

Social Security Hot Topics 2015



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Topics



Part I

- Expanded Office Hours
- *Social Security Matters*
- *my Social Security account*
- Other Online Services

Part II

- Medicare Review and HSAs
- OPERS Health Insurance Changes
- Applying for Medicare
- “Extra Help” with Prescription Costs
- Affordable Care Act

Part I



Expanded Office Hours



- Local SSA offices are open to public Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday 9 am - 4 pm except federal holidays, 9 am - noon Wednesdays
- Teleservice hours remain unchanged: 7 am - 7 pm Monday-Friday at 1-800-772-1213
 - Automated services available 24 hours a day

Why Wait In Line When You Can Go Online?

Social Security & Social Media

www.ssa.gov/socialmedia



- *Social Security Matters* is an interactive blog that encourages discussion and offers important retirement and disability-related solutions



- Facebook
- Twitter (@SocialSecurity)
- YouTube
- Google Plus
- LinkedIn
- Webinars
- Podcasts

Who Can Create a *my* Social Security Account?



- **Must be at least 18 years old**
- **Must have a valid email address**
 - **May use third-party's email**
 - **Other options: aolmail.com, gmail.com, icloud.com, outlook.com, yahoo.com**
- **Must have a Social Security number**
- **Must have a U.S. mailing address**

How to Create a *my* Social Security Account



Step 1

Visit
www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount
and select *my* Social Security



Step 2

Select "Create An Account."

A screenshot of the Social Security Administration's registration page. The page is divided into two main sections: "New Users" and "Existing Users".
New Users: This section contains a list of requirements for creating an account, a padlock icon, and a "Create An Account" button which is circled in red. Below the requirements, there is a warning about unauthorized use of the service.
Existing Users: This section contains fields for "Username:" and "Password:", each with a "Forgot" link. A "Sign In" button is located below these fields.
Text in New Users section:
You must be able to verify some information about yourself and:
• Have a valid E-mail address,
• Have a Social Security number,
• Have a U.S. mailing address, and
• Be at least 18 years of age.
You can create an account only to gain access to your own personal information. You cannot use this online service to access the records of a person:
• With whom you have a business relationship;
• For whom you are a representative payee; or
• For whom you are an appointed representative.
Unauthorized use of this service may subject you to criminal or civil penalties, or both.
Buttons: "Create An Account" (circled in red), "Learn More", "Sign In", "Forgot Username", "Forgot Password".

How to Create a *my* Social Security Account



Step 3

Provide some personal information to verify your identity.

This screenshot shows the "Create an Account" page on the Social Security website. At the top, the Social Security Administration logo and name are displayed. Below the header, the page title "Create an Account" is shown. A progress indicator at the top indicates three steps: "1 Verify your Identity" (active), "2 Secure your Identity", and "3 Create your Account". The main heading is "Please tell us who you are". Underneath, it says "Your Name: As shown on your Social Security card." There are four input fields: "First", "M.I." (Middle Initial), "Last", and "Suffix".This screenshot shows the "Create an Account" page on the Social Security website. At the top, the Social Security Administration logo and name are displayed. Below the header, the page title "Create an Account" is shown. A progress indicator at the top indicates three steps: "1 Verify your Identity", "2 Secure your Identity", and "3 Create your Account" (active). The main heading is "Please create your account details". Underneath, it says "Username:" followed by an input field.

Step 4

Choose a username and password to create your account.



my Social Security Account

- Services available to those on benefits
 - Request replacement Medicare card 
 - Request instant benefit verification letter
 - Request replacement 1099 for tax purposes
 - Change address/phone number (not available for SSI recipients)
 - Start or change direct deposit
 - Check benefit and payment information and earnings record

“Benefit and Payment Details” and “My Profile” Tabs



- **“Benefit and Payment Details” tab displays:**
 - **Benefit type**
 - **Scheduled payment dates**
 - **Payment amounts**
 - **Payment history**
 - **Overpayment/waiver information**
 - **Medicare information**
- **“My Profile” tab displays:**
 - **Contact information**
 - **Payment method**
 - **Pending changes made online to contact or direct deposit information**

Social Security Statement



- Anyone 18 or older can access *Statement* with *my* Social Security account if not already receiving benefits
- SSA has resumed automatically mailing *Statements* but only every 5 years beginning at age 25 to those without a *my* Social Security Account
 - Once individual turns 60, *Statement* is mailed every year to anyone without *my* Social Security Account
- Important to review *Statement* every year!

