

## **Informational Update Vol 16 # 11**

**1. 2026 Social Security Letter** – If you are Medicare-eligible and on Social Security, you should have received your **Social Security Administration (SSA) verification letter** (came toward the end of November), informing you of your **2026 Social Security** benefit amount before and after deductions. If you have not received this letter, call Social Security or, if you have an SSA account, go to its website, [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov), where this information is now available. If you don't have an account, you may open one online. Do not hesitate to provide any information you may be asked to give.

You will find the SSA website contains lots of information, including, but not limited to, your Social Security Statement, your November'25 Benefit Verification Letter, and your Part B & D premiums. You can also replace your Social Security card and your 2025 SSA-1099 tax letter (after January 31, 2026 - 2025 tax letter is currently being mailed out).

Your Social Security benefit amount will increase by 2.8% starting January 1, 2026 (up .3% from 2024), due a rise in the cost of living. Social Security deducts from this amount your Medicare Part B (medical) premium, your IRMAA Medicare Part D (drugs) premium (if applicable), and, if you want, federal tax.

### **Medicare Part B Premium**

Your Medicare Part B premium is divided into 2 parts: the standard amount & IRMAA (Income-Related Monthly Adjustment Amounts). Everyone who is Medicare-eligible pays the same standard amount. For 2026, the standard amount is \$202.90 per month (up \$17.90 from 2024).

IRMAA is a monthly surcharge that is deducted ONLY from those Medicare-eligible members whose taxable income (based on your 2024 income tax return) surpasses a certain threshold. In 2026 the threshold is \$109,000 if you filed individually (up \$3,000 from 2025) and \$218,000 if you filed jointly (up \$6,000 from 2024). The SSA letter contains a chart indicating various income thresholds and the monthly amounts of the IRMAA surcharge.

### **Medicare Part D Premium**

If you have a Medicare Part D drug plan through the city, you must have a High Option Rider. You either purchased this rider as an active employee or purchased it after you retired. The High Option Rider is currently \$120 a month (will rise to \$150 a month) and is deducted from your **pension check**.

### **How Much Will You Get?**

Please note: the first page of the SSA letter contains 4 bullets. The first bullet shows how much your SS benefit for 2026 is before deductions, ***provided you are collecting Social Security***.

The second bullet shows the 2026 deductions for Medicare Part B for the standard amount and for IRMAA (if not eligible, the IRMAA deduction should be 0).

The good news is that the 2026 standard amount & IRMAA deductions are both reimbursable. You will receive the standard amount automatically sometime in April 2026. IRMAA reimbursement is not automatic; you must apply for it. The application is available when you receive your standard reimbursement.

The third bullet shows the 2026 deduction for Part D IRMAA. If you have an IRMAA deduction for Part B then you will also have one for Part D. Please note that Part D IRMAA is **NOT** reimbursable.

The fourth bullet lists your SSA benefit amount after all deductions.

If you are eligible for IRMAA in 2026, keep your 2026 Benefits SSA letter in a safe place. You will need to include it, along with your 2026 SSA-1099 letter, in the application package when you file for 2026 Part B IRMAA.

## **2. The Transition from Expresscripts to Prime Therapeutics**

All non-Medicare and Medicare retirees covered by EmblemHealth Plan D should have received a new Pharmacy ID card, as Prime Therapeutics is replacing Express Scripts as the pharmacy benefits manager, effective **January 1, 2026**. If you have not received the card, call EmblemHealth at **212-501-4444**. If you have specific questions about your drugs, call Prime Therapeutics at **833-998-5351**.

## **3. Question of the Month**

**Q.** I am a Medicare-eligible retiree on EmblemHealth Plan D. Am I eligible to go on the new Medicare Prescription Plan?

**A.** Yes, all Medicare-eligible Part D enrollees can use the new Medicare Prescription Payment Plan to break up the cost of drugs into monthly payments. To enroll, you need to fill out a paper election form that you can obtain from EmblemHealth. The best time to enroll is in January, when your total drug payment will be divided by 12.

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