of the event or incident. For grievances submitted in writing, a letter will be sent to you acknowledging receipt of the grievance. We must address your grievance as quickly as your case requires based on your health status, but no later than 30 days after receiving your complaint. You have the right to file an expedited grievance whenever we deny your request for an expedited decision about your request for a service, or, whenever we deny your request for an expedited decision about your appeal for a service. You also have the right to file an expedited grievance if you do not agree with our decision to extend the time needed to decide on your request for a service, or to consider your appeal for a service. We must decide within 24 hours if our decision to deny or delay making an expedited decision puts your life or health at risk. We may extend the time frame by up to 14 days if you ask for the extension, or if we justify a need for

additional information and the delay is in your best interest. If we deny your grievance in whole or in part, our written decision will explain why we denied it, and will tell you about any dispute resolution options you may have.

- **Whether you call or write, you should contact Member Services right away.** The complaint must be made within 60 calendar days after you had the problem you want to complain about.
- **If you are making a complaint because we denied your request for a “fast response” to a coverage decision or appeal, we will automatically give you a “fast” complaint.** If you have a “fast” complaint, it means we will give you **an answer within 24 hours.**

<b>Legal Terms</b>	What this section calls a <b>“fast complaint”</b> is also called a <b>“fast grievance.”</b>
--------------------	---

## **Step 2: We look into your complaint and give you our answer.**

- **If possible, we will answer you right away.** If you call us with a complaint, we may be able to give you an answer on the same phone call. If your health condition requires us to answer quickly, we will do that.
- **Most complaints are answered in 30 calendar days.** If we need more information and the delay is in your best interest or if you ask for more time, we can take up to 14 more days (44 days total) to answer your complaint.
- **If we do not agree** with some or all of your complaint or do not take responsibility for the problem you are complaining about, we will let you know. Our response will include our reasons for this answer. We must respond whether we agree with the complaint or not.

<b>Section 10.4</b>	<b>You can also make complaints about quality of care to the Quality Improvement Organization</b>
---------------------	---

You can make your complaint about the quality of care you received to our plan by using the step-by-step process outlined above.

When your complaint is about *quality of care*, you also have two extra options:

- **You can make your complaint to the Quality Improvement Organization.** If you prefer, you can make your complaint about the quality of care you received directly to this organization (*without* making the complaint to our plan). To find the name, address, and phone number of the Quality Improvement Organization in your state, look in Chapter 2, Section 4, of this booklet. If you make a complaint to this organization, we will work with them to resolve your complaint.

- **Or you can make your complaint to both at the same time.** If you wish, you can make your complaint about quality of care to our plan and also to the Quality Improvement Organization.

---

## **Chapter 10. Ending your membership in the plan**

<b>SECTION 1</b>	<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>166</b>
Section 1.1	This chapter focuses on ending your membership in our plan .....	166
<b>SECTION 2</b>	<b>When can you end your membership in our plan? .....</b>	<b>166</b>
Section 2.1	You can end your membership during the Medicare Advantage Fall Enrollment Period .....	166
Section 2.2	In certain situations, you can end your membership during a Special Enrollment Period .....	168
<b>SECTION 3</b>	<b>Until your membership ends, you must keep getting your medical services and drugs through our plan.....</b>	<b>169</b>
Section 3.1	Until your membership ends, you are still a member of our plan.....	169
<b>SECTION 4</b>	<b><i>Vantage Medicare Advantage</i> must end your membership in the plan in certain situations.....</b>	<b>169</b>
Section 4.1	When must we end your membership in the plan?.....	169
Section 4.2	We <u>cannot</u> ask you to leave our plan for any reason related to your health.....	170
Section 4.3	You have the right to make a complaint if we end your membership in our plan .....	170

---

## SECTION 1 Introduction

---

<b>Section 1.1</b>	<b>This chapter focuses on ending your membership in our plan</b>
--------------------	---

Ending your membership in *Vantage Medicare Advantage* may be **voluntary** (your own choice) or **involuntary** (not your own choice):

- You might leave our plan because you have decided that you *want* to leave.
  - There are only certain times during the year, or certain situations, when you may voluntarily end your membership in the plan. Section 2 tells you *when* you can end your membership in the plan.
  - The process for voluntarily ending your membership varies depending on what type of new coverage you are choosing. Section 3 tells you *how* to end your membership in each situation.
- There are also limited situations where you do not choose to leave, but we are required to end your membership. Section 5 tells you about situations when we must end your membership.

If you are leaving our plan, you must continue to get your medical care through our plan until your membership ends.

---

## SECTION 2 When can you end your membership in our plan?

---

You may end your membership in our plan only during certain times of the year, known as enrollment periods. All members have the opportunity to leave the plan during the Medicare Advantage Fall Enrollment Period. In certain situations, you may also be eligible to leave the plan at other times of the year.

<b>Section 2.1</b>	<b>You can end your membership during the Medicare Advantage Fall Enrollment Period</b>
--------------------	---

You can end your membership during the **Medicare Advantage Fall Enrollment Period**. This is the time when you should review your health and drug coverage and make a decision about your coverage for the upcoming year.

