



## Press Release

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For Immediate Release



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# News Release

## SOCIAL SECURITY

### Social Security Announces 8.7 Percent Benefit Increase for 2023

**S**ocial Security and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits for approximately 70 million Americans will increase 8.7 percent in 2023, the Social Security Administration announced today. On average, Social Security benefits will increase by more than \$140 per month starting in January.

The 8.7 percent cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) will begin with benefits payable to more than 65 million Social Security beneficiaries in January 2023. Increased payments to more than 7 million SSI beneficiaries will begin on December 30, 2022. (Note: some people receive both Social Security and SSI benefits). The Social Security Act ties the annual COLA to the increase in the Consumer Price Index as determined by the Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics.

"Medicare [Part B] premiums are going down and Social Security benefits are going up in 2023, which

will give seniors more peace of mind and breathing room. This year's substantial Social Security cost-of-living adjustment is the first time in over a decade that Medicare premiums are not rising and shows that we can provide more support to older Americans who count on the benefits they have earned," Acting Commissioner Kilolo Kijakazi said.

To view a COLA message from Acting Commissioner Kijakazi, please visit [www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vg-m5q4YT1AM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vg-m5q4YT1AM).

Some other adjustments that take effect in January of each year are based on the increase in average wages. Based on that increase, the maximum amount of earnings subject to the Social Security tax (taxable maximum) will increase to \$160,200 from \$147,000.

Social Security and SSI beneficiaries are normally notified by mail starting in early December about their

new benefit amount. The fastest way to find out their new benefit amount is to access their personal *my* Social Security account to view the COLA notice online. It's secure, easy, and people find out before the mail arrives. People can also opt to receive a text or email alert when there is a new message from Social Security – such as their COLA notice – waiting for them, rather than receiving a letter in the mail. People may create or access their *my* Social Security account online at [www.ssa.gov/myaccount](http://www.ssa.gov/myaccount).

Information about Medicare changes for 2023 is available at [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov). For Social Security beneficiaries enrolled in Medicare, their new higher 2023 benefit amount will be available in December through the mailed COLA notice and *my* Social Security's Message Center.

The Social Security Act provides for how the COLA is calculated. To read more, please visit [www.ssa.gov/cola](http://www.ssa.gov/cola). ●

## Your Shot at Sticking it to the Flu

**D**id you know that adults with the flu can be contagious from the day before symptoms begin (typically 1-4 days), all the way up to 10 days after the illness starts,<sup>1</sup> and can spread the flu to others who are up to six feet away?<sup>2</sup>

**The flu can be very serious.** One of the best ways to avoid the flu and related complications is to get a flu shot. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), during the 2019-20 flu season, up to 740,000 Americans were hospitalized because of problems related to the flu,<sup>3</sup> and the single best way to prevent seasonal flu is to get vaccinated each year.<sup>4</sup>

To help you and those around you stay healthy, you can receive your flu vaccine at a participating retail pharmacy. It is especially important for pregnant women, older adults, and people with chronic health conditions to get the flu vaccine not just this year, but every year. Spread the news – not the flu – and stop by a retail location to get vaccinated today.

### Available options for flu shots

Getting a flu shot is easy and convenient and is available at the options below:

- ◆ Your doctor's office
- ◆ Your local pharmacy
- ◆ The Alabama Dept. of Public Health (ADPH).
  - To see a listing of available and upcoming flu shot clinics offered by ADPH, visit <https://dph1.adph.state.al.us/PublicCal/>

There is no additional cost or copay for any of the flu shot options above. **Please remember to bring your PEEHIP ID card to whichever location you choose for your vaccine.**

**Members covered under the PEEHIP Humana Group Medicare Advantage (PPO) Plan: Be sure to show your ID card at the time of getting a flu shot from ADPH, your doctor, or your pharmacy.**

Contact your network pharmacy in advance to inquire about flu vaccine availability, age restrictions, and current vaccination schedules.

Vaccines at a local participating pharmacy typically do not require an appointment and are often quicker to get than those administered by a physician. Consider getting



your flu vaccine as soon as you can – even if you have not received one in the past.

### Are there other ways to prevent the spread of illness?

According to the CDC, everyday actions can help you stay healthy:

- ◆ Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- ◆ Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- ◆ Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth. Germs spread that way.
- ◆ Stay home if you get sick. The CDC recommends that you stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.
- ◆ During the COVID-19 pandemic, wear a mask when in public and encountering others; stay six feet away from other people and avoid gathering in large groups or unnecessary travel. ●

<sup>1</sup> WebMD: <https://wb.md/2FmTI80>

<sup>2</sup> Newsweek: <https://bit.ly/2o1CUvC>

<sup>3</sup> CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/burden/preliminary-in-season-estimates.htm>

<sup>4</sup> For everyone 6 months of age and older

## Notice to Enrollees in a Self-Funded Non-Federal Government Group Health Plan

Under a federal law known as the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA), Public Law 104-191, as amended, group health plans must generally comply with the requirement listed below. However, the law also permits state and local governmental employers that sponsor health plans to elect to exempt a plan from the requirements for any part of the plan that is “self-funded” by the employer, rather than provided through a health insurance policy. The Public Education Employees’ Health Insurance Board has elected to exempt PEEHIP from

the following requirement:

Protections against having benefits for mental health and substance use disorders be subject to more restrictions than apply to medical and surgical benefits covered by the plan.

