



Getting Medicare right

# The Medicare Part A Buy-In: An Introduction

**In New York**, if you have limited income and are eligible for Medicare but have to pay a premium for Medicare Part A (hospital insurance), **or** would have to pay a premium if you started getting it\*, you may qualify for help through the Medicare Part A Buy-In process. If you qualify, you will get help paying for your Medicare premiums, certain doctors' visits and drug coverage.

## To qualify for the Medicare Part A Buy-In, you must:

- be at least 65 years of age;
- be a U.S. citizen or a lawfully admitted, permanent legal resident;
- if you are not a U.S. citizen, have lived in the U.S. for at least 5 years in a row prior to qualifying;
- have income of \$923 or less per month (\$1,235 for a couple); **and**
- have or be enrolling in Medicare Part B.

**Note:** Even if you already have Medicaid, you can still qualify for the Medicare Part A Buy-In.

## Once you finish the Part A Buy-In process, you will have:

- Medicare Part A (hospital insurance)\*\*
- Medicare Part B (medical insurance)
- Medicare Part D (a Medicare private drug plan)
- help paying for both Part A and B through the Qualified Medicare Beneficiary (QMB) program (a "Medicare Savings Program")
- help paying for Part D through the "Extra Help" program

**For a basic guide to getting the Part A Buy-In, flip this page over.  
See the attached packet for more detailed instructions.**

\*If you have 10 years of work experience (40 quarters), you automatically get free Part A. If you have less than 10 years of work experience, you pay a monthly premium based on your work history. It can be as high as \$461 per month in 2010.

\*\* If you already have Part A and pay for it yourself, once you successfully complete the Part A Buy-In process and are determined eligible, you will have help paying for it.

# Basic Steps to the Medicare Part A Buy-In

## 1. Enroll in Medicare Part B at your local Social Security office. (Note: If you already have Medicare Part B\*, skip to Step 2.)

Because you qualify for the Medicare Part A Buy-In, you can enroll in Part B at any time during the year.

## 2. Go to your local Medicaid office with proof that you are enrolled in Part B and:

- Get screened for the Medicare Part A Buy-In; **and**
- Apply for QMB.

## 3. You will be automatically enrolled into Extra Help.

When you are enrolled in QMB, you will get “Extra Help”, a federal program that helps pay for most of the costs of Part D drug coverage. Within a few months, you will be enrolled in a Part D plan unless you choose one yourself or already have one. You will receive a letter in the mail explaining your options.

## 4. Mark your calendar to recertify your QMB in about 9 months.

You will need to recertify your QMB every year to keep getting help paying for Medicare. If you already have Medicaid, you will need to recertify your QMB at the same time that you recertify your Medicaid each year. If you do not get a form in the mail to renew your QMB, contact your local Medicaid office and ask for one.

**See the attached packet for a detailed, step-by-step guide to the Medicare Part A Buy-In. It will tell you where to go, what to do, and what paperwork to bring to the Social Security and Medicaid offices.**

\* You have Medicare Part B if you have a red-white-and-blue Medicare card that says, “Medical (Part B)”

# Step-by-Step Guide to the Medicare Part A Buy-In

Use this guide for the Medicare Part A Buy-In process. To get help paying for Medicare Part A (hospital insurance) and Medicare Part B (medical insurance), you will need to follow these simple but careful steps in the correct order **and** use the materials in this packet . When you are done, you will also be enrolled in Medicare Part D (a Medicare private drug plan) and automatically get help paying for it through Extra Help. (Not sure if you qualify? See the flier “Medicare Part A: An Introduction” in this packet.)

## Before you start: Keep notes

As you follow the steps for the Medicare Part A Buy-In process, make sure to write down important information, such as:

- the name and phone number of the person helping you through this process (counselor/friend/family member);
- the names and phone numbers of Social Security and Medicaid staff who help you;
- the dates when you go to the Social Security and Medicaid offices.

## 1. First you must have Medicare Part B. If you do not have Part B you will need to go to the Social Security office to apply for Part B.