- **When is the Medicare Advantage Fall Enrollment Period?** This happens from November 1 to December 31 in 2010.
- **What type of plan can you switch to during the Medicare Advantage Fall Enrollment Period?** During this time, you can review your health coverage and your prescription drug coverage. You can choose to keep your current coverage or make

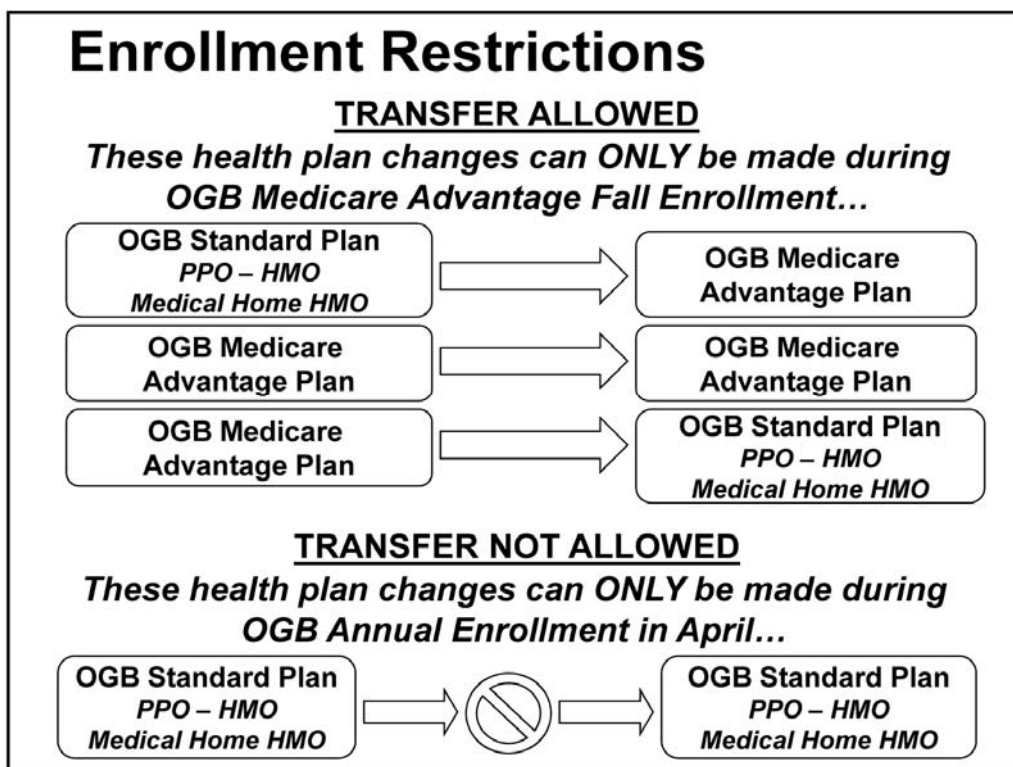
changes to your coverage for the upcoming year. If you decide to change to a new plan, you can choose:

- Any of the available OGB-offered Medicare Advantage plans,
- Any of the available OGB-offered Standard PPO, HMO or Medical Home HMO plans, or
- A non-OGB-sponsored Medicare Advantage plan (You can choose a plan that covers prescription drugs or one that does not cover prescription drugs).

**Please check with the OGB benefits administrator *before you change your plan*. This is important because you may lose benefits you currently receive under OGB if you switch to a non-OGB-sponsored Medicare Advantage plan.**

**Note:** If you disenroll from a Medicare prescription drug plan and go without creditable prescription drug coverage, you may need to pay a late enrollment penalty if you join a Medicare drug plan later. (“Creditable” coverage means the coverage is at least as good as Medicare’s standard prescription drug coverage.)

- **When will your membership end?** Your membership will end when your new plan’s coverage begins on January 1.



<b>Section 2.2</b>	<b>In certain situations, you can end your membership during a Special Enrollment Period</b>
--------------------	--

In certain situations, members of *Vantage Medicare Advantage* may be eligible to end their membership at other times of the year. This is known as a **Special Enrollment Period**.

- **Who is eligible for a Special Enrollment Period?** If any of the following situations apply to you, you are eligible to end your membership during a Special Enrollment Period. These are just examples, for the full list you can contact the plan, call Medicare, or visit the Medicare website (<http://www.medicare.gov>):
  - Usually, when you have moved.
  - If you have Medicaid.
  - If you are eligible for Extra Help with paying for your Medicare prescriptions.
  - If you live in a facility, such as a nursing home.
- **When are Special Enrollment Periods?** The enrollment periods vary depending on your situation.
- **What can you do?** If you are eligible to end your membership because of a special situation, you can choose to change both your Medicare health coverage and prescription drug coverage. This means you can choose:
  - Any of the available OGB-offered Medicare Advantage plans,
  - Any of the available OGB-offered Standard PPO, HMO or Medical Home HMO plans, or
  - A non-OGB-sponsored Medicare Advantage plan (You can choose a plan that covers prescription drugs or one that does not cover prescription drugs).

