

July 2020

Senior Insights

You May Be Able to Save \$1,735.20 Or More In Medicare Costs!

Do you have, or are you eligible for Medicare? If so, did you know that you could receive help from the state paying your Medicare premiums?

If you cannot afford Medicare premiums or other medical costs, you may be able to get assistance. Medicare Savings Programs may help pay Medicare Part A (Hospital Insurance) and Medicare Part B (Medical Insurance) premiums, deductibles, coinsurance, and copayments.

Am I Eligible for A Medicare Savings Program?

To qualify for a Medicare Savings Program, your monthly income, and total resources (like money in a bank, stocks, or bonds) must be at or below the amounts shown in this table:

2020 Monthly Income Limit
Single \$1,456; Married \$1,960

2020 Total Resource Limit
Single \$7,860; Married \$11,800

Countable resources include:

Money in a checking or savings account
Stocks
Bonds

Countable resources do not include:

Your home
One car
Burial plot
Up to \$1,500 for burial expenses if you have put that money aside
Furniture
Other household and personal items

How Do I Apply for Medicare Savings Programs?

Request an application from your local Health and Human Services office or contact your local Area Agency on Aging for assistance with the application. For more information please contact the Benefits Counselor, Crystalyn Morgan-Tadese, at The Area Agency on Aging of the Permian Basin by phone at 432-563-1061 ext. 338 or by email at cmorgan-tadese@aaapb.com.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Permian Basin Aging Advisory Council Meetings are held at 10:00am on the following dates:

**August 19,
November 18**

at the Permian Basin Regional
Planning Commission



Monthly Meetings

Andrews - 3rd Tuesday 1:00
Andrews Senior Center

Big Spring - 2nd Tuesday 10:30
Big Spring Senior Center

Fort Stockton - 2nd Wednesday
Call for Details
Fort Stockton Senior Center

Lamesa - 3rd Tuesday 10:00
Dawson Co. Senior Center

Memorial Health Care Center- Seminole
1st Wednesday 10:30

Midland/Odessa Parkinson's Caregivers
Call for Details

Midland - Last Thursday 10:00 & 2:00
Manor Park

Midland - 2nd Thursday 2:00
St. Luke's United Methodist Church

Monahans - 3rd Wednesday
Call for Details
Ward County Senior Center

Odessa - 4th Wednesday 2:00
Odessa Regional Medical Center
South Campus

The Courtyards - Odessa
4th Tuesday 2:00

Pecos - 2nd Wednesday 1:00
Pecos Senior Citizens Center

Rankin - Rankin Senior Center
Call for details

Stanton - 2nd Tuesday 1:00
Martin County Senior Citizens Center

For More Information Contact
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Caregiver Program Specialist

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How the Opioid Crisis Affects the Elderly

The number one reason Americans today seek medical attention is pain according to the National Institute of Health. In fact, pain is a more common condition than diabetes, heart disease, and cancer combined. Essentially, chronic pain impacts all areas of one's life. More than one in three (35 percent) of individuals over the age of 50 report that they have misused this particular category of drug in the last 30 days, causing the hospitalization rate for misuse to increase five-fold over the last two decades. However, opioids have other effects on the elderly, some of which are physical in nature and others which are more mental.

Physical Effects on Seniors

Nausea One of the most common and most significant negative physical side effects of opiate use in seniors is nausea, according to Clinical Interventions in Aging.

Constipation This research further states that another rather common side effect is opioid-induced constipation, with some studies finding that almost one-half of all hospice patients on opiates (48 percent) struggle with this issue.

Urinary Issues Another negative side effect of opiate use in the elderly is urinary retention, or the inability to empty the bladder completely. This is sometimes caused by build-up of opiates in the body, more so when the drug is not used appropriately, according to the International Journal of Molecular Science. Other times, it occurs because of decreased liver and kidney function. If left untreated, this renal toxicity could lead to acute kidney injury and, potentially, renal failure.

Respiratory Depression The University of Wisconsin Hospital & Clinics explains that opioids can impact breathing rate, volume (the amount of air the lungs are able to inhale and exhale), and tidal exchange (how well the lungs can exchange oxygen and carbon dioxide). The result is irregular or slower rates of breathing, two concerns that are especially problematic when the elderly individual is sleeping.

Increased Risk of Falls The risk of falls is already elevated for the elderly and this risk is even greater for those taking opiates as they are 2.4 times more likely to fall than to experience any other type of injury.

