



October 1, 2024

**Important Notice from the North Dakota Public Employees Retirement System  
(NDPERS) About Your Prescription Drug Coverage and Medicare  
(Active Members Eligible for Medicare)**

Please read this notice carefully and keep it where you can find it. This notice has information about your current prescription drug coverage with NDPERS and about your options under Medicare's prescription drug coverage. This information can help you decide whether or not you want to join a Medicare drug plan.

There are two important things you need to know about your current coverage and Medicare's prescription drug coverage:

1. Medicare prescription drug coverage became available in 2006 to everyone with Medicare. You can get this coverage if you join a Medicare Prescription Drug Plan or join a Medicare Advantage Plan (like an HMO or PPO) that offers prescription drug coverage. All Medicare drug plans provide at least a standard level of coverage set by Medicare. Some plans may also offer more coverage for a higher monthly premium.
2. NDPERS has determined that the prescription drug coverage offered by NDPERS is, on average for all plan participants, expected to pay out as much as standard Medicare prescription drug coverage pays and is therefore considered Creditable Coverage. Because your existing coverage is Creditable Coverage, you can keep this coverage and not pay a higher premium (a penalty) if you decide to join a Medicare drug plan.

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**When can you join a Medicare drug plan?**

You can join a Medicare drug plan when you first become eligible for Medicare and each year from October 15<sup>th</sup> to December 7<sup>th</sup>.

However, if you lose your current creditable prescription drug coverage, through no fault of your own, you will also be eligible for a two (2) month Special Enrollment Period (SEP) to join a Medicare drug plan.

**If you do decide to enroll in a Medicare prescription drug plan and drop your NDPERS prescription drug coverage, be aware that you may not be able to get this coverage back.**

If you drop your coverage with NDPERS and enroll in a Medicare prescription drug plan, you may not be able to get this coverage back later. You should compare your current coverage, including which drugs are covered, with the coverage and cost of the plans offering Medicare prescription drug coverage in your area before making a decision.

In addition, your current coverage pays for other health expenses, in addition to prescription drugs, and you will not remain eligible to receive all of your current health and prescription drug benefits if you choose to enroll in a Medicare prescription drug plan.

You should also know that if you drop or lose your coverage with NDPERS and don't enroll in Medicare prescription drug coverage after your current coverage ends, you may pay more to enroll in Medicare prescription drug coverage later. If you go 63 days or longer without prescription drug coverage that's at least as good as Medicare's prescription drug coverage, your monthly premium will go up at least 1% per month for every month that you did not have that coverage. For example, if you go nineteen months without coverage, your premium will always be at least 19% higher than what most other people pay. You'll have to pay this higher premium as long as you have Medicare coverage. In addition, you may have to wait until the following October to join a Medicare prescription drug plan.

### **For more information your current prescription drug coverage and this notice...**

Contact Sanford Health Plan at (800) 499-3416 for information about your current prescription drug coverage. Contact NDPERS at (800) 803-7377 for information about this notice. You will receive this notice before the next period you can join a Medicare drug plan.

### **For more information about your options under Medicare prescription drug coverage...**

More detailed information about Medicare plans that offer prescription drug coverage is in the "Medicare & You" handbook. You'll get a copy of the handbook in the mail every year from Medicare. You may also be contacted directly by Medicare drug plans. For more information about Medicare prescription drug coverage:

- Visit [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov)
- Call Senior Health Insurance Counseling (SHIC), a program of the North Dakota Insurance Department, at 1-800-247-0560.
- Call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227). TTY users should call 1-877-486-2048.

For people with limited income and resources, extra help paying for a Medicare prescription drug plan is available. Information about this extra help is available from the Social Security Administration (SSA). For more information about this extra help, visit SSA online at [www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov) or call them at 1-800-772-1213 (TTY 1-800-325-0778).

**Remember: Keep this Creditable Coverage notice. If you decide to join one of the Medicare drug plans, you may be required to provide a copy of this notice when you join to show whether or not you have maintained creditable coverage and, therefore, whether or not you are required to pay a higher premium (a penalty).**

Date: October 1, 2024

Contact-- Position/Office: Member Services Unit

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