



## **THE IMPORTANCE OF COMPARING MEDICARE PLANS ANNUALLY**

For Medicare beneficiaries who have Medicare Advantage plans, it is important to review your plan every year. There are several reasons to do this.

First, your health may have changed from the previous year, and it may be that your current plan no longer covers your needs sufficiently. One of the biggest changes I regularly see is in dental needs. Some plans have very comprehensive coverage while others have very minimal coverage. It is especially important if you need a bridge or implant. Many companies don't cover either of these. Another area is hearing aids. Copays for hearing aids can vary greatly between plans, so if you need them next year, make sure to look at your options.

Second, your plan may have made some dramatic changes in copays and other benefits. One plan in particular did this for next year, and if you don't pay attention to the changes (shown in your Annual Notice of Change) you could face an unpleasant surprise when you have certain services performed.

Lastly, some companies bring out new plans each year that could be a significant upgrade to your current plan. For example, one company has a new plan with a \$600 fitness benefit (golf fees, etc.). Another has a \$65 per month food and gas card. Other plans have over-the-counter benefits that allow you to get health and wellness products for free every quarter.

If you didn't make a change during the annual enrollment period (ending December 7), you still have the first three months of next year to do so. It's called the Medicare Advantage Open Enrollment Period. Any change you make will take affect the month after you make the change.

If you are interested in doing a review, I would be happy to talk and meet with you for a complimentary consultation.

Jim Slacke

(815) 666-6648