Navigating Medicare at Boeing: What to Know About the Boeing Aetna Medicare Plan

If you work at Boeing, or you have retired from Boeing, Medicare is one of the biggest transitions on your calendar. A few of the decisions are permanent, and a few of the rules can cost you real money if you get them wrong.

This article walks through the Boeing Aetna Medicare Plan in plain English: what it is, what it costs, who it fits, and the rules to get right. Sean O'Connor and team recorded a video walkthrough explaining the plan. Click the video below to watch.



THE SHORT VERSION

About $59 a month, with an $800 yearly medical cap. The Boeing Aetna plan includes drug coverage and caps your share of covered medical costs at $800 per person per year. Prescription drugs have their own separate $2,100 yearly cap.

Leaving is permanent. Drop the plan, or join any other Medicare Advantage or Part D plan, and you cannot come back. A younger spouse's Boeing coverage can be lost with it.

Medicare premiums look back two years at your income. Higher earners pay a surcharge called IRMAA, based on your tax return from two years ago, so start tax and income planning well before 65.

Medicare Explained

Medicare is the federal health insurance program most Americans become eligible for at 65, and it comes in parts. Part A covers hospital stays, and most people pay no premium for it. Part B covers doctors and outpatient care, and it carries a monthly premium that everyone pays directly to Medicare. Part D covers prescription drugs.

At 65, most Americans choose between two ways to receive these benefits. Original Medicare pairs Parts A and B with a Medigap supplement policy (Plan G is the most common) and a separate Part D drug plan. You pay more every month, often a couple hundred dollars or more per person, but you get nearly unlimited provider access and very little out of pocket when you use care. Medicare Advantage, also called Part C, bundles hospital, medical, and usually drug coverage into one private plan. It is cheaper month to month, but it comes with network and cost-sharing rules, and quality varies a great deal from plan to plan.

Here is why this matters for Boeing families: you are not limited to shopping the individual market. For eligible Boeing retirees, Boeing offers a third option, a group Medicare Advantage plan negotiated on behalf of tens of thousands of retirees, and in our experience the terms are substantially stronger than the plans you see advertised on TV.

What Is the Boeing Aetna Medicare Plan?

The Boeing Aetna Medicare Plan is a group version of that second path: a Medicare Advantage PPO offered through Aetna and sponsored by Boeing. For eligible retirees, when you become Medicare-eligible at 65, this plan replaces your Boeing retiree medical coverage. It is not a supplement sitting on top of Medicare. It combines Parts A, B, and D, hospital, doctors, and drugs, into one plan.

What makes it different is that it is an Employer Group Waiver Plan. Because Boeing negotiates for its entire retiree population, the rates and benefits are significantly better than anything you could typically buy as an individual. One housekeeping note: Boeing offers a few plan variations by employment group. Many retirees, including most SPEEA-represented and non-union retirees in Washington state, are on Plan D. Your plan letter is in

your enrollment documents, so check which one applies to you. The figures in this article reflect the Plan D design.

What It Costs

There are two layers of cost, and the first one surprises people: everyone on Medicare pays the Part B premium directly to Medicare, no matter which path they choose, and that includes the Boeing plan. In 2026 the standard amount is $202.90 a month, and higher earners pay more. We come back to that below.

The second layer is the plan itself, and this is where the comparison gets interesting.

The Boeing Aetna Plan runs about $59 a month, and that includes drug coverage. The annual deductible is just $100, and it is waived for a long list of services. Most importantly, your maximum out-of-pocket is capped at $800 per person per year. A major surgery, a hospitalization, whatever happens, your share of covered medical costs stops at $800 for the year.

Original Medicare with a Medigap supplement buys nearly total coverage, but you pay for it monthly, often $200 to $300 or more per person once you add a drug plan.

Typical individual Medicare Advantage plans, the ones in the ads, often charge no premium at all. That sounds appealing until you look at the out-of-pocket maximums, which commonly run $5,000 to $8,000 or more per year. That is exactly why the Boeing plan's $800 cap matters. In our view, that cap is worth far more than a free premium.

One honest note: plan premiums can change from year to year. This plan recently moved from no premium to about $59, so expect some movement over time.

What You Pay When You Use Care

The standout numbers first. Doctor visits, primary care or specialist, are 5% coinsurance, and you never need a referral. Hospital stays and outpatient surgery are also 5%. Labs, preventive care, and home health are free. Skilled nursing coverage is notably strong, better than under Original Medicare. All of it counts toward the $800 annual cap.

Now the things to plan for. Emergency room and urgent care visits carry modest copays, with the full schedule in your plan documents. Routine dental and routine eyeglasses are not covered, so many retirees pair this plan with inexpensive standalone dental and vision coverage. Medicare Advantage acceptance is not universal, and some health systems and individual providers may not accept or bill a particular plan, so call your doctors and key

facilities and confirm they will bill this plan before your coverage starts. One fine-print item: the hearing aid benefit does not count toward the $800 cap.

On access, this is a PPO with a very broad network: any provider who accepts Medicare can generally see you, it travels well nationwide, and emergencies are covered worldwide.

Prescription Drug Coverage

Drug coverage is built into the plan, so there is no separate drug plan to buy. In fact, you should not buy one, and we explain why in the rules below. There is no drug deductible, generics are inexpensive, and brand-name drugs cost a share of the price.

