



# Brad Keating

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Note: please call or email...

**I do not guarantee text responses!**

Brad helping at a prison in Kenya, Africa (they didn't keep me!)

GREETINGS!!!

### **Full time agent... part time volunteer!**

I appreciate a career that I am allowed to serve others during down time. I feel all my clients are part of the work that I am able to do around the country... and the world. (Note – I do work remote when I travel away from Colorado). This year's highlight was going to Kenya, Africa in August. I was one of the main speakers at a church conference and did prison ministry. It was amazing to see how something as simple as a bar of soap made a big difference to prisoners who had none. The prisons I went into mostly were non-violent criminals caught trying to help their families in a struggling economy.

**Final update on my golfing daughter Arielle:** After 5 years and a Masters degree, Arielle finished her collegiate career helping Missouri State win their conference and finally getting to go to the NCAA regional tourney (her goal since she went to college). She finished as the team's top player, but was 43<sup>rd</sup> overall. She is currently in California having fun with a friend, and contemplating her future while surfing. 😊

## **NEW CLIENT internet site!!!**

With the slowness, cost of producing and inconsistency and cost of snail mail, and the help of a tech savvy daughter, I am moving my newsletters to the internet. This is a work in progress and I envision videos and current information being on there regularly. I'm working with my daughter to continually improve it.

MARKETING SITE: **www.insuranceSS.org**

**NEW CLIENT INTERNET SITE: www.bradkeatinginsurance.com**

- Better and current information for my clients
- Newsletters on the site (this one should already be on by the time you get this snail mail)
- LATEST news after AEP put on by end of January / and summer news by end of July!



Check the site end of January and end of July for current updates and news.  
Check the site after October 7<sup>th</sup> for the latest news letter (and previous ones)  
(I will send the pre-fall newsletter by snail mail in September)





# Medicare ADVANTAGE Plans

(EXTENDED VERSION- lots of info!)

- Plans AUTO renew and there is **NOTHING** you must do.

**You should always read your "Changes in Benefits" from the company.**

This will have important info about specific changes that may affect your situation (RX tiering, etc...)

Here is the list of companies I am licensed, appointed, tested and "Ready to Sell" Advantage Plans in 2024:

AARP-UnitedHealthcare  
Humana  
Cigna

Anthem  
Clear Spring  
Wellcare/Centene

Aetna  
Devoted

## +++++ **DENTAL SELLS... BIG!!!**

Plans are offering more dental, one is up to \$5000 first dollar coverage (No co-pays... no deductibles). One plan offers "up to" \$20,000 in dental coverage... which sounds great, except they have rather large co-pays. You are paying more for services that other plans are covering fully.



**Dental coverage plus other cost savings could mean an Advantage plan is \$4000 - \$7000 cheaper than a supplement!** (depends on situation)

Implants – some are covering and some are not. If this is in your future – we need to discuss options.

## =====

## **COMMERCIALS and COMPANIES throwing "bones" to the seniors**



Plans must be as good as original Medicare... but they can throw in "extras" as they want. Advertising a plan means throwing out bones that "hook" the audience.

### IMPORTANT POINTS:

- Every company offers something that the others don't. That is their "bone"
  - If that benefit helps you great... but be wise in the true \$ saved vs what others offer.
- Many of the companies offer the same benefits or very close.
  - Gym membership... ALL have it. Chiropractic... ALL have it.

**MOST IMPORTANT:**     *The pot of GOLD is only so big!!!*

- NO COMPANY is best at everything. If they are strong in one benefit... they will be weak in another.
  - The key is finding the plan that has what you want! (That's what I do for you!!)

### Colorado Advantage Companies (11 companies- 47 plans)

**AETNA** – 4 HMO's / 3 PPO's

**ANTHEM** – 1 HMO

**CIGNA** – 1 HMO / 2 PPO's

**CLEAR SPRING** -1 HMO / 1 PPO

**DEVOTED** – 1 HMO / 2 PPO's

**ELAVATE** – 1 HMO

**KAISER** – 4 HMO's / 1 PPO

**UHC/AARP** – 4 HMO's / 3 PPO's

**PERENNIAL** – 1 HMO

**SELECT HEALTH**– 3 HMO's / 1 PPO

**HUMANA** – 3 HMO's / 8 PPO's / 1 PFFS



**Plan Costs**

**\$0 plans:** 19 HMO's / 12 PPO's

**MONEY BACK plans:** NO RX – 7 (highest GIVEBACK benefit **\$100**)  
 With RX – 2 (highest GIVEBACK benefit **\$130**)

**Plans that cost \$:** 7 (Highest cost - \$181 a month) – **(note – I have no clients on a paying plan)**  
 The plans that cost money – usually have some better benefits from that company.

