

NJREA past, present and future

2017 Medicare Part B Premiums

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) announced the 2017 premiums for Medicare Part B programs. For most Medicare beneficiaries already collecting Medicare benefits, there will be a small increase in these premiums. To offset this, there will be a modest 0.3 percent Social Security cost-of-living increase in 2017. A “hold harmless” provision prevents Medicare Part B premiums from increasing by more than the Social Security COLA amount for the approximately 70 percent of Medicare beneficiaries that are already enrolled.

The Medicare Part B monthly premium will rise to \$109 in 2017—an increase from the previous premium of \$104.90—for most retirees who are currently receiving benefits and earned less than a certain amount in 2015. Retirees will only pay a different premium amount in 2017 if they meet one of these four conditions:

- They enroll in Medicare Part B for the first time.
- They do not receive Social Security benefits.
- They have both Medicare and Medicaid, and Medicaid pays their premiums.
- Their modified adjusted gross income (AGI) as reported on their 2015 IRS tax return is above a certain amount.

If you're in one of the above groups, to determine how much your Medicare Part B premium will be, find the scenario that best describes your 2015 tax return filing below:

File Individual Tax Return	File Joint Tax Return	You pay in 2017
\$85,000 or below	\$170,000 or below	\$134.00
\$85,001–\$107,000	\$170,001–\$214,000	\$187.50
\$107,001–\$160,000	\$214,001–\$320,000	\$267.90
\$160,001–\$214,000	\$320,001–\$428,000	\$348.30
above \$214,000	above \$428,000	\$428.60

The Social Security Administration (SSA) uses the income reported two years ago to determine a Part B beneficiary's premiums. Thus, the income reported on a beneficiary's 2015 tax return is used to determine whether the beneficiary must pay a higher monthly Part B premium in 2017. If a beneficiary's income decreased significantly in the past two years, he/she may request that information from more recent years be used to calculate the premium.

For those members receiving post-retirement medical benefits paid for by the state of New Jersey, the standard Medicare Part B premium for them and their dependents is reimbursed in the member's pension check. Any income-related adjustment, or for new enrollees with a higher premium that a member or his/her dependent pays, is reimbursed at the end of the year in which the adjustment is paid, after the proper paperwork is filed with the Division of Pensions and Benefits.

If you have questions about your Medicare Part B premium, call 800-MEDICARE (800-633-4227). Any questions regarding the reimbursement process should be directed to the New Jersey Division of Pensions and Benefits at 609- 292-7524.

Around the counties

For questions, call your county REA. For trip details, check the county newsletter.

The **MIDDLESEX COUNTY REA**'s next meeting/luncheon will be held on Thursday, March 9 at The Grand Marquis in Old Bridge. Phil Lomonico, NJEA Research/NJEA Member Benefits, will be attending. The cost is \$30. To attend, call Susan Jaysnovitch at 732-925-1606.

MORRIS COUNTY REA welcomes you to its next meeting/luncheon on Wednesday, March 8 at the Zeris Inn in Mountain Lakes. The cost is \$26. To attend, call Nancy Condit at 973-335-0990.

Join **SALEM COUNTY REA** for its next meeting/luncheon on Wednesday, Feb. 15 at the Senior Center in Alloway. Joe Hannigan, Salem County's director of Veterans' Affairs is the guest speaker. The cost is \$15. For more information, call Peggy Kavanaugh at 856-935-0075.

The **UNION COUNTY REA**'s winter meeting/luncheon will be held on Tuesday, Feb. 28 at The Westwood in Garwood. The cost is \$25. To attend, call Elaine Volpe at 908-486-3938.

NJRE-SOUTHWEST FLORIDA will be having its next meeting/luncheon on Tuesday, Jan. 31 at Jack's on the Marion in Punta Gorda. The Punta Gorda Historical Society will provide the guest speakers. To attend, or for more information, call Ron Winsett at 239-948-2982. 📍