



## Withholding Medicare Prescription Drug Premium from Your 2013 Social Security Payment

Each year, Medicare Prescription Drug Plans may change what they cost and cover. Medicare prescription drug coverage (Part D) could be part of a Medicare Advantage Plan (like an HMO or PPO), a Medicare Cost Plan, or a Medicare Prescription Drug Plan. You should review your current plan and compare it to others to make sure it still meets your needs. If you ask to have your Medicare drug plan's premium withheld from your Social Security payment (called "premium withhold"), there are some important things to know about how premium withhold works in different situations.

### What happens when I first start premium withhold?

It could take up to 3 months from the time you request premium withhold before you start seeing premiums withheld from your Social Security payment. Depending on when the plan gets your enrollment request, premiums might be withheld back to the start of your enrollment in the plan. Other times, premiums aren't withheld until 1 or 2 months after you're enrolled. If this is the case, you'll get a bill and you'll need to pay your drug plan's monthly premium directly to your plan. If there's difficulty withholding premium from your Social Security payment, your drug plan will let you know.

### What if I'm having premium withheld from my Social Security payment now, but I want to switch to a new Medicare drug plan for next year and still have my premiums withheld?

How quickly premium withholding can start under your new plan depends on how early in the 2013 enrollment period you enroll in your new plan. In some instances, your enrollment and request for premium withhold from your Social Security payment will be early enough in the Open Enrollment Period that your premium withholding under your new plan will begin in January 2013. If your enrollment occurs later in the enrollment period, you may be asked to pay your new plan directly starting in January 2013 until premium withholding is set up. If this happens, you'll get a bill or a payment book from your Medicare drug plan telling you the balance due. You may also need to contact your plan again to let them know you want to have premium withholding. It's important that you pay close attention to all mailings and billing statements you get from your new drug plan. Your plan will tell you when premium withhold is set up.



## **I chose a different plan for 2013 with a different premium but the plan is with the same company I was with in 2012. I had my premiums withheld from my Social Security payment in 2012 and asked for the same in 2013. Why are they sending me a bill for January?**

Even though you're with the same company, Medicare sees this as a plan change. As a result, depending on when you made your enrollment decision, you may be asked to pay your new plan directly for a while. If that happens, you'll get a bill or a payment book from your new drug plan telling you the balance due. Your new plan will expect you to pay premiums directly until premium withhold is started with your new plan. You may need to contact the plan to let them know you still want to have premium withholding.

**Example:** You enrolled at the end of Open Enrollment and chose to have your premiums withheld from your Social Security payment. However, you just got a payment book from your drug plan saying you owe \$36.50 each month, starting in January 2013. You call the plan, and the plan says that it didn't get your request for enrollment in time to arrange for your January premium to be withheld. The plan says it will request to have the premiums withheld from your Social Security payment starting in February. You'll need to send your premium payment for January to your plan.

## **What if I stop premium withhold when I switch to a new plan in 2013?**

In most cases, you won't have premiums withheld in 2013. You should begin paying your new plan directly when you get a bill. In some instances, your premium withhold might continue through January or February 2013, especially if you decided to stop premium withhold toward the end of Open Enrollment. If that happens, Social Security will refund any premiums that are withheld in 2013.

**Example:** In 2012, your premiums were withheld from your Social Security payment. You enrolled online in October in a new plan for 2013 and selected that you would pay the plan directly. Since you enrolled early enough, your premiums for your 2012 plan weren't withheld after December 2012, and you pay your plan directly in 2013.

**If you have questions about paying your Medicare drug plan premiums, call the customer service number listed on your drug plan card. If your drug plan can't help or you have additional questions about your premium or enrollment, call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227). TTY users should call 1-877-486-2048.**