**Please check with the OGB benefits administrator *before you change your plan*. This is important because you may lose benefits you currently receive under OGB if you switch to a non-OGB-sponsored Medicare Advantage plan.**

**Note:** If you disenroll from a Medicare prescription drug plan and go without creditable prescription drug coverage, you may need to pay a late enrollment penalty if you join a Medicare drug plan later. (“Creditable” coverage means the coverage is at least as good as Medicare’s standard prescription drug coverage.)

- **When will your membership end?** Your membership will usually end on the first day of the month after OGB receives your request to change your plan.

For more information about the plan options available to you during these enrollment periods and how to change plans without losing your OGB benefits, contact the agency you retired from

or OGB's Customer Service Department at 225-925-6625 or toll-free 1-800-272-8451 (TTY 225-925-6770 or toll-free 1-800-259-6771).

---

## **SECTION 3      Until your membership ends, you must keep getting your medical services and drugs through our plan**

---

<b>Section 3.1      Until your membership ends, you are still a member of our plan</b>
--

If you leave *Vantage Medicare Advantage*, it may take time before your membership ends and your new Medicare coverage goes into effect. (See Section 2 for information on when your new coverage begins.) During this time, you must continue to get your medical care and prescription drugs through our plan.

- **You should continue to use our network pharmacies to get your prescriptions filled until your membership in our plan ends.** Usually, your prescription drugs are only covered if they are filled at a network pharmacy, including through our mail-order pharmacy services.
- **If you are hospitalized on the day that your membership ends, your hospital stay will usually be covered by our plan until you are discharged** (even if you are discharged after your new health coverage begins).

---

## **SECTION 4      *Vantage Medicare Advantage* must end your membership in the plan in certain situations**

---

<b>Section 4.1      When must we end your membership in the plan?</b>
---

***Vantage Medicare Advantage* must end your membership in the plan if any of the following happen:**

- If you do not stay continuously enrolled in Medicare Part A and Part B.
- If you move out of our service area for more than six months.
  - If you move or take a long trip, you need to call Member Services to find out if the place you are moving or traveling to is in our plan's area.
- If you become incarcerated.
- If you lie about or withhold information about other insurance you have that provides prescription drug coverage.

- If you intentionally give us incorrect information when you are enrolling in our plan and that information affects your eligibility for our plan.
- If you continuously behave in a way that is disruptive and makes it difficult for us to provide medical care for you and other members of our plan.
  - We cannot make you leave our plan for this reason unless we get permission from Medicare first.
- If you let someone else use your membership card to get medical care.
  - If we end your membership because of this reason, Medicare may have your case investigated by the Inspector General.
- If you do not pay the plan premiums by the end of the calendar month.
  - We must notify you in writing that you have 90 days to pay the plan premium before we end your membership.

### **Where can you get more information?**

If you have questions or would like more information on when we can end your membership:

- You can call OGB for more information at (225) 925-6625 or toll-free (800) 272-8451.

<b>Section 4.2</b>	<b>We <u>cannot</u> ask you to leave our plan for any reason related to your health</b>
--------------------	---

### **What should you do if this happens?**

If you feel that you are being asked to leave our plan because of a health-related reason, you should call Medicare at 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227). TTY users should call 1-877-486-2048. You may call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

<b>Section 4.3</b>	<b>You have the right to make a complaint if we end your membership in our plan</b>
--------------------	---

If we end your membership in our plan, we must tell you our reasons in writing for ending your membership. We must also explain how you can make a complaint about our decision to end your membership. You can also look in Chapter 9, Section 10 for information about how to make a complaint.

---

## **Chapter 11. Legal notices**

<b>SECTION 1</b>	<b>Notice about Governing Law.....</b>	<b>172</b>
<b>SECTION 2</b>	<b>Notice about Nondiscrimination .....</b>	<b>172</b>
<b>SECTION 3</b>	<b>Recovery of the Cost of Benefits.....</b>	<b>172</b>
<b>SECTION 4</b>	<b>Subrogation .....</b>	<b>172</b>
<b>SECTION 5</b>	<b>Reimbursement .....</b>	<b>173</b>
<b>SECTION 6</b>	<b>Lien.....</b>	<b>173</b>
<b>SECTION 7</b>	<b>Assignment.....</b>	<b>174</b>
<b>SECTION 8</b>	<b>Participating Providers' Subrogation Rights .....</b>	<b>174</b>
<b>SECTION 9</b>	<b>Other Plan Rights.....</b>	<b>174</b>

---

## **SECTION 1      Notice about Governing Law**

---

Many laws apply to this *Evidence of Coverage* and some additional provisions may apply because they are required by law. This may affect your rights and responsibilities even if the laws are not included or explained in this document. The principal law that applies to this document is Title XVIII of the Social Security Act and the regulations created under the Social Security Act by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, or CMS. In addition, other Federal laws may apply and, under certain circumstances, the laws of the state you live in.

