

MSSP CMS Beneficiary Notification FAQs (for patients)

For Patients:

Q: What is the Medicare Shared Savings Program (MSSP)?

A: The Medicare Shared Savings Program (Shared Savings Program) offers providers and suppliers, such as physicians, hospitals, and others involved in your care the opportunity to create an Accountable Care Organization (ACO). An ACO agrees to be held accountable for the quality, cost, and experience of care assigned to patients who have Original Medicare.

The Shared Savings Program is an alternative payment model that promotes accountability for a patient population; coordinates items and services for patients with Original Medicare; and encourages high quality and efficient services.

<https://www.cms.gov/medicare/medicare-fee-for-service-payment/sharedsavingsprogram>

Q: What is an ACO?

A: An Accountable Care Organization (ACO) is a group of doctors, hospitals, and/or other health care providers who work together to improve the quality and experience you get.

These organizations help your doctors and other health care providers understand your history, and talk to one another about your care and your health care needs. This can save you time and money by avoiding repeated tests and unneeded appointments. It may make it easier to spot potential problems before they become more serious - like drug interactions that can happen if one provider isn't aware of what another has prescribed.

ACO providers communicate with each other and partner with you in making health care decisions. They share information and may use Electronic Health Records (EHRs), so you'll likely have fewer repeated medical tests and may save time on paperwork.

An ACO won't limit your choice of health care providers. It isn't a Medicare Advantage Plan, HMO plan, or an insurance plan of any kind. Only people with Original Medicare can be assigned to an ACO within MSSP. If your doctor, hospital, or other provider is part of an ACO, you still have the right to visit any doctor, hospital, or other provider that accepts Medicare at any time, and your Original Medicare benefits won't change.

<https://www.medicare.gov/manage-your-health/coordinating-your-care/accountable-care-organizations>

Q: What is the Beneficiary Notice and why is the beneficiary receiving it?

A: As your provider participates in an ACO and you have Original Medicare, you are receiving the written notification to inform you that a group of providers are working together to coordinate your care with the goal of improving your health while reducing unnecessary testing and preventing Medicare fraud, waste, or abuse.

The notification also informs you that through this care coordination, Medicare gives your health care provider's ACO the opportunity to request certain information about your care. Securely sharing your data in this way helps make sure all people involved in your care have access to your health information when and where they need it, to work together to get the care you need. If you don't want Medicare to share your health care information in this way, you have the option to "opt out" of this data sharing by calling 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227).

Q: I don't want Medicare to share my health information with the ACO. What must I do?

A: Please contact Medicare at 1-800- MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227). As a reminder, the directions to opt out are located on your Beneficiary Notice.

Step 1: Call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227)

Step 2: Enter your Medicare number (Medicare number is located on the beneficiary's red, white, and blue Medicare card)

Step 3: Once you reach a representative, you will need to provide at minimum four pieces of information for verification purposes:

- Name
- Medicare number
- Date of birth
- Address
- Social Security Number

Step 4: You will inform the representative that you want to opt out of sharing claims data in the ACO program. You will need to provide the name of the ACO as listed at the top of the Beneficiary Information Notice.

Step 5: You will receive a letter in 30 calendar days to confirm you have opted out of sharing claims data.

Medicare will continue to use your information for some purposes, like evaluating quality of care.

If you change your mind and want Medicare to share your health information with the ACO, you can call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227) to let Medicare know. Your provider office of the ACO is not permitted to contact Medicare on your behalf.

Q: How often will I receive the Beneficiary Notification?

A: Beginning 2023, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) requires that an ACO and its primary care participants provide the written notification once per "contract period." This means you will receive at least one notification every few years based on current CMS regulations.

In addition to receiving the written notification, your provider will follow-up with you within 180 days from the initial notification. The purpose of this follow-up is to allow you to ask questions regarding ACOs, such as how your care is coordinated, or how Medicare shares your data.