

Using the New Medicare Choices Helpline

The new Medicare Choices Helpline answers general questions about Medicare, provides information about HMOs in your area, provides HMO disenrollment forms and information, or can send you a copy of the new “Medicare and You” handbook. You can reach a representative between 8:00 AM and 4:30 PM Monday – Friday.

1-800-MEDICARE

1-800-633-4227

TTY/TTD 1-877-486-2048

You can speak to a representative in English or Spanish and order publications, including audio cassette and Braille versions. An additional service allows you to hear prerecorded answers to frequently asked questions 24 hours a day.

An automated menu system will answer, and ask you to choose English or Spanish language. You will then be given several choices. To listen to the prerecorded frequently asked questions, press 1 on your phone. To speak directly with a customer service representative, press 9 on your phone. To order publications, press 2 on your phone.

You can get information provided by the Health Care Financing Administration (HCFA) to help you choose among Medicare plan options in your area. This Medicare Compare information reports what people enrolled in a particular HMO thought about the services they received and how well the HMO provided some important health services to their members. There’s information about how HMO enrollees rate their health plan, the health care they have received, and the ease of getting referrals. The health service data includes information about what percent of members received important services like mammography, beta blocker drugs after heart attack, and annual eye exams for diabetics. Further it tells the percent of plan doctors who are board certified in their specialty.

The quality information is a new addition to information on plan benefits, costs, and service areas which has previously been available through CMS. You can receive information on covered benefits and your costs just for the HMOs that serve your zip code, making it easier to compare among plans available and decide on the right HMO.

You can also obtain this information through the internet at www.medicare.gov.