For purposes of subrogation, as more specifically described below, federal law shall control. In particular, 42 U.S.C. Section 1395w-22(a)(4) makes the Medicare Secondary Payer Law (42 U.S.C. Section 1395y(b)(2)) applicable to Medicare Advantage plans. See, also 42 C.F.R. Section 422.108(f). Pursuant to the Medicare Secondary Payer laws, Vantage as a Medicare Advantage plan, has the right to recover all conditional payments made on your behalf as described herein. A benefit payment may be characterized as a “conditional payment” when the right of subrogation applies.

---

## **SECTION 2      Notice about Nondiscrimination**

---

We do not discriminate based on a person’s race, disability, religion, sex, health, ethnicity, creed, age, or national origin. All organizations that provide Medicare Advantage Plans, like our plan, must obey Federal laws against discrimination, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, the Americans with Disabilities Act, all other laws that apply to organizations that get Federal funding, and any other laws and rules that apply for any other reason.

---

## **SECTION 3      Recovery of the Cost of Benefits**

---

If you are injured or become ill through the act of another person or party or entity and we provide benefits for the injury or illness, you are entitled to benefits under this Plan and we shall have the right to repayment of any and all benefits paid on your behalf that are associated with the injury or illness for which the other person or entity is liable.

---

## **SECTION 4      Subrogation**

---

Subrogation means that we can regain, by legal action if necessary, the benefits paid by us from any person or entity against whom you may have a claim. Subrogation will result in savings for the benefit of all Vantage Medicare Advantage members because the cost of treatment for sickness or injury will be paid by the person or entity that is legally responsible for such payment. In the event that benefits are provided under this Plan, we shall be subrogated to your

---

rights of recovery against any person or entity to the extent of the amount of the benefits provided. This includes our right to bring suit against the person or entity in our name or your name. At our request, you shall execute and deliver the necessary documentation (as determined by us) to secure and protect our subrogation rights. You agree to cooperate with us and/or our representatives, including our attorneys, in completing such documentation and in giving such information surrounding any accident or incident you were involved in, as we or our representatives deem necessary to fully investigate the accident or incident. You also have the following obligations under this subrogation provision:

- To seek recovery from the responsible person or entity (or his/her insurer) of all amounts in connection with benefits paid by us under this Plan and to notify us within ten (10) working days of any such actions taken by you.
- To refrain from doing anything to impair, prejudice or discharge our rights of subrogation.
- To fully cooperate and assist us, as is deemed necessary by us, to enforce our rights of subrogation. This obligation to assist us will apply to your legal representative.
- To pay us any amounts received by you or your legal representative to the extent of the amount of the benefits provided by us to which we are entitled to because of our rights of subrogation.

---

## **SECTION 5      Reimbursement**

---

Vantage Medicare Advantage has the right to be reimbursed by you for any and all benefits that were paid by us that are associated with any injury or illness caused by another person or entity. This right of reimbursement will apply where we have paid benefits and you and/or your representative has been reimbursed any amounts by another person or entity or by any other source as set forth herein. This right of reimbursement is cumulative with and not exclusive of our subrogation rights. However, we may only obtain reimbursement from you to the extent of the actual benefits provided by us. Our right to reimbursement is secondary to your right to be made whole.

---

## **SECTION 6      Lien**

---

Vantage Medicare Advantage, by paying any benefits under this Plan, is granted a lien on the proceeds of any settlement, judgment or other payment received by you. You hereby consent to

our lien and agree to take whatever steps are necessary to assist us in securing and protecting our lien.

---

## **SECTION 7      Assignment**

---

Vantage Medicare Advantage, by the payment of any benefits under this Plan, is granted an assignment of the proceeds of any settlement, judgment or other payment received by you to the extent of the benefits paid. By accepting benefits hereunder, you consent to our assignment and authorize and direct his or her attorney, personal representative or any insurance company to directly reimburse us or our designee to the extent of the benefits paid. This assignment becomes effective and is binding upon your attorney, personal representative or any insurance company upon service of a copy of this provision upon them by us or our designee.

---

## **SECTION 8      Participating Providers' Subrogation Rights**

---

As previously set forth herein, Participating Providers have a contractual right to pursue third parties for the full recovery of the cost of the medical services rendered to you in lieu of submitting claims to Vantage Medicare Advantage for payment. In such an instance, and with your written consent, Participating Providers will request appropriate information from you regarding the third parties responsible for your injury or illness, and you will cooperate in providing this information to Participating Providers. Participating Providers who elect to pursue third parties for a recovery will not, under any circumstances, submit their claims to us for payment, but will only pursue the third parties for recovery. In such an event, and if full recovery is not made by the Participating Providers, you understand you may have a further financial responsibility to Participating Providers for the cost of medical services not recovered from the third parties.