\* \* \* \* \*

**Benefit comparisons**

**Notes -** By CMS rules, I'm not allowed to discuss any specific benefit from any specific plan on a newsletter.  
 I compared the 6 top company "flagship" HMO's (best sellers) plans to see the differences

**PPO's –** Are going to have less benefits (IE - higher co-pays) because they have broader coverage (nationwide)

<b><u>Benefit</u></b>	<b><u>Best</u></b>	<b><u>Worst</u></b>	<b><u>Differential</u></b>
Maximum Out of Pocket	3400	4900	+/- 1500
Hospital Co-pays	5 x 150	275 x 6	+/- 900
Primary/Specialist	0/20	0/35	+/- 15
Surgery	150	350	+/- 200
Labs / MRI-CAT	0/175	0/225	+/- 50
Urgent / Emergency	35 / 90	50 / 120	+/- 30
RX deductible / Tier 3	0 / 42	0 / 47 or 20%	+/- 5
Skilled Nursing	178	10-day/203	+/- 700 per stay
Ground Ambulance	195	300	+/- 105
Diabetes Supplies	same with all plans		
Dental	5000	1000	+/- 4000
Hearing Aids	too difficult to compare		
Vision	400	250	+/- 150
Over the counter	150 Q	50 Q	+/- 400
Chiropractor	0	20	+/- 20 -

**Other "Bones to throw out to consumers" benefits:**

- Air ambulance -** some have it, most don't
- Diabetes monitor** One plan pays for it under certain circumstances
- World wide ground/air -** one has it
- Durable Medical / Prosthetic –** All have the same basic benefit
- ED RX –** Some have it, but Medicare doesn't cover (I guess they think a happy guy is less health costs!)
- HMO travel -** Some HMO plans are nationwide if within their network. (PPO's are same but bigger network)
- PERS –** personal emergency response, one plan pays for it.
- Routine transportation –** Some plans pay for this, most do not.
- Flex money –** Some plans give up to a few hundred dollars for things like acupuncture
- Food / utilities -** This is generally for those with Medicaid, but one company is offering to others.
- Earn "extra" –** Some plans offer money incentives to do healthy things. Usually \$50 - \$100 max.
- Meal benefit -** Some plans pay for meals after a surgery or recovery

\*\*\* AGAIN... these are all nice extras that a plan might throw out as better than other plans. Buying a plan for one benefit that a company or agent promotes... is not looking at the overall picture. **I'm here to help!!**

# Advantage Company Comparisons

(Brad's opinion – with a college football flare)

## **The POWER 2:**

These are the big boys. Everyone knows them which helps for good consistency with claims and no worries that they have the \$ to pay. Thanks to competition their plans have improved significantly last couple years. Few complaints considering these are my 2 biggest sellers.

- UHC/AARP** – Largest health company in the country. Huge network in Colorado. Their 2024 plan did not increase the dental... but better in other benefits.
- HUMANA** - Largest Advantage company in the country. Trails UHC in Colorado. Improved on dental coverage... but other benefits are weaker than UHC.

## **Mid Majors:**

These are big companies with recognizable names. Some will have some better benefits overall than the Power 2, but generally only in the hundreds of dollars. Some plans have about same or less benefits than the Power 2. If there is something specific you need that only one of these mid majors has... may be worth a look (as always – I can help you with this).

- AETNA** - Big name and has bought their way to being prominent. I think a good company. Had the best dental originally... but others caught up and surpassed them.
- CIGNA** - A good company trying to break through in the senior market. A couple “gimmick” extra benefits for hooks but overall good plans.
- ANTHEM** - Regional big company (and huge because of California). Have had a great supplement and good claims, but honestly, this is the worst plan out there. No reason to consider.
- KAISER** - Another regional California based company. They put out their first PPO ever this year. Their plans are better than Anthem... but not much. I would not consider.

