



# Ask SHIP

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LOCAL HELP FOR PEOPLE WITH MEDICARE

**Q: I am a GM retiree. I was recently notified that I will be losing my GM health coverage. What are my options?**

Starting January 1, 2009, GM will not be providing health coverage for their retired salaried employees over the age of 65. In an attempt to offset the costs that these retirees will incur, GM will increase pensions by \$300 per month. This pension is taxable and is per retiree.

Retired, salaried GM employees over age 65 will need to choose from Medicare Prescription Drug Plans, Supplement Insurance, or Medicare Advantage Plans. These retirees will be eligible for an early Special Enrollment period beginning October 15, 2008. Their new coverage will go into effect January 1, 2009.

Medicare Guaranteed Rights also provide for a 63-day guarantee of Medicare supplement insurance of Plans A, B, C, F, K, and L or a Medicare Advantage plan and a Part D prescription drug plan starting January 1, 2009,

due to the loss of other health insurance coverage.

Another important option to consider is whether retiree might be covered by their spouse's employer, VA benefits, or other options.

If no other group coverage is offered, the retiree needs to compare the other options available to them. Comparing these plans with their individual needs in mind is very important when considering their out-of-pocket expenses.

## **Supplement Insurance**

Supplement Insurance or Medigap Plans help fill the gaps in Medicare Part A and Part B coverage. Medicare Supplement insurance is a private health insurance policy. These plans are listed at [www.in.gov/idoi/2541.htm](http://www.in.gov/idoi/2541.htm) and can be compared at [www.in.gov/idoi/medigap/](http://www.in.gov/idoi/medigap/).

## **Prescription Drug Plans**

Prescription Drug Plans (also called Part D) are offered by private insurance companies and generally allow you to pay less for your prescriptions. Plans can be compared by

going to [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov).

## **Medicare Advantage Plans**

Medicare Advantage expands health care options for Medicare beneficiaries. There are three types of Medicare Advantage Plans: Cost Contract HMO, Medicare Advantage PPO, and Medicare Advantage PFFS. These plans can also be compared at [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov).

GM has contracted with Extend Health, a private insurance company, to help retirees find affordable Medicare plans. Extend Health receives a fee for each policy sold from the insurer. The service to retirees is free. Not all of the Indiana insurance companies approved to sell Medicare plans are represented by Extend Health.

Additional health insurance counseling is available through the State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP). SHIP can assist you in comparing the plans and options that are available to you. For more information, call 1-800-452-4800, Ext. 3.

**SHIP is a free, unbiased counseling program provided by the Indiana State Department of Insurance. For assistance, call your local SHIP site to make an appointment or call the state office at 1-800-452-4800 to obtain a list of local SHIP sites.**