**(Note: If you already have Medicare Part B, skip to Step 2 on the other side of this page.)**

## Before you visit the Social Security Office...

### Collect these materials:

- Proof of date of birth (for example, passport, birth certificate or state ID)
- Proof of all forms of income, earned and unearned (such as recent pay stubs, pension statements, tax returns or proof of Social Security reduced benefits.)
- Proof of U.S. citizenship or lawful residence (for example, passport, permanent resident card, U.S. birth certificate)
- Copy of Social Security card
- Letter #1 from this packet

**Continue on the other side ➡**

# Medicare Part A Buy-In Guide (Continued)

## While at the Social Security Office...

- Ask to enroll in Medicare Part B
- Show the representative Letter #1 (from this packet)
- Get a copy of your Application for Supplemental Medical Insurance

## Do not leave the Social Security office until you have completed the application process for Part B.

In 4-6 weeks, you will receive a red-white-and-blue Medicare card in the mail that says, "Medical (Part B)".

## 2. Once you have enrolled in Part B, you will need to go to the Medicaid office to get screened for the Medicare Part A Buy In and apply for the Medicare Savings Program "QMB."

### Before you visit the Medicaid office...

#### Collect these materials:

- Proof of enrollment in Part B (the Medicare red-white-and-blue card with "M" suffix, **or** a copy of your Part B enrollment receipt)
- Proof of address (for example, your license, state ID or a bill)
- Copy of Social Security card
- Proof of all forms of income, earned and unearned (for example, recent pay stubs, pension statements, Social Security statements or tax returns)
- Letter #2 from this packet.

### While at the Medicaid Office...

- Ask to be screened for the Medicare Part A Buy-In and apply for QMB.
- Show the Medicaid staff person Letter #2 (from this packet).
- Get proof of your application for QMB and the Medicare Part A Buy-In.

## Do not leave the office until you have completed the application process for QMB and the Part A Buy-In.

## 3. You will be automatically enrolled in Extra Help.

When you have been enrolled in QMB, you will get "Extra Help", a federal program that helps pay for most of the costs of Part D drug coverage. Within a few months, you will be enrolled in a Part D plan unless you choose one

yourself or already have one. You will receive a letter in the mail explaining your options.

## 4. Mark your calendar!

In about 9 months, you will get a form in the mail to recertify your QMB. **You must fill out the form and return it or you will lose QMB**, and will have to pay for Medicare Parts A and B yourself. If you already have Medicaid, you will recertify your QMB at the same time that you recertify your Medicaid each year.

If you do not get the form in the mail, call your Medicaid office and ask what steps you need to take to recertify your QMB.



Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Social Security Office**

Dear Sir/Madam:

I would like to enroll in Supplemental Medical Insurance (SMI) (Medicare Part B) as a potential **Part A Buy-In/QMB** applicant. Once I have enrolled in SMI, I will file for QMB and the Part A Buy-in at the Department of Social Services. Below, please find the citation from the SSA Program Operations Manual System (POMS) which explains how I am eligible to enroll in SMI outside of the General Enrollment Period at any time throughout the year.

I would like to have my SMI enrollment request processed and I need a copy of my application to take with me to the Department of Social Services as proof that I have filed for SMI.

Thank you very much for your assistance. Please call the Medicare Rights Center at 1-800-333-4114 for more information.

**EM-08071 REV Processing Instructions - Premium HI for Individuals in Part A Buy-In States who do not have Medicare Part B – POMS Instructions Will Follow Shortly 8/11/2008 HI 00801.134, HI 00801.138, HI 00801.139, HI 00801.140, HI 00815.023, SM 00850.355, SM 00850.700, SM 03040.025**

In Part A buy-in states, some low income individuals that appear eligible for Medicare Part A and Part B buy-in as qualified Medicare beneficiaries (QMB) are experiencing difficulty enrolling in Part B at their local Social Security offices. QMB's are individuals who are eligible for Medicaid payment of their Medicare premiums, deductibles, and coinsurance. The confusion seems to occur with individuals who want to file for Premium Part A, do not have Part B, and are outside of an enrollment period.

If an individual contacts the field office (FO) and appears to meet the QMB eligibility requirements, resides in a Part A buy-in State, wishes to file for Premium Part A, and does not have Part B, the individual may file an application for Part B and conditional enrollment in Premium Part A. Since the individual resides in a Part A buy-in State, the application does not have to be filed in an enrollment period; it may be filed at any time.

Currently, MCS will not accept a Part B and conditional Part A enrollment filed outside of an enrollment period for an individual who resides in a Part A Buy-in State. MCS will generate exception message number 20604 – Check BIC M Decision Status – SMI Application Not in Enrollment Period. To address this exception, the FO needs to input the claim into MCS and then prepare an A101/EF101 for the Part B and conditional Part A award when the exception is received.