---

## **SECTION 9      Other Plan Rights**

---

The subrogation and reimbursement rights of Vantage Medicare Advantage, including the foregoing rights of assignment and lien, are applicable to any recoveries made by or on behalf of you as a result of any injuries or illnesses sustained including, but not limited to, the following sources:

- Payments made directly by the tortfeasor or any insurance company on behalf of the tortfeasor or any other payments on behalf of the tortfeasor.

- 
- Any payments, settlements, judgment or arbitration awards paid by any insurance company under an uninsured or underinsured motorists' coverage policy, whether on behalf of you or other person.
  - Any workers' compensation award or settlement.
  - Medical payments coverage under any automobile insurance policy.
  - Premises or homeowner's insurance coverage including premises or homeowner's medical payments coverage.
  - Any other payments from any other source designed or intended to compensate you for injuries sustained as a result of negligence or alleged negligence of a person or entity.

Our right to recover, whether by subrogation or reimbursement, shall also apply to your dependents, minors, descendants and incompetent or disabled persons' settlements or recoveries.

You shall not enter into any type of settlement, which reduces or excludes, or attempts to reduce or exclude, the benefits provided by us. Our rights shall not be defeated by any doctrine reported to defeat our recovery rights by allocation of settlement proceeds exclusively to non-medical expense damages. You shall not incur any expenses on behalf of us in pursuit of our rights hereunder.

We shall recover the amount of benefits provided under this Plan subject to any claim of fault on the part of any Member, whether by comparative negligence or otherwise. Benefits payable by us under this Plan are secondary to any coverage under no-fault or similar insurance.

In the event that you fail or refuse to comply with the terms of this Plan and this provision specifically, you shall reimburse the Plan for any and all costs and expenses including attorney fees incurred by us in enforcing our rights hereunder. In addition, your failure to comply and/or assist us with our subrogation rights may result in termination of your participation in the Vantage Medicare Advantage plan.

---

## **Chapter 12. Definitions of important words**

**Allowed Amount** – The amount the plan would pay (before applicable co-payments or coinsurance) to a provider for rendering a covered service/drug.

**Appeal** – An appeal is something you do if you disagree with a decision to deny a request for health care services or prescription drugs or payment for services or drugs you already received. You may also make an appeal if you disagree with a decision to stop services that you are receiving. For example, you may ask for an appeal if our plan does not pay for a drug, item, or service you think you should be able to receive. Chapter 9 explains appeals, including the process involved in making an appeal.

**Balance Billing** – Charging or collecting from a member an amount in excess of the Medicare reimbursement rate for Medicare-covered services, supplies, or drugs provided to a member.

**Benefit Period** – For both our plan and Original Medicare, a benefit period is used to determine coverage for inpatient stays in hospitals and skilled nursing facilities. A benefit period begins on the first day you go to a Medicare-covered inpatient hospital or a skilled nursing facility. The benefit period ends when you have not been an inpatient at any hospital or SNF for 60 days in a row. If you go to the hospital (or SNF) after one benefit period has ended, a new benefit period begins. There is no limit to the number of benefit periods you can have.

The type of care that is covered depends on whether you are considered an inpatient for hospital and SNF stays. You must be admitted to the hospital as an inpatient, not just under observation. You are an inpatient in a SNF only if your care in the SNF meets certain standards for skilled level of care. Specifically, in order to be an inpatient in a SNF, you must need daily skilled-nursing or skilled-rehabilitation care, or both.

**Brand-Name Drug** – A prescription drug that is manufactured and sold by the pharmaceutical company that originally researched and developed the drug. Brand-name drugs have the same active-ingredient formula as the generic version of the drug. However, generic drugs are manufactured and sold by other drug manufacturers and are generally not available until after the patent on the brand-name drug has expired.

**Catastrophic Coverage Stage** – The stage in the Part D Drug Benefit where you pay a low copayment or coinsurance for your drugs after you or other qualified parties on your behalf have spent \$4,550 in covered drugs during the covered year.

**Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS)** – The Federal agency that runs Medicare. Chapter 2 explains how to contact CMS.

**Coinsurance** – The percentage (like 20%) of the total allowed amount that is owed by the member for covered services.

---

**Comprehensive Outpatient Rehabilitation Facility (CORF)** – A facility that mainly provides rehabilitation services after an illness or injury, and provides a variety of services including physician’s services, physical therapy, social or psychological services, and outpatient rehabilitation.

**Copayment** – The fixed amount you pay each time you receive certain medical services. You pay a copayment at the time you get the medical service.

**Cost-Sharing** – Cost-sharing refers to amounts that a member has to pay in addition to the plan’s premium when services or drugs are received. It includes any combination of the following two types of payments: (1) any fixed “copayment” amount that a plan requires when a specific service or drug is received; or (2) any “coinsurance” amount, a percentage of the total amount paid for a service or drug, that a plan requires when a specific service or drug is received.

**Cost-Sharing Tier** – Every drug on the list of covered drugs is in one of four cost-sharing tiers. In general, the higher the cost-sharing tier, the higher your cost for the drug.

