

## Healthcare Planning

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You should apply for Medicare Part A upon reaching age 65 even if you are still actively teaching. There is no need to apply for Medicare Part B until you retire, as Northwestern's health coverage remains the primary payer. After retirement, there is a financial penalty if you delay in enrolling in Medicare Parts B and D (or C, which is an alternative to both). Once you enroll, you then begin to pay Medicare premiums and will likely find that your other health insurance premiums decline. Apply at [medicare.gov](https://www.medicare.gov).

Medicare does not cover all your medical expenses. There are exclusions, copayments, and deductibles. You have choices regarding how to supplement your Medicare coverage, including:

- **Continuing Northwestern healthcare benefits.** You may continue your enrollment in Northwestern's health, dental, and vision plans if you are enrolled in them at the time of retirement and do not let coverage lapse. The University ceases its contributions to these plans at the time of retirement; therefore you cover the full cost of premiums. These plans are comprehensive but can be quite expensive. You cannot add new coverages to these plans later; you must add them before retirement. Once you discontinue any of these plans, you may not re-enroll.
- **Private Medicare Supplemental and prescription drug plans.** Many insurance companies offer plans grouped in categories mandated by Medicare and based on the benefits offered. The University endorses the supplemental plans offered through United Healthcare, but you should study plans offered by other companies as well since premium costs vary from plan to plan. Insurance brokers can help you find the best plan for your needs. A comparison of supplemental plans is available at [medicare.gov](https://www.medicare.gov).

United Healthcare offers consultations with trained Medicare counselors who can help determine the best Medicare options for prospective retirees. Contact them at [www.myuhcplans.com](https://www.myuhcplans.com).