

Medicare Open Enrollment Offers Opportunities to Access Affordable Fitness Programs

(NAPS)—Millions of older adults are making important decisions about their health insurance coverage—including fitness and wellness benefits—during Medicare Open Enrollment. Seniors and other Medicare-eligible persons who choose to enroll in a Medicare Advantage plan may have access to covered services not offered through original Medicare, such as dental care, vision exams, hearing aids, and fitness programs that offer no-cost or low-cost gym access.

Here are three key reasons why obtaining access to an affordable fitness program is important to consider:

1.) Movement is medicine. Time and again, research has proven the health benefits of staying active. Researchers studying pandemic-related inactivity for older adults noted that it takes only 5 to 10 days of physical inactivity for muscles to start wasting away. Loss of muscle mass can lead to bone loss, increased fall risk, and functional dependency. Lack of physical activity also can speed the progression of chronic diseases including heart disease, arthritis, and obesity. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that adults aged 65 and older participate at least two days a week in activities that “strengthen muscles,” along with a minimum of 150 minutes a week of “moderate-intensity activity,” such as brisk walking. So, if you’ve been less active this past year and are feeling some of the health effects, it’s time to get up and move.

2.) There are more options for working out than ever before. The pandemic may have sidelined many people’s workout routines during the last 18 months, but it also created new fitness options. Fitness companies, health plans, gyms, YMCAs, and other organizations sprang into action in 2020, devising more ways to help their members work out safely and conveniently. Gyms now have outdoor work-



When looking into Medicare plans, consider the health benefits of those that emphasize exercise and include gym memberships.

out spaces, safely spaced indoor classes, and hygienic protocols in place. Many fitness programs offer online classes via social media, and most outdoor parks and recreation facilities are open again.

3.) No-cost and low-cost fitness center memberships are available through Medicare Advantage programs. Some Medicare Advantage health plans offer no-cost or low-cost fitness center memberships through programs such as the Silver&Fit® Healthy Aging and Exercise program. Key advantages of joining such a program include the option to choose from thousands of different types of fitness facilities, including large, name-brand chains to boutique clubs or YMCAs. These fitness benefits may offer at-home workout options, such as home fitness kits, libraries of on-demand digital workouts and even lifestyle coaches who can help members stay motivated and engaged in their fitness.

In a recent poll of people enrolled in Medicare, 95 percent of respondents agreed it is important to have coverage options aside from traditional Medicare. Fitness programs are a great example of a valuable additional option available through many Medicare Advantage plans.

Learn More

For further facts and tips, visit www.silverandfit.com.