**Coverage Determination** – A decision about whether a medical service or drug prescribed for you is covered by the plan and the amount, if any, you are required to pay for the service or prescription. In general, if you bring your prescription to a pharmacy and the pharmacy tells you the prescription is not covered under your plan, that is not a coverage determination. You need to call or write to your plan to ask for a formal decision about the coverage.

**Covered Drugs** – The term we use to mean all of the prescription drugs covered by our plan.

**Covered Services** – The general term we use to mean all of the health care services and supplies that are covered by our plan.

**Creditable Prescription Drug Coverage** – Prescription drug coverage (for example, from an employer or union) that is expected to cover, on average, at least as much as Medicare’s standard prescription drug coverage. People who have this kind of coverage when they become eligible for Medicare can generally keep that coverage without paying a penalty, if they decide to enroll in Medicare prescription drug coverage later.

**Custodial Care** – Care for personal needs rather than medically necessary needs. Custodial care is care that can be provided by people who do not have professional skills or training. This care includes help with walking, dressing, bathing, eating, preparation of special diets, and taking medication. Medicare does not cover custodial care unless it is provided as other care you are getting in addition to daily skilled nursing care and/or skilled rehabilitation services.

**Disenroll or Disenrollment** – The process of ending your membership in our plan. Disenrollment may be voluntary (your own choice) or involuntary (not your own choice).

**Durable Medical Equipment** – Certain medical equipment that is ordered by your doctor for use in the home. Examples are walkers, wheelchairs, or hospital beds.

**Emergency Care** – Covered services that are: 1) rendered by a provider qualified to furnish emergency services; and 2) needed to evaluate or stabilize an emergency medical condition.

**Evidence of Coverage (EOC) and Disclosure Information** – This document, along with your enrollment form and any other attachments, riders, or other optional coverage selected, which explains your coverage, what we must do, your rights, and what you have to do as a member of our plan.

**Exception** – A type of coverage determination that, if approved, allows you to get a drug that is not on your plan sponsor’s formulary (a formulary exception), or get a non-preferred drug at the preferred cost-sharing level (a tiering exception). You may also request an exception if your plan sponsor requires you to try another drug before receiving the drug you are requesting, or the plan limits the quantity or dosage of the drug you are requesting (a formulary exception).

**Generic Drug** – A prescription drug that is approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) as having the same active ingredient(s) as the brand-name drug. Generally, generic drugs cost less than brand-name drugs.

**Grievance** - A type of complaint you make about us or one of our network providers or pharmacies, including a complaint concerning the quality of your care. This type of complaint does not involve coverage or payment disputes.

**Home Health Aide** – A home health aide provides services that do not need the skills of a licensed nurse or therapist, such as help with personal care (e.g., bathing, using the toilet, dressing, or carrying out the prescribed exercises). Home health aides do not have a nursing license or provide therapy.

**Home Health Care** - Skilled nursing care and certain other health care services that you get in your home for the treatment of an illness or injury. Covered services are listed in the Benefits Chart in Chapter 4 under the heading “Home health care.” If you need home health care services, our plan will cover these services for you provided the Medicare coverage requirements are met. Home health care can include services from a home health aide if the services are part of the home health plan of care for your illness or injury. They are not covered unless you are also getting a covered skilled service. Home health services do not include the services of housekeepers, food service arrangements, or full-time nursing care at home.

**Hospice Care** - A special way of caring for people who are terminally ill and providing counseling for their families. Hospice care is physical care and counseling that is given by a team of people who are part of a Medicare-certified public agency or private company. Depending on the situation, this care may be given in the home, a hospice facility, a hospital, or a nursing home. Care from a hospice is meant to help patients in the last months of life by giving comfort and relief from pain. The focus is on care, not cure. For more information on hospice care, visit [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov) and under “Search Tools” choose “Find a Medicare Publication” to view or download the publication “Medicare Hospice Benefits.” Or, call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227. TTY users should call 1-877-486-2048)

---

**Initial Coverage Limit** – The maximum limit of coverage under the Initial Coverage Stage.

**Initial Coverage Stage** – This is the stage before your total drug expenses have reached \$4,550, including amounts you have paid and what our plan has paid on your behalf.

**Inpatient Care** - Health care that you get when you are admitted to a hospital.

**Late Enrollment Penalty** – An amount added to your monthly premium for Medicare drug coverage if you go without creditable coverage (coverage that expects to pay, on average, at least as much as standard Medicare prescription drug coverage) for a continuous period of 63 days or more. You pay this higher amount as long as you have a Medicare drug plan. There are some exceptions.

**Lifetime Reserve Days** - In the Original Medicare Plan and our plan, a total of 60 extra days that Medicare or our plan will pay for when you are in a hospital more than 90 days during a benefit period. Once these 60 reserve days are used, you do not get any extra days during your lifetime.

**List of Covered Drugs (Formulary or “Drug List”)** – A list of covered drugs provided by the plan. The drugs on this list are selected by the plan with the help of doctors and pharmacists. The list includes both brand-name and generic drugs.

