

Individual Health Newsletter | June 2017

Read our June 2017 Individual Health Newsletter (PDF, new window).

[Click here](#).

Medicare Newsletter | June 2017

Read our June 2017 Medicare E-Newsletter (PDF, new window) .

[Click here](#).

Health Insurance Outside of Open Enrollment

Open enrollment for individual health insurance coverage ended Jan. 31 and at this time the only way someone can enroll in a health insurance plan is if they've experienced a qualifying life event.

At this time our agency does not participate in enrollments outside of the open enrollment period. We have developed a document with information where to get assistance outside of

open enrollment.

[Click here for PDF.](#)

A New Medicare Charge is Coming: Here's How to Lessen the Blow

For high-income Americans covered by Medicare, now is the time to make tax moves to minimize an increase in premium surcharges. Starting in 2018, households with income more than \$85,000 (singles) or \$170,000 (couples), will be picking up an even greater share of the costs. For example, a single person with an income between \$133,500 and \$160,000 is expected to pay 30% more in 2018 for their Medicare Part B premium- an increase from \$2,856 to \$3,720 per year.

Here are some ways to reduce your exposure:

- Revamp charitable contributions: Consider donating appreciated assets, such as stock instead of cash. This often helps avoid capital-gains tax.
- Look to a Roth IRA: Payouts from a Roth IRA often aren't taxable, so they don't raise your Adjusted Gross Income (AGI).
- Manage capital gains and losses: Capital gains raise Adjusted Gross Income (AGI), but capital losses can offset gains plus \$3,000 of other income in a year.
- Time the receipt of income: Time the sale of an asset or payment to be split over two years, to keep your Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) lower.

- Look to work-related savings: Medicare recipients who are still employed can lower than Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) by contributing to 401(k) plans or traditional IRAs.

If you have questions about this, consider contacting your financial planner. Commonwealth Financial Network® (or your firm) does not provide legal or tax advice. You should consult a legal or tax professional regarding your individual situation.

Allen Financial: 31 Chestnut St., Camden, ME 04843 Phone: 207-236-8376.

Fixed Insurance products and services offered through Allen Insurance and Financial, L.S. Robinson Co. or CES Insurance Agency.

Medicare Matters: Open Enrollment Starts 10/15

When it comes to Medicare, one size doesn't fit all. While everyone has the same benefits available to them through Original Medicare, Medicare Advantage and prescription drug plan benefits vary by county and are subject to change from one year to the next.

If your health needs have changed in the last year, it's important that we review your coverage. At Allen Insurance and Financial, our goal is to help you find the best plan that fits your needs and supports the way you live.

Oct. 15 to Dec. 7 is the open enrollment period for Medicare coverage in 2017. Plan changes take effect Jan. 1, 2017.

Plan information for 2017 will become available Oct. 1. By that time you should have received your Annual Notice of Change

(ANOC) from your insurer to explain how your plan will be changing for 2017. If you have questions about your coverage or need to make a change, open enrollment is a great opportunity to do this.

Please feel free to call us with your questions at 855-710-5700.

[Read our September 2016 Medicare newsletter. \(PDF, new window\)](#)

Auto Insurance Back to School ProTip

Parents of college students: If a licensed driver in your household (on your policy) is heading off to college more than 100 miles from home – without a vehicle – you should give us a call. You may save some money on your car insurance. If your licensed driver is taking a car to school, we should know that, too.

The Value of an Independent Insurance Agent

By Rachel Bannister

Independent insurance agents remain vitally important to the industry because of the professional insurance counsel they provide and the relationships they cultivate with consumers and

in the communities where they live and work.

In addition to explaining all of the nuts and bolts of insurance protection, independent agents cultivate relationships with their clients and work to become trusted advocates for them. Although consumers often feel that it is essential to have a doctor they know and a banker or financial advisor they trust, they sometimes overlook the need for developing a similar relationship with their insurance agent.

As author and motivational speaker Bob Burg says, "All things equal, people will do business with, and refer business to, people they know, trust and like."

A relationship with an independent agent is equally as important in helping clients protect their families and property should an unfortunate event happen. Independent agents do more than sell insurance; they help identify exposures, find the insurance carriers that offer the needed coverage at the best premiums, and manage all policies to be sure they are working together for maximum protection.

Although it is true that some insurance coverages can be purchased at the click of a button and consumers can decide to go it alone, there is no substitute for the expertise that comes from choosing to work with an independent agent. In working with a variety of carriers, independent agents are well trained and equipped to handle the unique situations that arise over time and can review coverages to make sure that consumers' needs are being met as their lives change.

