



Understanding Medicare: Medicare Savings Programs

A Medicare Savings Program (MSP) is an assistance program that can help pay for Medicare costs if the beneficiary has limited finances. Medicare Savings Programs may sometimes be referred to as Medicare Buy-In Programs or Medicare Premium Payment Programs.

There are three main types of Medicare Savings Programs, and each program has different eligibility requirements:

- **Qualifying Individual (QI)** is a type of Medicare Savings Program that pays for your Medicare Part B premium. In 2014, the Part B premium for most people who have Medicare Part B is \$104.90 per month. ***An important thing to know about QI is that you will not qualify for QI if you qualify for Medicaid***, the health insurance program that covers health care services for certain people with limited finances.
- **Specified Low-Income Medicare Beneficiary (SLMB)** is another type of Medicare Savings Program that pays for your Medicare Part B premium. The difference between this program and the QI Medicare Savings Program is that ***you can still qualify for SLMB, even if you qualify for Medicaid***.
- **Qualified Medicare Beneficiary (QMB)** is a type of Medicare Savings Program that can pay for your Part B premium, in addition to Medicare deductibles, coinsurances, and copayments. QMB is the most comprehensive Medicare Savings Program and can help pay for many of your Medicare costs. Note that ***you can qualify for QMB, even if you qualify for Medicaid***.

If you qualify and get a Medicare Savings Program, you should automatically get Extra Help, the federal assistance program that helps pay Medicare prescription drug costs for people with limited finances. A Medicare Savings Program can also act as a way for Medicare-eligible people to automatically enroll in Medicare outside of formal enrollment

periods. Medicare Savings Programs also get rid of premium penalties for those who did not enroll in Medicare in a timely manner.

To qualify for a Medicare Savings Program, you must meet your state's income and asset eligibility guidelines. You must also have Medicare Part A, the part of Medicare that covers most inpatient hospital care. If you do not have Part A because you have to pay a Part A premium, know that the QMB Medicare Savings Program can help you pay your Part A premium.

Medicare Savings Program eligibility requirements vary by state, so you should contact your State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) or local Medicaid office to learn more about qualifying for a Medicare Savings Program in your state. Keep in mind that you should still apply for the Medicare Savings Program even if your income is slightly above your state's income and asset limits, since certain types of income and assets may not be counted. You can find the number for your local SHIP by going online and visiting www.shiptalk.org.

Click [here](#) for a helpful Medicare Interactive web page that provides additional information on Medicare Savings Programs.