Online *Social Security* *Statement*



Just like paper *Statement*, online version provides:

- **Estimated retirement and disability benefits**
- **Estimated benefits for dependent spouse and children when worker receives benefits or dies**
- **Medicare eligibility**
- **Worker's lifetime earnings according to Social Security records**
- **Estimated Social Security and Medicare taxes worker has paid**

Social Security Statement For Government Workers



- With 40 credits, *Statement* will show retirement benefit estimates. If not, *Statement* lists how many credits worker has earned.
- *Statement* will show non-FICA earners if they have enough earnings for Medicare.
- Note: Most people with non-FICA pensions (OPERS, STRS, SERS, Police & Fire, CSRS) have to use a two-step process to estimate Social Security benefits: 1) Get benefit estimate and W-2 info from the *Statement*, and 2) Use the WEP calculator at www.socialsecurity.gov/gpo-wep.

Social Security Homepage



Home Numbers & Cards Benefits **Information for...** Business & Government Our Agency

Descriptions and online applications

For extra help application, select Medicare Outreach Organizations

How much could I get from Social Security?

FIND OUT!
Create a *my* Social Security account today!

my Social Security
Log in
Create an Account

Check out your *Social Security Statement*, change your address & manage your benefits.

Online Services
Whether you are applying for or receiving benefits, learn what you can do online.

Retirement Estimator
Calculate your benefits based on your actual Social Security earnings record & apply online.

Disability Facts
Learn more about the Faces and Facts of Disability.

www.socialsecurity.gov/onlineservices

- Estimate future retirement benefits using Retirement Estimator
- Apply for retirement, spouse, disability or Medicare-only
 - Survivors and SSI application not online
- Check status of online application
- Determine how work will effect benefits using Retirement Earnings Test Calculator
- Use WEP and GPO calculators to determine how Social Security benefit may be reduced by non-covered government pension

www.socialsecurity.gov/onlineservices

- Search database of Frequently Asked Questions
- Apply for “Extra Help” with Medicare Prescription Costs
- Appeal a medical decision on a disability or SSI application
- Use screening tool to identify Social Security programs for which you may be eligible

Part II





Medicare Review

- **Federal health insurance program for people:**
 - **65 and older**
 - **Receiving disability benefits for at least 24 months (exception: Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis, ALS)**
 - **End Stage Renal Disease**



Medicare and SSA

**Social Security is the “gateway into Medicare”.
We enroll the public in traditional Medicare
A/B:**

- **Part A = Hospital Insurance**
- **Part B = Supplemental Medical Insurance**

**Can qualify for Medicaid as well – through Ohio
JFS offices**

Medicare Parts C and D



- **SSA cannot assist with enrollment in Parts C or D or other supplemental insurance (Medigap)**
- **SSA refers public to OSHIP and Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS)**
- **SSA's role in Part C and Part D restricted to:**
 - **Extra Help with prescription costs**
 - **Medicare Income-Related Monthly Adjustment Amount (IRMAA)**

Medicare Part A



Part A/Hospital Insurance

- **No monthly premium for 99% of beneficiaries**
- **Qualify on own wages or on work history of spouse/former spouse**

Medicare Part B



Part B/Supplemental Medical Insurance

- Standard 2015 premium = \$104.90/month
- Monthly premium is deducted from Social Security check, otherwise:
 - Quarterly billing
 - Automatic withdrawal from bank account with Medicare Easy Pay at www.medicare.gov/your-medicare-costs/paying-parts-a-and-b/medicare-easy-pay.html
- Anyone can apply for Part B, even without 40 credits
- Higher income Medicare beneficiaries may pay more than standard premium

Special Enrollment Period



If you delay Medicare Part B at age 65, you will NOT have a penalty for delayed enrollment as long as you can prove you had group health insurance through active employment and you enroll during Special Enrollment Period (SEP):

- Month you leave work plus 8 additional months
- Wait beyond those 8 months, and you will pay a penalty
- COBRA months do not factor in SEP
- You can start Part B special enrollment process 3 months before stopping work



To Process the Part B in the SEP

- You must contact Social Security on the phone or visit a local office. You cannot complete the SEP online.
- The individual will need documents
 1. CMS Form L564
 2. Part B enrollment form CMS 40B
- Download the forms at www.ssa.gov/forms
- You can apply for the SEP up to 3 months in advance of a retirement date.



