

How well is MEDICARE working for beneficiaries in

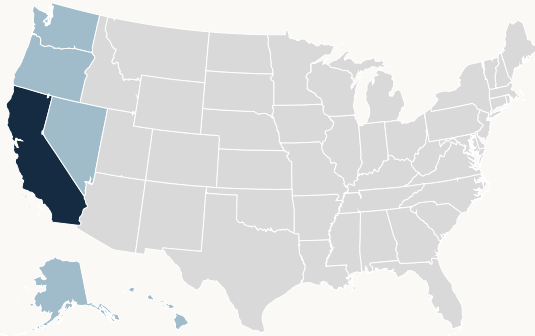
California

The
Commonwealth
Fund

Medicare is a federal program that should be uniform across the country — but the experience of beneficiaries varies depending on where they live. See the latest performance data for your state.

California ranks #31 overall.

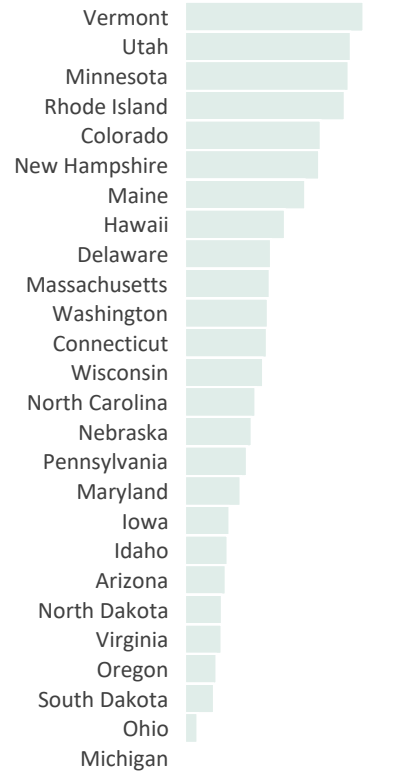
| | National rank | Rank among Western states |
|-------------------------|---------------|---------------------------|
| Overall | 31 of 51 | 4 of 6 |
| Access to Care | 48 | 5 |
| Quality of Care | 12 | 3 |
| Costs and Affordability | 10 | 3 |
| Population Health | 34 | 4 |



Note: West region includes AK, CA, HI, NV, OR, WA.

How California compares to all states

Better-than-average overall performance



Worse-than-average overall performance

The Medicare Population in California

| | California | United States ^a |
|---|------------|----------------------------|
| State population enrolled in Medicare | 17.8% | 19.8% |
| Population age 65 and older | 6,524,861 | 61,245,283 |
| Share of beneficiaries age 85 and older | 12.1% | 10.8% |
| Beneficiaries enrolled in Medicare Advantage | 51.2% | 50.4% |
| Median household income over age 65 | \$71,673 | \$59,648 |
| Older adults with income at or near federal poverty level | 20.0% | 18.9% |
| Beneficiaries receiving Low-Income Subsidy | 27.0% | 20.1% |

