



Things to Think About Before Turning 65

So, you're about to hit the big 6-5. Congrats! But man, the Medicare chaos is real, isn't it? Your phone's blowing up with call centers, and your mailbox looks like a Medicare advertising convention exploded in it.

But here's the million-dollar question: Do you actually need to do anything about Medicare when you turn 65?

I can't tell you how often I hear, "But the Social Security office said I had to enroll in Part A!" Spoiler alert: That's not always true.

The Very First Step

Before you do anything else, ask yourself, "Do I NEED or WANT to join the Medicare health insurance system?" Most folks become eligible at 65, but that doesn't mean everyone needs to jump on board right away.

Your Current Health Insurance Situation

Here's where things get interesting. Depending on how you're getting your health insurance now, you might need Medicare ASAP or be fine waiting. Let's look at some common scenarios:

1. You're on ACA/Obamacare/Marketplace Insurance

If this is you, you need to enroll in Medicare at 65. Do it during your initial enrollment window - that's 3 months before your birth month, your birth month, and 3 months after. My advice? Don't wait. Get on it as soon as your window opens.

2. You're Already Getting Social Security Benefits

Good news: You'll be automatically enrolled in both Part A and Part B. But here's the kicker - you don't have to keep Part B if you've got other qualifying coverage. What's qualifying coverage? Typically, it's group health insurance through your current employment or your spouse's current employment, where the employer has 20 or more employees. Don't let the government make you pay for something you might not need



yet. Just follow the instructions that come with your Medicare card to decline Part B if you don't need it now. You can always enroll later when you need it, usually when you (or your spouse) retire.

3. You Work for a Small Employer (Less Than 20 Employees)

In this case, you'll need both Part A and Part B. Medicare's secondary payer rules come into play here.

4. You Work for a Large Employer (20+ Employees)

This is where people often mess up. Just because you have employer coverage doesn't mean you have to keep it when you're Medicare-eligible. Do the math - compare your current costs and coverage with what Medicare offers. Sometimes, Medicare's a better deal.

5. You're Retired But Still on Your Former Employer's Plan

Some employers offer retiree health coverage that bridges the gap until you're Medicare-eligible. For example, if you retire at 63, your employer might provide health insurance until you turn 65. At that point, you'll transition to Medicare. Some generous employers even provide a health reimbursement account to help with your Medicare expenses. If you're in this boat, give me a call when you're approaching 65. I'll help you set up the right Medicare plans to complement any retiree benefits you receive.

6. You're on Social Security Disability and Already Have Medicare

This is huge. When you turn 65, you get a one-time, six-month window to enroll in a Medicare Supplement without being penalized for pre-existing conditions. Don't miss this opportunity!

7. You're on COBRA and Turning 65

This one's tricky, so pay attention. If you're on COBRA and turning 65, a couple of things might happen:

- You might not be eligible for COBRA anymore once you're Medicare-eligible.
- You might be able to keep COBRA, but you'll need to enroll in Medicare Parts A and B, too.

Here's why: Medicare becomes your primary payer when you're 65+ and on COBRA. That means you must enroll in Part A and Part B. You can keep COBRA as secondary coverage if you want, but it rarely makes financial sense. COBRA's products are usually



more expensive than Medicare's supplemental products. Don't rely on your HR department for advice; they're not Medicare experts. Give me a call instead. I'll walk you through your options and help you find a better solution than keeping COBRA.

The Bottom Line

Don't just enroll in Medicare because someone said you had to or because you thought you should. Make an informed decision. Give me a call - I'll help you figure out if you need Medicare now or if you can safely wait.

Remember, the first step is answering that basic question: "Do I need or want to enroll in Medicare Part A and/or Part B?" Don't even think about Medicare products until you know you need Medicare itself.

So, before you get overwhelmed by all the Medicare noise, let's chat. I'll help you navigate this maze and make the best choice for your situation. After all, that's what I'm here for!