SEP = Part B only. Part A Enrollment Differs.

A beneficiary MUST take Part A when he/she:

- 1. Receives a monthly benefit.**
- 2. Voluntarily suspends benefits (aka – file and suspend at full age).**

Part A has a “fixed start date” – either:

- 1. Initial Enrollment Period (normally age 65)
or**
- 2. If after age 65, 6 months PRIOR to the
application for benefits.**

Ex: I suspend my benefits at age 67 for my wife to draw spouse benefits from me. Application date May 2015 – Part A goes back to Nov 2014.



Medicare and Health Savings Accounts (HSAs)

- Individual and employer cannot contribute to HSA once account-holder becomes entitled to Medicare (A and/or A and B)
- Again – if entitled to monthly Social Security benefits, you cannot waive Part A
 - Includes “file and suspend” beneficiaries
 - If filing for benefits after 65, Part A is retroactive up to 6 months
- Only way to avoid Part A is to withdraw application for cash benefits
- Even if entitled to Medicare, you can withdraw funds from HSA to pay authorized health expenses



For More Info, Contact IRS

- Medicare and HSAs both have tax advantages.
- IRS may impose penalties for people who have Medicare and contribute to HSA.
- See IRS Publication 969, *Health Savings Accounts and Other tax-Favored Health Plans* at www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p969.pdf



Those with Higher Incomes May Pay More for Part B and Prescription Drugs

- Applies to about 5% of Medicare population
- Single with MAGI > \$85,000, married filing jointly with MAGI > \$170,000
- 2015 premium based on 2013 tax return
 - Recalculated annually
 - MAGI = Adjusted Gross + Tax Exempt Interest Income from line 8b on 1040
- Higher Part B premium = \$146.90-\$335.70/month
- Premium for prescription drug plan (Part C or D) may also be higher
- May request new determination with life-changing event (SSA-44)

OPERS Health Insurance Changes



- Ohio Public Employees Retirement System (OPERS) is eliminating its retiree health plan effective January 2016
- Retirees will receive some OPERS funds for health care in the Medicare market through a Health Reimbursement Account
- So OPERS retirees will need Medicare A and B as their foundation. But...
- More than 6,000 OPERS retirees are not insured for premium-free Part A either on their own work record or on the record of a spouse. What should they do?

For OPERS retirees who do not have Medicare Part A



- OPERS retirees should do **NOTHING** now. OPERS will forward instructions once finalized.
- They can use the mySocialSecurity account to see how many Medicare credits they have so far
- May make sense for OPERS retiree to earn 40 credits to qualify for premium-free Part A, depending on:
 - Age
 - Health
 - Number of credits needed

Explore Eligibility for Premium-Free Part A as a Spouse



- **OPERS retiree may qualify for premium-free Part A as a spouse**
 - **Current - Has there been a recent marriage? Is the couple separated?**
 - **Deceased (no duration of marriage requirement)**
 - **Divorced (10-year marriage requirement)**
 - **Younger spouse, as long as spouse is at least 62, even if not yet drawing Social Security benefits**
- **Have them schedule an appointment with SSA if there is a possibility.**

If OPERS Retiree Ineligible for Premium-Free Part A



- **May buy Part A and pay monthly premium. In 2015, Part A premium =**
 - **\$224/month with 30+ credits + penalty for delayed enrollment**
 - **\$407/month with fewer than 30 credits + penalty for delayed enrollment**
- **OPERS will reimburse retirees for cost of Part A and any penalty**
- **Again - Part A application details are being finalized!! More details to come...**

Paying for A/B Premiums



- **If ineligible for any Social Security benefits:**
 - Quarterly billing
 - Medicare Easy Pay
- **If eligible for cash benefits but benefit is less than premium:**
 - Yearly billing
- **Medicare will eventually terminate if premiums are not paid.**
 - Will have to wait to reapply in General Enrollment Period (Jan-March) with coverage delayed until July.
- **Third Party Premium Billing Request (CMS-2384) permits third party to be billed for premium.**

Apply Online for Medicare Only



- Elect Medicare only and delay cash benefits
- Application takes just 10 minutes to complete
- Can file for Part A only or both A and B
- Allows you to apply for Medicare on own work record (not spouse's work record)
- Must be at least 64 and 8 months old

Do not use online application if you have ANY Medicare coverage.

