



GOOD HEALTH

P A T I E N T N E W S L E T T E R

MEDICARE PART D ENROLLMENT



- Pick a plan that provides good customer service (example, 5-star rating is the best).
- Pick a plan that meets your own needs.
- Use the online plan finder on Medicare’s website, <https://www.medicare.gov/plan-compare/#/?lang=en&year=2020>, to help you pick the plan that is best for you.
- Call Medicare’s help line at 800-633-4227. You can speak to someone 24/7.
- Contact your state health insurance assistance program (SHIP) at <877-839-2675>. This program provides help from trained counselors on Medicare and Medicaid. It is also free of charge.
- Part D drug plans can change their costs and the lists of drugs they cover every calendar year.

Open enrollment for Medicare Part D begins **October 15 and ends December 7, 2020.**

When choosing a drug plan, think about the following:

- Pick a plan that covers all your drugs with the lowest out-of-pocket cost.

For more information, please visit AARP, https://www.aarp.org/health/medicare-insurance/medicare_partD_guide/. This information was adapted from <https://www.aarp.org/health/medicare-qa-tool/>.

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AND EMPLOYMENT NETWORKS

Employment Networks are a part of Social Security Administration’s (SSA) Ticket to Work program. The Ticket to Work program is a free program available to those who receive Social Security Disability benefits. The goal of the program is to help those who draw Social Security Disability return to the workforce. The Ticket to Work program makes

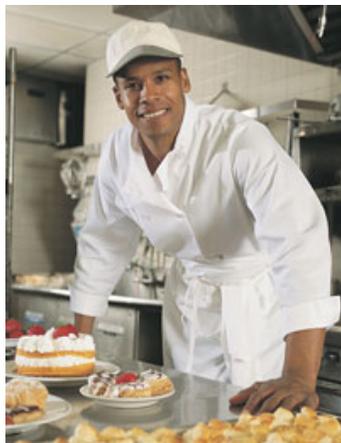
it possible to test your ability to work without losing your benefits. Employment Networks help those who receive Social Security Disability participate in the Ticket to Work program. If you receive Social Security Disability benefits and would like to re-enter the workforce, the first step is to contact the Ticket to Work program at 1-866-968-7842.



The services provided are free. These agencies can help you with:

- Setting goals to return to work or school

- Finding and keeping a job
- Writing a resume
- Increasing the amount of money you make
- Keeping your insurance (Medicare/Medicaid) benefits



Here are five multi-state Employment Networks that offer virtual services, along with the contact information for your state vocational rehabilitation program.

- **Career One Stop** – Career, training, and job search resources
<https://www.careeronestop.org/>
- **AAA Take Charge** – Pays work related expenses to help you stay employed or move toward a career goal
<https://www.aaatakecharge.com/>
- **My Employment Options** – Specializes in work-at-home, such as customer service, sales, healthcare, clerical, tech support
<https://www.myemploymentoptions.com/>
- **National Telecommuting Institute** – Helps with work-at-home jobs
<https://www.nticentral.org/>

- **A Career Path for You** – Uses a tool to find jobs that match your personality
1-888-508-8997
- **Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services**
1-800-441-7607
- **Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services**
1-800-443-1000
- **Tennessee Department of Rehabilitation Services**
(615) 313-4891



MAKE YOURSELF AT HOME BY CHOOSING HOME DIALYSIS

Kidney patients have a higher risk of catching viruses such as COVID-19, so the more you can socially distance from others, the better. Home dialysis allows you to do dialysis in the safety of your own home without having to travel to and from your dialysis center every week. Most home dialysis centers offer telehealth which allows your care to be closely managed by your healthcare team without having to leave your home.

There are two types of home dialysis – home hemodialysis and peritoneal dialysis. Home hemodialysis is when blood pumps out of your body and into

a machine that acts as a kidney. The machine cleans your blood, and your blood is returned to your body after it is clean, just as it does when you are in the dialysis clinic.

Peritoneal dialysis uses the lining of the abdomen to clean your blood. A catheter (tube) is placed in your abdomen, and a solution flows through the catheter into the abdomen. The lining of the abdomen acts as a filter to remove waste products and water. The solution then flows back out and carries waste products and extra fluid with it. In addition to decreasing your exposure to viruses such as

COVID-19, there are many other benefits to home dialysis. Some of those benefits are more independence, better control of treatment and life choices, more energy after treatments, fewer medicines, and fewer diet restrictions. If you are interested in doing dialysis at home, we encourage you to speak with your kidney doctor about trying home dialysis!



SMOKING CESSATION

Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) Facts about Tobacco Use

- Smoking leads to disease and disability and harms nearly every organ of the body.
- Smoking is the leading cause of preventable death.
- Smoking costs the United States billions of dollars each year.
- Thousands of young people start smoking cigarettes every day.
- Many adult cigarette smokers want to quit smoking.
- More than 16 million Americans are living with a disease caused by smoking.
- For every person who dies because of smoking, at least 30 people live with a serious smoking-related illness.
- Smoking causes cancer, heart disease, stroke, lung diseases, diabetes, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), which includes emphysema and chronic bronchitis.
- Smoking also increases risk for tuberculosis, certain eye diseases, and problems of the immune system, including rheumatoid arthritis.
- Smoking is a known cause of erectile dysfunction in males.



RESOURCES TO HELP YOU QUIT SMOKING

- **1-800-QUIT NOW:** A phone-based service to help people stop smoking. It is a free service that provides individual counseling, information on how to quit, referrals, mailed self-help materials, information on FDA-approved medications, and, in some cases, free or discounted cessation medications.
- **1-877-44U-QUIT:** The National Cancer Institute's toll-free phone number to speak to a counselor to get information to help you quit smoking. You can also chat with a counselor online at https://livehelp.cancer.gov/app/chat/chat_launch.
- **QuitGuide:** A free smartphone app that helps you understand your smoking patterns and build the skills needed to become smoke-free.
- **quitSTART:** The quitSTART app is a free smartphone app that helps you quit smoking with tips, encouragement, and challenges.
- **SmokefreeTXT:** A text message service to help you quit smoking. Text QUIT to 47848.

For more information, visit <https://smokefree.gov/>.