The exemption from this federal requirement is in effect for the plan year beginning October 1, 2005. The election will be renewed every subsequent plan year. For more information regarding this notice, please contact PEEHIP. ●

## Behavioral Health Telehealth – Connect With Someone Who Cares



The doctor is in, even if you can’t or don’t want to go into an office. Behavioral health telehealth visits are available through your PEEHIP Humana Group Medicare Advantage PPO plan. Telehealth visits allow you to get behavioral healthcare anywhere through your phone,\* tablet or computer.

As a PEEHIP Humana member, you can use telehealth services to connect with a licensed behavioral health specialist. These providers are available when you may need them to coach you through many of life’s challenges. These providers can:

- ◆ Discuss healthy ways you can deal with stress, anxiety or sadness
- ◆ Listen without judgment as you talk about your life, relationships and feelings
- ◆ Help you set and meet behavioral and emotional goals
- ◆ Assist you in developing strategies for living a fuller, healthier life

To get started with behavioral health telehealth visits, ask

your trusted provider about local virtual behavioral health options, or get started with Array, a national in-network virtual behavioral health provider. Visit [www.arraybc.com/patients/humana](http://www.arraybc.com/patients/humana) or call 888-410-0405 (TTY: 711) to schedule your Array virtual visit.

For questions about your PEEHIP Humana plan benefits, visit [our.humana.com/PEEHIP](http://our.humana.com/PEEHIP) or contact your PEEHIP Humana Customer Care Team at 1-800-747-0008 (TTY: 711), Monday – Friday, 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. Central Time.

\*Depending on the initial consultation, video may be required for telehealth visits. These services are not a substitute for emergency care and are not intended to replace your primary care provider or other providers in your network. Any description of when to use telehealth services is for informational purposes only and should not be construed as medical advice. Please refer to your Evidence of Coverage for additional details on what your plan may cover or other rules that may apply. ●

# Medicare-Eligible PEEHIP Members

The information below pertains to Medicare-eligible PEEHIP retirees or Medicare-eligible dependents of PEEHIP retirees. For more information, visit [www.rsa-al.gov/peehip/retirees/](http://www.rsa-al.gov/peehip/retirees/).



# UnitedHealthcare®

## What to Expect Next

Effective January 1, 2023, UnitedHealthcare® will administer the PEEHIP Medicare Advantage (PPO) Plan for Medicare-eligible retirees and their covered Medicare-eligible dependents. This plan offers all of the same custom benefits and services PEEHIP retirees have today under the current Medicare Advantage Plan, plus additional services.

You will be receiving more information from UnitedHealthcare® about what to expect next. A Plan Guide will be mailed early this month, providing detailed information about the PEEHIP Group Medicare Advantage Plan benefits and services. In December, you will receive a **Quick Start Guide and ID card**, which is your enrollment confirmation. Your member ID card will be attached to the front cover of your Quick Start Guide. **If you are a Medicare-eligible PEEHIP member covered on a retiree contract, you do not need to take any action.** You will be automatically enrolled in the PEEHIP UnitedHealthcare® Group Medicare Advantage (PPO) Plan.

## Go online for valuable plan information

After you receive your UnitedHealthcare® member ID card, you will be able to register online at [retiree.uhc.com/peehip](http://retiree.uhc.com/peehip) to have access to a safe, secure website where you will be able to:

- ◆ Look up your latest claim information
- ◆ Review benefit information and plan materials
- ◆ Print a temporary ID card and request a new one
- ◆ Search for network doctors
- ◆ Learn more about health and wellness topics and explore all Renew has to offer based on your interests and goals
- ◆ Sign up to get your Explanation of Benefits online

## How to sign up for your online account:

1. Visit [retiree.uhc.com/peehip](http://retiree.uhc.com/peehip) and click on the Sign in or register button and then click **Register Now** on the next screen
2. Enter your first and last name, date of birth, ZIP code, UnitedHealthcare® member ID number and click **continue**
3. Create your username and password, enter your email address, and click **create my ID**
4. For security purposes, you will be asked to verify your account by email, call, or text
  - ◆ If by email, follow the instructions in your confirmation email
  - ◆ If by call or text, enter the code you receive into the website page

Make sure to write down your username and password and keep them in a safe place. You will need them each time you sign in to your account.

## Health assessment

In the first 90 days after your plan's effective date, UnitedHealthcare® will give you a call. Medicare requires them to call and ask you to complete a short health survey. You can also sign in to [retiree.uhc.com/peehip](http://retiree.uhc.com/peehip) and take the survey online.

## Questions or want to learn more?

To learn about plan benefits, find a provider, look up prescription drugs, and more, visit [retiree.uhc.com/peehip](http://retiree.uhc.com/peehip) or call 877.298.2341, TTY 711, 8 a.m. – 8 p.m., seven days a week. ●