There is also real catastrophic protection: once your out-of-pocket drug spending reaches $2,100 in a calendar year, you pay nothing for covered Part D drugs for the rest of that year. For anyone managing a chronic condition with expensive medications, that is the number that matters. Full drug details and participating pharmacies are at BoeingAetnaMedicare.com.

Who This Plan Fits, and Who Should Look Closer

In our experience, for most eligible Boeing retirees this plan is a compelling choice. It is especially attractive if you value certainty, because with the $800 cap a bad health year is far less likely to become a financial event. It is strong for anyone managing chronic conditions, it works well for travelers and snowbirds, and it is simple: one plan, one card, enrollment handled by Boeing.

A few situations deserve a closer look before you decide. If your care is anchored at a provider or health system that does not accept this plan, weigh that before you enroll. If your spouse has retiree coverage from their employer that is as good or better, compare the household's options side by side. If you want the unrestricted access of Original Medicare plus a Medigap supplement, you can have it, you will simply pay meaningfully more each month, often $200 to $300 more per person. And veterans with VA benefits or TRICARE For Life have coordination questions that deserve individual analysis.

Whichever way you are leaning, get advice before you decline or drop the Boeing plan. The rules below explain why.

How Enrollment Works

The good news is that Boeing does most of this for you. About 90 days before your 65th birthday, Boeing and Aetna send an enrollment packet with everything you need. If you are

already receiving Social Security, you are generally enrolled in Medicare Parts A and B automatically; confirm your enrollment when the packet arrives. If you are not yet taking Social Security, and many Boeing professionals delay it, you must enroll in Part B yourself at ssa.gov. Do not skip this step. Enrolling late can mean a gap in coverage and a permanent late-enrollment penalty.

Once Social Security issues your Medicare number, Boeing enrolls you in the Aetna plan; follow the packet instructions to confirm your coverage is in place. So the sequence is simple: watch for the packet, square away Part B, and Boeing handles the rest. If anything in the packet is unclear, call Aetna member services or talk with your advisor.

The Two Rules That Protect Your Coverage

Rule one: it is a one-way door. Once you leave the Boeing Aetna plan, you cannot get back on. There is no re-enrollment window and no exception process. And here is the trap most people do not see: under Medicare's rules, enrolling in any other Medicare Advantage plan, or even a standalone Part D drug plan, can automatically terminate your Boeing coverage. Every fall during the Annual Enrollment Period, retirees are bombarded with ads for zero-premium plans. Sign up for one, even by accident, even just for the drug coverage, and you may have permanently forfeited a far better plan.

Rule two matters for every couple with an age gap. Medicare is individual coverage, so you transition to the Aetna plan at your 65th birthday and your spouse transitions at theirs. Put plainly: for a younger spouse to keep Boeing's regular pre-65 retiree health coverage, you generally need to stay enrolled in this Medicare plan once you are 65. Dropping out does not just close the door on you. It can take away your spouse's coverage years before they are Medicare-eligible.

The takeaway: before you change anything about your Medicare coverage, anything at all, get advice from someone who knows this plan.

The Tax Side: IRMAA

Medicare charges higher earners an extra amount on top of the standard Part B premium. It is called IRMAA, the Income-Related Monthly Adjustment Amount, and it can also apply to Part D. It is paid to Medicare and is separate from your Aetna premium; the Boeing plan does not cause it or prevent it.

The planning point is timing: IRMAA is based on your tax return from two years ago, so your income at 63 typically sets your premium at 65, and a large one-time income event in your

early sixties can quietly raise your Medicare premiums later. One useful exception: if you have retired since that return was filed, Form SSA-44 lets you ask Social Security to base your premium on your lower current income instead. Managing the surcharge is its own topic; for Boeing professionals with pensions and 401(k)s, it is one of the most common planning conversations we have.

Your Medicare Transition Checklist

Put a reminder on your calendar 90 days before your 65th birthday, and read the Boeing packet when it arrives. If you are not yet on Social Security, enroll in Part B at ssa.gov. Call your doctors and confirm they accept the Boeing Aetna plan. Review your plan documents at BoeingAetnaMedicare.com to confirm your plan letter, and direct any packet questions to Aetna member services. Do not enroll in any other Medicare Advantage or Part D plan, no matter how good the ad sounds. And if your spouse is under 65, or your income is anywhere near the IRMAA thresholds, start the planning conversation a couple of years early, not the month you turn 65.

The Bottom Line

The Boeing Aetna Medicare Plan is among the strongest retiree health benefits we see: about $59 a month, an $800 annual cap, built-in drug coverage, and a nationwide network. In our view, for most eligible Boeing retirees it is a standout option. The keys are to get enrolled correctly, respect the one-way door, protect a younger spouse's coverage, and manage the tax side before you get there.

If you would like to talk through how this transition fits your own situation, your pension timing, your 401(k), your Roth conversion window, we would be happy to help. You can schedule a meeting with one of our Certified Financial Planners here: Calendar Link

stablerwealthmanagement.com | team@stablerwm.com | (425) 646-6327

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Benefit eligibility, plan provisions, premiums, and costs are determined by Boeing, Aetna, and the applicable plan documents, and can change. Figures reflect the 2026 plan year. Individual plan cost comparisons are general market estimates.

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