## **Division 2:**

These are smaller, regional, growing companies. The only way to get any market share is to have specifically better plans than the Power 2. And they do! I am wary only because of being burned by Bright Health a couple years ago. Bright was fabulous... until they had “issues”. Their customer support ended and claims were a hassle. This was not good for my clients. However, these companies are NOT Bright health.

- DEVOTED** - 3<sup>rd</sup> fastest growing company in the country for Advantage. Has the best dental coverage. Probably best “extras” of any plans. Strong network. If dental is important... worth a try?
- CLEAR SPRING** - I think best overall plan. Low co-pays. Been out a while... and don't seem to be trying to grow. So not sure on my thoughts overall... but great base plan.
- SELECT HEALTH** - New company on the front range. Plan is not much better than the POWER 2 and not as strong as the other Division 2 plans. I would not consider currently.

## **Division 3 / NAIA:**

Small, specialized companies serving Denver area. Plans are not better than POWER 2.

**PERENNIAL and ELAVATE** – I'm sure there is some reason for their existence. I just can't find it.

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*NOW more than ever you and your friends NEED an agent with YOUR best interests in mind*

**Don't fall for a company or agent pitch.  
I will help you find whichever one is best for YOU!**

# Medicare Supplements

ALL supplements auto-renew and there is NOTHING you MUST do.

## When is it time to switch plans?

In general... if you are paying near \$200 a month, its time to shop. If you have good health, can do anytime of the year for another supplement. If want to switch to an Advantage - must do during Annual enrollment (now).

Note- if age or health prohibits switching to keep under \$200... you will financially be better off with an Advantage Plan. The latest PPO's can be great options. But... finances aren't the only reason to consider!

### Latest company pricing/news:

**AFLAC** – is the most recent A rated company to come into Colorado.

AFLAC has the best rates across the state – normal underwriting for the most part.

They do not offer any gym club memberships.

**ACCENDO** – Strangely, Aetna-CVS decided to pull this product from selling. Most likely consolidating to focus on being under the Aetna name. So much for the CVS-Aetna co-op.

Accendo still has the 2<sup>nd</sup> best rates or close across the State. Should be fine for a couple more years.

**ANTHEM** – Has been my best seller this year until just recently when AFLAC came out. They do offer a gym membership, but can go away at anytime. Rates are good. Should be fine for a couple years.

**CIGNA** - just heard from a couple clients that they have had a significant rate increase. It's been out a while, so probably time to look at switching or look at an Advantage. CALL ME for an appointment.

**MUTUAL OF OMAHA** – Still my overall favorite company... BUT rates have gone up over the last couple years and probably time to give me a call about looking at a switch.

**UHC/AARP** – They have had solid rates for quite some time... but they are heading higher. Even with the gym membership, if you are heading upwards of \$200 a month... good time to call me to do some shopping.

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### Why do companies wait until after enrollment time to raise rates?

They normally want close to a full year of claims to see how they match up to the income. Is there a bit of “gaming” when they know you are more likely to switch to an Advantage with a price increase. Probably. But you can switch to another supplement anytime of the year... if you health qualify.

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### GENERAL NOTE:

The government wants seniors to have “skin in the game” when it comes to Medicare. Advantage Plans accomplish this and that is where the financial incentives are coming from the government. In 2023, for the first time, more than 50% of seniors had an Advantage. The price jump with Part D's is another sign. They are trying to make the dollar incentive so good that seniors willingly go to Advantage. I saw this change about 5 – 7 years ago. Advantage plans get better EVERY year.

**Is supplement G still the best?** Yes. But – the financial savings of an Advantage will always win. I love the best plans, but want to make sure my clients have the info.

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Want to look at another Supplement or an Advantage plan?

Please call me **719-244-2857**



# **Part D – RX plans**

- **ALL Part D Plans AUTO renew, no need to do anything if you are keeping same plan!**

PLEASE! READ your booklet of changes from the company. If you take a NAME BRAND RX you need to look at the tiering and make sure what your cost will be. If you need help, email or call me.



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***A major shift with Stand alone RX plans (PDP's):***

Only 2 companies have 1 plan less than \$20: Wellcare has a \$0 plan and Cigna has a \$10 plan  
There are only 3 other plans less than \$40: Silver Script 20.10, Mutual of Omaha 22.80, Clear Spring 27.20  
- Anthem has 2 plans... both over \$100 a month!  
+ ***I have clients checking into Canada and Mexico for their RX. I think it is a viable option to consider.***

## **What is going on?**

My opinion is that HUMANA, UHC, AETNA (Silver Scripts) and ANTHEM are pushing their Part D clients to go to their Advantage Plan. The company agents (when you call) can push Advantage Plans which have no deductible (\$500) savings, no cost (another \$500 savings) and thousands saved from the extra benefits and not paying for your supplement. Although it is an option to consider (but make sure you call me!!), you can go to Wellcare for \$0 which helps... and I don't like how they push clients to themselves and not shop.