How Opioids Impact the Elderly Mentally

Cognitive Impairment Read the label on the side of a prescription opiate bottle and it will tell you that taking this type of drug may cause cognitive impairment. Both short and long-term opiate use can result in "deficits in executive functions, attention, concentration, recall, visuospatial skills, and psychomotor speed."

Depression Studies have connected opioid misuse with increased levels of depression. Mental Health America reports that two million of the 34 million older Americans already suffer from depression on some level.

If you suspect that you (or an elderly loved one) may have a prescription opiate addiction, in the Opioid Addiction Treatment: A Guide for Patients, Families and Friends, the American Society of Addiction Medication (ASAM) shares that the first steps toward recovery. *This entire article is available at <https://www.aginginplace.org/how-the-opioid-crisis-affects-the-elderly/>*

Nursing Facilities Covid-19 Update

On April 27, 2020 Governor Abbott announced that Texas would be opened in phases. As a part of the plan to reopen Texas, Abbott planned to expand Covid-19 public health testing. On May 11, 2020, Governor Abbott ordered one hundred percent testing of all staff and residents in Texas nursing facilities. Testing began in May for the 1,224 licensed nursing facilities in Texas. Any facilities with positive cases were to be prioritized. Residents maintained the right to refuse care or treatment, which includes getting tested for COVID-19. However, because of a resident refusing, residents must be isolated for 14 days. As of June 8, 2020 all nursing facilities have been tested.

To prevent the further transmission of covid-19 as well as to protect nursing home residents, which are more vulnerable to the virus, CMS released guidelines on recommendations to reopen nursing homes. CMS recommended opening facilities on phases specific to nursing facilities. They recommend three phases, with visitation opening to visitors on phase three, when facilities meet the criteria below:

- No new positive cases on Covid-19 for 28 days (phase one and two)
- The nursing home is not experiencing staff shortages
- The nursing home has an adequate supply of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- Adequate access to testing for Covid-19
- Referral hospital(s) have bed capacity on wards and intensive care units

Due to the Covid-19 crisis, the Health and Human Services Commission is encouraging all Texas nursing facilities to apply for available funding. The facility could be eligible for up to \$3,000 to purchase communication devices to aid in connecting residents with their loved ones during the pandemic.

For more information on covid-19, visitation, and advocacy for long term care residents, make sure to follow the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program on Facebook. Facebook live for families will be held every Wednesday from 12:15 to 12:45. Family members, Ombudsman and residents are encouraged to attend and ask questions.

If you would like more information about your local Ombudsman Program or would like to volunteer, contact **Yasmin Galvan, Managing Local Ombudsman with Area Agency on Aging of the Permian Basin Regional Planning Commission at (432) 563-1061.**

Article Resources

<https://gov.texas.gov/news/post/governor-abbott-hhsc-announce-3.6-million-to-connect-nursing-facility-residents-and-families>

<https://gov.texas.gov/news/post/governor-abbott-announces-phase-one-to-open-texas-establishes-statewide-minimum-standard-health-protocols>

<https://www.cms.gov/files/document/qso-20-30-nh.pdf>

<https://www.cms.gov/files/document/covid-nursing-home-reopening-recommendation-faqs.pdf>

<https://hhs.texas.gov/doing-business-hhs/provider-portals/long-term-care-providers/nursing-facilities/civil-money-penalty-funds-nf-projects>



of the Permian Basin Regional Planning Commission

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This Is A Laughing Matter

Not That Old Yet

"This is your great-grandma and great grandpa," I told my grandson as I handed him a photo of my parents. "Do you think I look like them?" He shook his head. "Not yet."

In the Morning

"When my 85-year-old father was in the hospital, his doctor, trying to determine Dad's mental state, asked, "What gets you up in the morning?" My father shrugged. "Probably the same thing as everyone. I have to go to the bathroom."

First Day of Retirement

My mother was browsing in a store when a saleswoman offered assistance. Mom admitted she didn't have anything particular in mind, and the pair started chatting. The woman quickly learned that Mom was retired. Interested, she confessed that she, too, was considering retirement. Mom immediately started telling her how much she liked no longer working and how the saleswoman would enjoy it too. Finally, convinced by Mom's enthusiasm, she asked, "How long have you been retired?" Mom said, "This is my first day."

If you wish to stop receiving this newsletter, please call Marydyth Taylor at 1-800-491-4636 or 432-563-1061 or e-mail mtaylor@aaapb.com