Table 1. Medicare Performance Indicators

| Dimension and indicator | Data year | State rate | U.S. average ^a | Best state rate | State rank |
|---|-------------------|------------|---------------------------|-----------------|------------|
| Access to Care | | | | | |
| 2025 Scorecard | | | | | |
| Adults age 65 and older who had a routine checkup in the past two years | 2024 | 95.2% | 97.1% | 99.2% | 44 |
| Medicare Advantage plans within a state that require prior authorization for specialist doctor visits or preventive care | 2025 | 62.2% | 48.3% | 8.3% | 45 |
| Adults age 65 and older who did not have at least one person they think of as their personal health care provider | 2024 | 6.5% | 4.0% | 1.9% | 45 |
| Adults age 65 and older without a dental visit in the past year | 2024 | 27.2% | 28.2% | 19.1% | 24 |
| Medicare beneficiaries with a home health referral who received home health services within seven days of hospital discharge | 2022 | 45.5% | 51.5% | 62.9% | 45 |
| Quality of Care | | | | | |
| 2025 Scorecard | | | | | |
| Medicare beneficiaries age 65 and older who received at least one drug that should be avoided in the elderly | 2023 | 21.9% | 21.2% | 17.4% | 21 |
| Hospital admissions for ambulatory care—sensitive conditions among Medicare beneficiaries, per 1,000 beneficiaries | 2023 | 23.8 | 26.4 | 13.9 | 21 |
| Potentially avoidable emergency department visits, Medicare beneficiaries age 65 and older, per 1,000 beneficiaries | 2023 | 146.2 | 155.2 | 126.4 | 16 |
| 30-day hospital readmissions among Medicare beneficiaries, per 1,000 beneficiaries | 2023 | 36.7 | 37.5 | 18.6 | 27 |
| Risk-adjusted 30-day mortality among Medicare beneficiaries age 65 and older hospitalized for heart attack, heart failure, pneumonia, or stroke | 07/2020 - 06/2023 | 13.6% | 14.4% | 12.3% | 4 |
| Short-stay nursing home residents readmitted within 30 days of hospital discharge to nursing home | 10/2023 - 09/2024 | 24.3% | 25.0% | 13.0% | 29 |
| Patient safety and adverse hospital events composite measure (PSI-90; lower is better) | 07/2021 - 06/2023 | 32 | 36 | 16 | 17 |
| Adults age 65 and older with an injurious fall in the past year | 2023 | 33.3% | 38.7% | 28.8% | 8 |
| Long-stay nursing home residents who received an antipsychotic medication | 01/2024 - 12/2024 | 10.6% | 14.6% | 7.5% | 6 |
| Long-stay nursing home residents with pressure sores | 01/2024 - 12/2024 | 5.2% | 5.5% | 3.9% | 18 |
| Adults age 65 and older who have ever received a pneumonia vaccine | 2024 | 67.4% | 70.3% | 76.4% | 43 |
| Adults age 65 and older who received a flu vaccine in the past year | 2024 | 65.5% | 62.8% | 73.1% | 16 |
| Adults age 65 and older who received a COVID vaccine between August 2024 and March 2025 | 08/2024 - 03/2025 | 40.7% | 43.4% | 54.7% | 12 |

Table 1. Medicare Performance Indicators (cont.)

| Dimension and indicator | Data year | State rate | U.S. average ^a | Best state rate | State rank |
|---|-----------|------------|---------------------------|-----------------|------------|
| Costs and Affordability | | | | | |
| 2025 Scorecard | | | | | |
| Adults age 65 and older who went without care because of cost in the past year | 2024 | 4.0% | 3.8% | 1.6% | 34 |
| Medicare beneficiaries average out-of-pocket spending on Part D drugs | 2023 | \$275 | \$386 | \$216 | 4 |
| Total share of Part D drug costs paid by the Medicare beneficiary | 2023 | 5.6% | 7.4% | 3.0% | 4 |
| Total Medicare (Parts A & B) reimbursements per enrollee | 2023 | \$12,125 | \$11,886 | \$8,203 | 39 |
| Primary care spending as share of total Medicare spending among beneficiaries age 65 and older | 2023 | 4.9% | 5.7% | 10.9% | 30 |
| Population Health | | | | | |
| 2025 Scorecard | | | | | |
| Adults age 65 and older who rated their health as fair or poor | 2024 | 26.0% | 25.0% | 15.9% | 39 |
| Medicare beneficiaries diagnosed with three or more chronic conditions | 2023 | 58% | 62% | 45% | 17 |
| Adults age 65 and older reporting 14 or more poor physical health days per month | 2024 | 17.3% | 17.5% | 13.6% | 25 |
| Adults age 65 and older reporting 14 or more poor mental health days per month | 2024 | 9.0% | 8.7% | 6.0% | 38 |
| Adults age 65 and older who reported difficulty with dressing, running errands alone, walking, or concentrating | 2024 | 33.1% | 32.6% | 22.1% | 32 |
| Average number of years of additional life expectancy at age 65 | 2021 | 19.3 | 18.4 | 20.6 | 8 |
| Adults age 65 and older reporting loneliness or lack of emotional support | 2022 | 38.5% | 34.5% | 28.7% | 36 |
| Adults age 60 and older who experienced food insecurity within the past year | 2023 | 8.8% | 9.2% | 3.8% | 33 |

Notes: (a) National (U.S.) estimates include all 50 states and D.C. and do not include territories.