**Low Income Subsidy/Extra Help** – A Medicare program to help people with limited income and resources pay Medicare prescription drug program costs, such as premiums, deductibles, and coinsurance.

**Maximum charge** - The highest amount allowed, based on the Medicare-approved amount, that can be billed by a provider.

**Medicaid (or Medical Assistance)** – A joint Federal and State program that helps with medical costs for some people with low incomes and limited resources. Medicaid programs vary from state to state, but most health care costs are covered if you qualify for both Medicare and Medicaid. See Chapter 2, Section 6 for information about how to contact Medicaid in your state.

**Medical Emergency** – You believe that your health is in serious danger – including severe pain, a bad injury, a sudden illness, or a medical condition that is quickly getting worse. See “Emergency Care.”

**Medically Necessary** – Drugs, services, or supplies that are proper and needed for the diagnosis or treatment of your medical condition; are used for the diagnosis, direct care, and treatment of your medical condition; meet the standards of good medical practice in the local community; and are not mainly for your convenience or that of your doctor.

**Medicare** – The Federal health insurance program for people 65 years of age or older, some people under age 65 with certain disabilities, and people with End-Stage Renal Disease

(generally those with permanent kidney failure who need dialysis or a kidney transplant). People with Medicare can get their Medicare health coverage through Original Medicare or a Medicare Advantage plan.

**Medicare Advantage (MA) Plan** – Sometimes called Medicare Part C. A plan offered by a private company that contracts with Medicare to provide you with all your Medicare Part A (Hospital) and Part B (Medical) benefits. A Medicare Advantage plan can be an HMO, PPO, a Private Fee-for-Service (PFFS) plan, or a Medicare Medical Savings Account (MSA) plan. In most cases, Medicare Advantage plans also offer Medicare Part D (prescription drug coverage). These plans are called **Medicare Advantage Plans with Prescription Drug Coverage**. Everyone who has Medicare Part A and Part B is eligible to join any Medicare Health Plan that is offered in their area, except people with End-Stage Renal Disease (unless certain exceptions apply).

**Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage (Medicare Part D)** – Insurance to help pay for outpatient prescription drugs, vaccines, biologicals, and some supplies not covered by Medicare Part A or Part B.

**“Medigap” (Medicare Supplement Insurance) Policy** – Medicare supplement insurance sold by private insurance companies to fill “gaps” in Original Medicare. Medigap policies only work with Original Medicare. (A Medicare Advantage plan is not a Medigap policy.)

**Member (Member of our Plan, or “Plan Member”)** – A person with Medicare who is eligible to get covered services, who has enrolled in our plan and whose enrollment has been confirmed by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS).

**Member Services** – A department within our plan responsible for answering your questions about your membership, benefits, grievances, and appeals. See Chapter 2 for information about how to contact Member Services.

**Network Pharmacy** – A network pharmacy is a pharmacy where members of our plan can get their prescription drug benefits. We call them “network pharmacies” because they contract with our plan. In most cases, your prescriptions are covered only if they are filled at one of our network pharmacies.

**Network Provider** – “Provider” is the general term we use for doctors, other health care professionals, hospitals, and other health care facilities that are licensed or certified by Medicare and by the State to provide health care services. We call them “**network providers**” when they have an agreement with our plan to accept our payment as payment in full, and in some cases to coordinate as well as provide covered services to members of our plan. Our plan pays network providers based on the agreements it has with the providers or if the providers agree to provide you with plan-covered services. Network providers may also be referred to as “plan providers.”

---

**Organization Determination** – The Medicare Advantage organization has made an organization determination when it, or one of its providers, makes a decision about whether services are covered or how much you have to pay for covered services.

**Original Medicare** (“Traditional Medicare” or “Fee-for-service” Medicare) – Original Medicare is offered by the government, and not a private health plan like Medicare Advantage plans and prescription drug plans. Under Original Medicare, Medicare services are covered by paying doctors, hospitals, and other health care providers payment amounts established by Congress. You can see any doctor, hospital, or other health care provider that accepts Medicare. You must pay the deductible. Medicare pays its share of the Medicare-approved amount, and you pay your share. Original Medicare has two parts: Part A (Hospital Insurance) and Part B (Medical Insurance) and is available everywhere in the United States.

**Out-of-Network Pharmacy** – A pharmacy that does not have a contract with our plan to coordinate or provide covered drugs to members of our plan. As explained in this Evidence of Coverage, most drugs you get from out-of-network pharmacies are not covered by our plan unless certain conditions apply.

**Out-of-Network Provider or Out-of-Network Facility** – A provider or facility with which we have not arranged to coordinate or provide covered services to members of our plan. Out-of-network providers are providers that are not employed, owned, or operated by our plan or are not under contract to deliver covered services to you. Using out-of-network providers or facilities is explained in this booklet in Chapter 3.

**Out-of-Pocket Costs** – See the definition for “cost-sharing” above. A member’s cost-sharing requirement to pay for a portion of services or drugs received is also referred to as the member’s “out-of-pocket” cost requirement.

