



How the Medicare Beneficiary Ombudsman Works For You

An “Ombudsman” is a person who reviews issues and helps to resolve them. Congress requires that Medicare have a Beneficiary Ombudsman who helps people with Medicare. The Medicare Beneficiary Ombudsman shares information with the Secretary of Health and Human Services, Congress, and other organizations about what works well, and what doesn’t work well, to continuously improve the quality of the services and care you get through Medicare by reporting problems and making recommendations.

How does the Medicare Beneficiary Ombudsman help you?

The Ombudsman makes sure information is available for you about

- your Medicare benefits,
- whether you have the information you need to make good health care decisions,
- your rights and protections under the Medicare Program, and
- how you can get issues resolved.

How does the Medicare Beneficiary Ombudsman help you through other organizations?

The Ombudsman works with organizations like State Health Insurance Assistance Programs (SHIPs) and Quality Improvement Organizations (see back for more information) to ensure they resolve your issues promptly. This allows these organizations to provide information, counseling and assistance to help you with

- your Medicare questions, including your benefits, coverage, premiums, deductibles, and coinsurance.
- grievances (complaints).
- appeals. (You can appeal if you think a service or item you got should have been covered or paid for and Medicare denies your request, you question the amount that was paid, or your plan stops paying for coverage you are already receiving.)
- problems joining or leaving a Medicare Advantage Plan (like an HMO or PPO) or any other Medicare Health Plan or Medicare Prescription Drug Plan.



For More Information

- Visit www.medicare.gov on the web.
- Visit the Ombudsman's webpage at www.cms.hhs.gov/center/ombudsman.asp on the web.
- Call your Quality Improvement Organization if you have a complaint about the quality of Medicare-covered services. A Quality Improvement Organization consists of groups of doctors and health care experts to check on and improve the care given to people with Medicare. Visit www.medicare.gov, or call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227) to get their telephone number. TTY users should call 1-877-486-2048.
- Call your State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) for help with questions about appeals, buying other insurance, choosing a Medicare health or prescription drug plan, buying a Medigap policy, and Medicare rights and protections. The SHIP program is a State program that gets money from the Federal Government to give free local health insurance counseling to people with Medicare. You can find their telephone number by visiting www.medicare.gov on the web. Under "Search Tools," select "Find Helpful Phone Numbers and Websites." Or, call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227) to get their telephone number. TTY users should call 1-877-486-2048.