

Medicare and Group Employer Health Plans

How Medicare Works with other Insurance

If you have Medicare and other health insurance (such as a group health plan, retiree coverage, or Medicaid), each type of coverage is called a "payer." When there's more than one payer, "coordination of benefits" rules decide who pays first. The "primary payer" pays what it owes on your bills first, and then sends the rest to the "secondary payer" (supplemental payer) to pay. In some rare cases, there may also be a third payer.

What it means to Pay Primary/Secondary

- The insurance that pays first (primary payer) pays up to the limits of its coverage.
- The one that pays second (secondary payer) only pays if there are costs the primary insurer didn't cover.
- The secondary payer (which may be Medicare) may not pay all the remaining costs.
- If your group health plan or retiree coverage is the secondary payer, you may need to enroll in Medicare Part B before they'll pay.

If the insurance company doesn't pay the claim promptly (usually within 120 days), your doctor or other provider may bill Medicare. Medicare may make a conditional payment to pay the bill, and then later recover any payments the primary payer should've made.

Note: An employee or employee's dependent who is covered by an employer group health plan based on current employment is not required to enroll in Medicare Part B upon attaining age 65. The individual should be able to sign up for Medicare Part B without a late enrollment penalty at any point up until the end of the 8-month period that starts the month after the earlier of when (1) employment ends or (2) the group health plan coverage based on current employment ends (**this does not apply to COBRA as it is not considered a group health plan**). This 8-month period is called a "Special Enrollment Period."

How Medicare Coordinates with other Coverage

If you have questions about who pays first, or if your coverage changes, call the Benefits Coordination & Recovery Center at 1-855-798-2627 (TTY: 1-855-797-2627). Tell your doctor and other health care provider about any changes in your insurance or coverage when you get care.

For more information, please visit

<https://www.medicare.gov/supplements-other-insurance/how-medicare-works-with-other-insurance>