**Out-of-Pocket Maximum** – The maximum amount that you pay out-of-pocket during the calendar year, usually at the time services are received, for covered Part A (Hospital Insurance) and Part B (Medical Insurance) services. Plan premiums and Medicare Part A and Part B premiums do not count toward the out-of-pocket maximum.

**Part C** – see “**Medicare Advantage (MA) Plan**”.

**Part D** – The voluntary Medicare Prescription Drug Benefit Program. (For ease of reference, we will refer to the prescription drug benefit program as Part D.)

**Part D Drugs** – Drugs that can be covered under Part D. We may or may not offer all Part D drugs. (See your formulary for a specific list of covered drugs.) Certain categories of drugs were specifically excluded by Congress from being covered as Part D drugs.

**Point of Service (POS)** - An HMO option that lets a member use out-of-network providers for an additional cost. See Chapter 1 Section 3.2 and Chapter 3 Section 2.4 for additional information.

---

**Prescription Drug Benefit Manager** – An entity that provides pharmacy benefit management services, including contracting with a network of pharmacies; establishing payment levels for network pharmacies; negotiating rebate arrangements; developing and managing formularies, preferred drug lists, and prior authorization programs; maintaining patient compliance programs; performing drug utilization review; and operating disease management programs. Many also operate mail order pharmacies or have arrangements to include prescription availability through mail-order pharmacies.

**Primary Care Physician (PCP)** – A health care professional you select to coordinate your health care. Your PCP is responsible for providing or authorizing covered services while you are a plan member. Chapter 3 tells more about PCPs.

**Prior Authorization** – Approval in advance to get services or certain drugs that may or may not be on our formulary. Some in-network medical services are covered only if your doctor or other network provider gets “prior authorization” from our plan. Covered services that need prior authorization are marked in the Benefits Chart in Chapter 4. Some drugs are covered only if your doctor or other network provider gets “prior authorization” from us. Covered drugs that need prior authorization are marked in the formulary.

**Providers** – Doctors and other health care professionals that the state licenses to provide medical services and care. It also includes hospitals and other health care facilities.

**Quality Improvement Organization (QIO)** – Groups of practicing doctors and other health care experts that are paid by the Federal government to check and improve the care given to Medicare patients. They must review your complaints about the quality of care given by Medicare Providers. See Chapter 2, Section 4 for information about how to contact the QIO in your state and Chapter 9 for information about making complaints to the QIO.

**Quantity Limits** – A management tool that is designed to limit the use of selected drugs for quality, safety, or utilization reasons. Limits may be on the amount of the drug that we cover per prescription or for a defined period of time.

**Rehabilitation Services** – These services include physical therapy, speech and language therapy, and occupational therapy.

**Service Area** – “Service area” is the geographic area approved by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) within which an eligible individual may enroll in a certain plan, and in the case of network plans, where a network must be available to provide services.

**Skilled Nursing Facility (SNF) Care** – A level of care in a SNF ordered by a doctor that must be given or supervised by licensed health care professionals. It may be skilled nursing care, or skilled rehabilitation services, or both. Skilled nursing care includes services that require the skills of a licensed nurse to perform or supervise. Skilled rehabilitation services are physical therapy, speech therapy, and occupational therapy. Physical therapy includes exercise to improve

the movement and strength of an area of the body, and training on how to use special equipment, such as how to use a walker or get in and out of a wheelchair. Speech therapy includes exercise to regain and strengthen speech and/or swallowing skills. Occupational therapy helps you learn how to perform usual daily activities, such as eating and dressing by yourself.

**Special Needs Plan** – A special type of Medicare Advantage plan that provides more focused health care for specific groups of people, such as those who have both Medicare and Medicaid, who reside in a nursing home, or who have certain chronic medical conditions.

**Step Therapy** – A utilization tool that requires you to first try another drug to treat your medical condition before we will cover the drug your physician may have initially prescribed.

**Subrogation** – Subrogation means Vantage can regain by legal action, if necessary, the cost of benefits paid by Vantage from any person or entity against whom the member may have a claim.

**Supplemental Security Income (SSI)** – A monthly benefit paid by the Social Security Administration to people with limited income and resources who are disabled, blind, or age 65 and older. SSI benefits are not the same as Social Security benefits.

**Urgently Needed Care** – Urgently needed care is a non-emergency situation when you need medical care right away because of an illness, injury, or condition that you did not expect or anticipate, but your health is not in serious danger.



**VANTAGE HEALTH PLAN, INC.**  
*Making Healthcare Work!*

## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

### ***Monroe Location***

130 DeSiard Street, Suite 300  
Monroe, La. 71201  
LOCAL: (318) 361-0900  
TOLL-FREE: (888) 823-1910  
TTY (866) 524-5144  
(for the hearing impaired)

### ***Shreveport Location***

855 Pierremont Rd., Suite 109  
Shreveport, LA 71106  
TOLL-FREE: (888) 823-1910  
TTY (866) 524-5144  
(for the hearing impaired)

***[www.vhp-stategroup.com](http://www.vhp-stategroup.com)***