“Extra Help” Guidelines



- **AKA Low Income Subsidy, Part D Rx Help**
 - **2015 income limits--i.e. gross Social Security benefit, pension, earnings from work**
 - Single < app. \$1,470/month (\$17,655/year)
 - Married couple living together < \$1,990/month (\$23,895/year)
 - Higher for larger households
 - **2015 resource limits--i.e. savings, investments, IRAs, 401Ks, real estate, etc; excludes home and vehicles**
 - Single < app. \$13,640*
 - Married couple living together < app. \$27,250*
- *Includes \$1,500/person burial exclusion**

Application Provides One-Stop Shopping



- **Application initiates a Medicare Savings Program application**
 - Question 15 asks whether applicant wants to apply for state buy-in program. If so, SSA sends electronic information to state/county. Applicant should expect follow-up phone call or letter from JFS.
- **Medicare Savings Programs help pay for Part B premiums**
 - For some, Savings Programs help pay for Part A premiums and Part A and B deductibles and co-payments

Applying for “Extra Help”



- Third parties are encouraged to apply on behalf of others
- Applications are available:
 - Online at www.socialsecurity.gov/prescriptionhelp (**fastest and easiest way to get a decision**)
 - Local office
 - Postage-paid reply postcard
 - 1-800-772-1213 – Teleservice Center or local office will mail SSA 1020 form
- Apply at any time during the year or with change in circumstances (i.e. loss of job, death of spouse, etc.)
- Our motto: ***When in doubt, fill it out!***



Various Levels of Extra Help

SSA's determination letter will indicate the level of subsidy applicant qualifies for:

- **Full premium subsidy (100%) with no deductible and limited copayments;**
- **Full premium subsidy (100%) but with reduced deductibles and co-payments;**
- **Partial premium subsidy with reduced deductibles and copayments:**
 - **75%**
 - **50%**
 - **25%**
- **Or, ineligible for subsidy**



“Extra Help” Automatic for Some

- **“Extra help” enrollment is automatic for “deemed” population. No application is required if:**
 - **Dual eligible – Beneficiary has Medicare and Medicaid**
 - **Beneficiary has SSI and Medicare**
 - **State pays Part B premium**
- **“Deemed eligibles” should still choose prescription drug plan or they will be auto-enrolled in a plan**
- **If beneficiaries lose “deemed” status, they are notified by CMS and are encouraged to contact Social Security to apply for “extra help”**



“Extra Help” Redeterminations

- If individual has been approved for “extra help” in the past, s/he may be selected for a redetermination.
- If so, *Notice of Review of Eligibility for Extra Help* typically arrives in the mail in August.
- Should complete and return that form within 30 days noting any changes in income, resources and household size.
- If form is not returned, “extra help” will eventually be terminated.



Medicare Resources

1-800-Medicare

Medicare.gov

The Official U.S. Government Site for Medicare



1-800-686-1578 (Ohio Senior Health Insurance Information Program, OSHIP)



Affordable Care Act (ACA)



- **Key parts of Affordable Care Act (aka Obamacare) took effect Jan. 1, 2014.**
- **If employer doesn't offer health insurance, you can buy insurance directly in a new competitive "Marketplace."**
 - **Expanded Medicaid in Ohio (and some other states).**
- **Open Enrollment has ended for 2015, but enrollment may be permitted in some life-changing situations**
- **Open Enrollment for 2016 = Nov. 1, 2015-Jan. 31, 2016.**

More About Health Care Law



- Every plan offers comprehensive coverage—from doctors to medications to hospital visits.
- Marketplace lets you compare health plans in plain language.
- Visit Health Insurance Marketplace at www.HealthCare.gov to get information about how the Affordable Care Act can help. Or call 1-800-318-2596.

HealthCare.gov

How Health Care Law Effects Those on Medicare



- Medicare is not part of Health Insurance Marketplace so beneficiaries don't need to do anything
- Medicare choices and benefits are unchanged, but Affordable Care Act expanded Medicare benefits include free preventive services, cancer screenings, and annual wellness visit
- Plus ACA expanded discounts on brand-name and generic drugs until "donut hole" closure in 2020
- Note: Medicare beneficiaries can't use ACA insurance through healthcare.gov