In addition, it should not be forgotten that local independent agents are often among the first people to respond when there is a loss, working to provide prompt service and to handle all aspects of a claim with insureds. That kind of experience is far superior to going it alone.

Nearly every independent insurance agency is involved in their community. Interests may vary from taking part in organizations such as the local chamber of commerce or networking groups to

having a seat on hospital and school boards to being actively involved in the local culture and arts scene to coaching or sponsoring sports teams or volunteering at soup kitchens and homeless shelters.

No matter the vehicle, independent insurance agents are contributing members of their communities. Independent agents care about the area in which they serve and give of their time and resources to support them. Just listen to agents talk about their city or town and you will know that the people in it are important to them, and their work is more fulfilling than simply providing a paycheck.

Above all, insurance is a relationship business. The independent agent will continue to work with insurance carriers to innovate and become more efficient, all the while embracing long-standing community partnerships and creating new ones – all to the benefit of their customers and communities.

Rachel Bannister, CPCU, CIC, AIS, API, AIM, is marketing supervisor at Patrons Oxford Insurance Company in Auburn.

Do You Need Travel Insurance?

There are many travel insurance products on the market. Making sure you pay only for the coverage you need can be a challenge. That's where an independent insurance agent comes in.

Travel insurance can cover:

- Trip cancellation or disruption as the result of illness or death, a crisis at work, financial default on the part of a at your operator or other unexpected events
- Medical treatment not covered by your existing insurance
- Getting home after a medical emergency, earthquake, tsunami or

other environmental event or political upheaval

Generally, there are three types of insurance plans to cover these events. They are:

- Standalone evacuation plans
- Standalone medical insurance plans (including evacuation)
- A more comprehensive plan including trip cancellation and interruption coverage and medical and evacuation coverage

Among the many factors to consider:

- The coverage level your health insurance plan provides, for both emergency and non-emergency care outside the U.S.
- The likelihood you would have to cancel your trip because of an illness (you, your travel companion or close relative)
- The level of non-refundable costs involved with your trip

[Read more now.](#)

Jo-Ann Neal Now Licensed for Medicare

Jo-Ann Neal of Allen Insurance and Financial has obtained her license to present Medicare insurance options to Allen clients.



Jo-Ann Neal

“Medicare coverage and insurance policies that help fill the gaps of Medicare can be complex and confusing,” said Dan Wyman, manager of Allen’s insured benefits division. “Jo-Ann and Anna Moorman of our office can help our clients pick the best plans as they approach Medicare eligibility.”

Jo-Ann works with both individuals and groups on their insurance benefits policies, including health, dental, life, and disability. She joined the company in 2013, earning her license to sell health and life insurance in Maine through Allen's in-house education program.

Forms 1095A, 1095B, 1095C – What They Mean for You

Beginning this tax filing year, there are several new documents being issued from various sources to provide information to complete individual tax filings.

These notices are intended to provide the Internal Revenue Service with proof that individuals had health insurance coverage, the months during the year the health insurance coverage existed, and for full-time employees of companies with 50 or more employees, proof that affordable and minimum value coverage was offered.

The form 1095A is from the "Health Insurance Marketplace." This is provided to an individual who enrolled in coverage through the Marketplace (healthcare.gov), which family members were covered on the health insurance plan and what months the insurance coverage was in place. This form is intended to provide the IRS with proof that the individual and any family members had coverage that satisfies the individual shared responsibility provision of the Affordable Care Act.

The form 1095B is from the health insurance provider. This most often will be the health insurance company itself. They will provide this notice to individuals they cover, with information

about who was covered and when. Again, this is intended to provide proof that the individual and any family members had coverage that satisfies the individual shared responsibility provision of the Affordable Care Act.

The form 1095C is from the employer with more than 50 full-time employees or equivalents. This provides information about the health plan that is offered (or not), and that it meets the minimum value as determined by the affordable care act. It also certifies that the health insurance coverage offered is "affordable." This affordability percentage will change each year, but for 2015, the rule was that the coverage could not cost more than 9.56% of a full-time individual's annual salary. This illustrates the individual's eligibility for a premium tax credit if they had purchased coverage through the Health Insurance Marketplace.

It is possible that an individual will receive these notices from several sources. If the individual had more than one job in 2015, or was covered by more than one insurance company, there will be multiples. If family members were enrolled on separate contracts, that will require multiple notices as well.

Please feel free to call us for assistance with understanding these forms or for a more in-depth, detailed explanation.

Call 207-236-4311.