POMS instructions are being updated. Until national instructions are published, follow these processing instructions:

**POMS Instructions Continued on Reverse ➔**

## FO Processing Instructions:

- Take an initial claim for Part B and conditional Part A through MCS (i.e. select claim type 5 = UNINS MED ONLY on APPL screen)
- Develop proofs of age, citizenship or LAPR, and residency.
- Review the earnings record for accuracy. A reduced Hospital Insurance Premium (HI) may apply if the individual or spouse has 30-39 quarters of coverage (see HI 01005.007, Reduced Hospital Insurance (HI) Premium).
- Prepare an A101. If problems occur with the A101 prepare an EF101. Instructions for screen completion for the A101 are in MCS 014.000 and EF101 are in T2PE 009.000.
- Include the following entries:
  - Part A entitlement on the HI Data screen (HIDA or EFHIDA);
    - START equal to the current operating month (COM)
    - BASIS of 'A'
    - TYPE of 'P'
    - PERIOD of 'Q'
    - FILING date;
  - HI THIRD PARTY DATA (HITP or EFHITP);
    - START equal to PREMIUM HI START
    - CODE of Z99
    - CATEGORY of 'Q'
  - HI Premium/Reduction (HIPR or EFHIPR)
    - START equal to PREMIUM HI START
    - PENALTY PERCENTAGE OF 00
    - Complete the following fields if applicable:
      - HAS 30 QTR
      - STOP
      - 30 QTR SSN
  - Part B entitlement on the SMI Data screen (SMID or EFSMID);
    - START equal to COM
    - BASIS of 'A'
    - PERIOD of 'Q'
    - FILING date
    - MED-RET-US, if applicable
  - SMI THIRD PARTY DATA (SMTP or EFSMTP);
    - Do not code THIRD PARTY DATA for Part B. See NOTE below.
  - SMI PREMIUM HISTORY/VARIABLE SMI (SMPR or EFSMPR);
    - START equal to SMI START
    - PENALTY PERCENTAGE of 000

### NOTE:

Refer the individual to the appropriate State office to file for QMB benefits. Emphasize the importance of promptly contacting the State. The individual may be billed for Part B premiums until state buy-in begins.

## PSC Processing Instructions:

- Propagate A101/EF101 into MACADE.
- NOTE: Technicians should ensure that all coding referred to above are included on the screens of their MACADE action (see SM 00850.700).

If the enrollee does not contact the State and does not pay the Part B premiums when billed, Part B will terminate for nonpayment of premiums (HI 00820.035). Conditional Premium Part A will not generate a bill.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Department of Social Services**

Dear Sir/Madam:

I am now enrolled in Medicare Part B. I would like to be assessed for the **Medicare Part A Buy-In** and file a QMB application. Below, please find the citation referencing this process from the New York State Department of Health. I currently meet all of the state's requirements listed in this document as follows:

- ✓ I am either an SSI cash recipient or my income is below 100% of the FPL;'
- ✓ I am a U.S. citizen or I have met the five year continuous lawfully admitted permanent residency status;
- ✓ I am age 65 or older;
- ✓ I am enrolled in Part B, but not Part A; and
- ✓ I have a Medicare number with an "M" suffix.

Thank you very much for assistance. Please call the Medicare Rights Center 1-800-333-4114 for more information.

[Adapted from GENERAL INFORMATION SYSTEM 6/24/04: GIS 04 MA/013](#)

**SUBJECT: Medicare Part A Buy-in**

There are some individuals who are eligible for Medicare Part B, but do not have enough work quarters to qualify for free Medicare Part A. For those individuals who have Medicare Part B and meet the income and resource requirements of the Qualified Medicare Beneficiary Program (QMB), states may purchase Part A coverage on their behalf.

Under the Part A buy-in, individuals obtain Part A coverage when the local district accretes the individual to the Part A Buy-in system. Individuals accreted by the State to the Part A buy-in will appear on your buy-in list and will be coded as a QMB. You will be able to identify such individuals as they will have a "63" accretion code.

Such individuals:

- Are age 65 or over;
- have Part B coverage, but not Part A;
- have a Medicare number with an M suffix;
- have income below 100% Federal Poverty Level

Districts must determine if the individual qualifies for Part A buy-in based on the criteria listed above.