

Medicare Part B Premiums lower than projected for 2012

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services announced that Medicare Part B Premiums will be lower than projected. The Part B premiums will have a 3.6% increase to coincide with the COLA increase previously decided earlier in the year. For 2012 the Medicare Part B Premium will be \$99.90 and the Part B deductible will decrease by \$22, however the premiums paid for Medicare's prescription drug plan will remain virtually unchanged.

Medicare Part B covers physicians' services, outpatient hospital services, certain home health services, durable medical equipment and other items. These services have been greatly improved since the Affordable Care Act was passed, which allows Medicare beneficiaries to receive free preventative services and a 50% discount on covered prescription drugs when they enter the 'donut hole.'

Medicare Part A beneficiaries will see a modest increase in monthly premiums.

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