## **8 companies and my opinion of them and what they are doing:**

(Note – Every plan has at least one RX (out of 7000) that they are best at. If you happen to be on that RX... then it makes sense to be with that company. CHECK OUT your RX on the formulary they send.)

**Aarp/UHC** – Jumped rates way up to push people to go to Advantage Plans.

**Anthem** – who in their right mind would buy a \$100+ RX plan? (has to be one bad RX – yikes!)

**Cigna** – I thought this might be good... but it doesn't come out in top 3 for about any RX I ran with Medicare

**Clear Spring** – They were the worst rated RX plans last year. Are best price with some name RX this year.

**Humana** – Jumping rates up hoping to get people to move to Advantage Plans

**Mutual of Omaha** – they dropped their Advantage plans... so want a compliment to their Supplements

**Silver Scripts** – Aetna/CVS plan... same as Humana and UHC... wanting to push to Advantage Plans

**Wellcare** – Owned by Centene.. but no Advantage plans in Colorado. Lowest price ever for an RX plan  
(Humana had a \$1.87 plan in 2005) I think they are setting up for Centene Advantage Plans soon.

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RX comparison (I put main RX on the Medicare site 10/1/2023 and checked which they said was best)

- **NOTE: If there is a generic, and you/doctor want name brand – Medicare won't cover. PERIOD.**

**Generics – Wellcare \$0. Not even close.** // Enbrel and Tradjenta – Wellcare \$0

Diabetic Rx (Ozempic, Januvia, Jardiance) – Wellcare \$0 best / Wellcare \$82 / Clear Spring \$27.20

COPD RX (Flovent, Spiriva) – Clear Spring 27.20 best / Humana Walmart 48.70

Xarelto / Eliquis – Clear Spring \$27.20 best / Wellcare 82.20 / Wellcare \$0

**\*\*\* NOTE – ALL plans have a maximum \$35 co-pay for Medicare covered insulin.\*\*\***

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## **WANT TO SWITCH?**

Can come into office or can do by phone. CALL ME!! **719-244-2857**

+ If ready to look at an Advantage Plan – call me for an appointment!

# Latest Medicare News



2024 Part B premium:

I scoured the CMS sites including Medicare and Social Security. There are no official announcements at the time of this writing what the new Part B premiums or deductibles will be. I did find a source that said the rumor is the new premium will be going to \$179.80 per month instead of the \$164.90. Nothing set in stone.

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## SHINGLES SHOTS:

Yes – they are covered under Part D.

However – it is considered a name brand, so the deductible applies. Generally, Advantage plans have NO deductible on their Part D, so there is no cost for the shots. If you have a stand alone Part D... they will have a deductible for name brands. If you haven't met the deductible, then the shots will be "covered" but are part of the deductible. So you pay the full cost.

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Want to compare doctors, hospitals or Nursing Facilities?

Go to [Medicare.gov](https://www.medicare.gov) then "Providers and Services" then "Find and Compare"

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## Medicare Fraud

Medicare will NEVER call you unless you have contacted them first. NEVER give out any information to someone calling on the phone (personally, I don't get why people buy any insurance over the phone with a stranger – referrals are not strangers).

If you suspect fraud with anything involving Medicare – Call 1-800-Medicare (633-4227)

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## On the lighter side:

- When I was young, I was a poor golfer. After years of playing and practice... I am no longer... young.
- When I was young, it was "Rock around the clock," now it's "Limp around the block"
- When I was young, I felt like a million bucks. Now I feel like a bounced check.
- A grandfather asked his granddaughter to fetch a newspaper. She laughed and said, "Grandpa you are so old. Just use my phone." He looked at it puzzled, then slammed her phone against the wall and killed that big hairy spider.
- A lady walks into a pharmacy for her new specialized RX. As the pharmacist hands her the RX she asks what the most common side effects are. He responds, "Bankruptcy."



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\$

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(many other options – let me shop for you!)



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