

[print](#)

Lower income might mean lower Medicare premiums

by MICHAEL LOWE Guest Columnist

01.13.10 - 09:00 am

If you have Medicare coverage and you pay a higher Part B premium due to your higher income, here's some news that may be comforting during these troubling economic times.

If you have experienced a significant reduction in your overall income, Social Security might be able to reduce the amount of your Medicare Part B premium as well.

The significant reduction in income can be as a result of a number of changes: marriage, divorce or annulment, death of a spouse, work reduction, work stoppage, reduction of income due to a loss of income-producing property, and loss or reduction of certain forms of pension income.

If any one of these events has happened to you, just provide Social Security evidence of the event and tell us how it has reduced your income. Evidence could be a death certificate, letter from your employer about your loss of work, or something of that nature. If you filed a federal income tax return for the year in question, we'll need to see your signed copy of the tax return. If your income will not change until the following year, you can give us an estimate of what you think your income will be.

Once you show us evidence of the event and provide proof or an estimate of your reduced income, Social Security will update the records and, if appropriate, adjust your Medicare Part B premium. You can request a new decision and ask that we use more accurate tax return information if:

You amended your tax return for the year we used to determine your premium and it changes the income we count;

You provide proof from IRS of an error in the tax return information we used to make our decision; or

Your tax filing status for the year we used to determine your premium was "married filing separately" and you did not live with your spouse at any time during that year.

If you wish to report a significant reduction in your income so we can adjust your Medicare Part B premium, visit the Social Security Web site at www.socialsecurity.gov/mediinfo.htm, or call us toll-free at 1-800-772-1213 (TTY 1-800-325-0778) or visit your local Social Security office.

To learn more about Medicare Part B coverage, visit www.medicare.gov or call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227; TTY 1-877-486-2048).

Michael Lowe is the Social Security district manager for Williamson

© williamsondailynews.com 2010