

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

September 11, 2024

Tift Regional Medical Center/Southwell Medical will not renew its in-network participation agreement with United Healthcare’s Medicare Advantage plan

The network participation agreement between Tift Regional Medical Center/Southwell Medical (collectively “TRMC”) and United Healthcare Medicare Advantage (“UHCMA”) will expire on **October 31, 2024** and will not be renewed. Below is a list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ).

Does this affect traditional Medicare or United Healthcare’s commercial plans?

No.

Why is TRMC not renewing the in-network participation agreement with UHCMA?

TRMC is not able to renew the agreement because payments from UHCMA are delayed in many cases and do not appropriately cover the true cost of care. We rely on fair, timely payments to provide the high-quality services expected by our patients and the community. Basically, UHCMA is paying what they want to pay and when they want to pay without regard to what is in the agreement.

After multiple extensions of the current contract and over two years of unresolved disputes with UHCMA, the payment issues with UHCMA remain unresolved.

Do any other hospital systems not have an in-network agreement with UHCMA?

TRMC is not alone—some of the other hospital systems within our region do not have a network participation agreement with UHCMA for the same reasons as TRMC.

Can I transfer to another Medicare Advantage plan that has an in-network participation agreement?

Yes. TRMC is notifying the public now because the open enrollment period for Medicare begins on October 15, 2024 and ends on December 7, 2024. The open enrollment period is an opportunity for UHCMA enrollees to transfer to a Medicare Advantage plan that has a network participation agreement with TRMC.

Which Medicare Advantage programs have a network participation agreement with TRMC?

Aetna, Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield, Clear Spring Health, Clover Health, Humana, Pruitt Health Premier, and WellCare.

What are some other options for patients affected by this change?

- Visit medicare.gov to search for available plans based on your zip code and other criteria.
- Call 1-800-MEDICARE for guidance from a representative with the federal Medicare operation.
- Contact the Georgia State Health Insurance Assistance Program at 866-552-4464, option 4, for free assistance with reviewing Medicare enrollment options.
- Call the phone number on the back of your insurance card for more information.

Will TRMC be holding any community forums regarding this issue?

Yes. TRMC will schedule community forums soon to provide assistance to patients and to answer any questions. More information will follow.

Will TRMC continue to provide services to UHCMA enrollees regardless of in-network status?

Absolutely. TRMC will continue to provide services to UHCMA enrollees as an out of network provider.

If I remain under the UHCMA plan, will there be an increase in my out-of-pocket expenses?

In many cases, deductibles for patients under an out-of-network Medicare Advantage plan are the same as an in-network plan.

Does this affect TRMC's physician clinics?

As of right now, the answer is no. We hope that all of our physician clinics, including our rural health clinics, will be able to continue participation in the United Medicare Advantage program.

Who can I call for any questions or further assistance?

For further assistance, patients can call a special TRMC Patient Financial Services hotline at **229-353-7072**.

We understand that changes like this may cause concern or inconvenience, and we are committed to assisting our patients throughout this transition. Thank you for your continued trust in TRMC as your healthcare provider.

