

## **Important Notice from Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution About Your Prescription Drug Coverage and Medicare**

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Please read this notice carefully and keep it where you can find it.

This notice has information about your current prescription drug coverage with WHOI for people enrolled in Medicare. It also explains the options you have under Medicare prescription drug coverage and can help you decide whether or not you want to enroll. At the end of this notice is information about where you can get help to make decisions about your prescription drug coverage.

1. Medicare prescription drug coverage became available in 2006 to everyone with Medicare through Medicare prescription drug plans (Plan D) and Medicare Advantage Plans that offer prescription drug coverage. All Medicare prescription drug plans provide at least a standard level of coverage set by Medicare. Some plans may also offer more coverage for a higher monthly cost.
2. WHOI has determined that the prescription drug coverage offered by Blue Cross Blue Shield of MA (BCBSMA), on average for all plan participants, expected to pay out as much as the standard Medicare prescription drug coverage will pay and is considered Creditable Coverage.

Because your existing coverage is on average at least as good as standard Medicare prescription drug coverage, you can keep this coverage and not pay extra if you later decide to enroll in Medicare prescription drug coverage. Individuals can enroll in a Medicare prescription drug plan when they first become eligible for Medicare and each year from October 15th through December 7th.

Beneficiaries leaving employer coverage may be eligible for a two (2) month Special Enrollment Period to sign up for a Medicare prescription drug plan.

You should compare your current coverage, including which drugs are covered, with the coverage and cost of the plans offering Medicare prescription drug coverage. If you do decide to enroll in a Medicare prescription drug plan and drop your WHOI Medical plan (including Prescription coverage), be aware that you and your dependents may not get this coverage back.

Please contact us for more information about what happens to your WHOI coverage if you enroll in a Medicare prescription drug plan. You should also know that if you drop or lose your coverage with WHOI and don't enroll in Medicare prescription drug coverage after your current coverage ends, you may pay more (a penalty) to enroll in Medicare prescription drug coverage later.

If you go 63 days or longer without prescription drug coverage that is not 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 19 months without coverage, your premium will always be at least 19% higher than what many other people pay.

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You'll have to pay this higher premium as long as you have Medicare prescription drug coverage. In addition, you may have to wait until the following Enrollment period to enroll.

For more information about this notice or your current prescription drug coverage, contact Human Resources or call BCBSMA at 800-241-0803. NOTE: You will receive this notice annually and at other times in the future such as before the next period you can enroll in Medicare prescription drug coverage, and if this coverage through WHOI changes. You also may request a copy. For more information about your options under Medicare prescription drug coverage, you can find more detailed information about the Medicare plans that offer prescription drug coverage 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 prescription drug plans.

For more information about Medicare prescription drug plans:

- Visit [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov)
- Call your State Health Insurance Assistance Program (see your copy of the Medicare & You handbook for their telephone number). For personalized help, 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 Medicare prescription drug coverage is available.
- Information about this extra help is available from the Social Security Administration (SSA) online at [www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov), or you call them at 1-800-772-1213 (TTY 1-800-325-0778).

**Remember:** Keep this notice. If you enroll in one of the new plans approved by Medicare which offer prescription drug coverage, you may be required to provide a copy of this notice when you join to show that you are not required to pay a higher premium amount.

**NOTE:** You'll get this notice each year. You will also get it before the next period you can join a Medicare drug plan, and if this coverage through Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution changes. You also may request a copy of this notice at any time.

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