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Blue Medicare Advantage PPO | Avera available during annual enrollment period

Wellmark to offer new Medicare Advantage plan

SIOUX FALLS, South Dakota. (Aug. 11, 2022) — Wellmark Advantage Health Plan and Avera Health announce today a new offering for Medicare-eligible South Dakotans who are seeking a more comprehensive option come this fall. Blue Medicare Advantage PPO | Avera will be offered in several counties, pending approval from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS).

“Bringing these two trusted organizations together means we can offer South Dakotans an innovative, high-value health plan option with the coverage and service you expect from Wellmark and Avera,” said Briggs Hamor, Wellmark Advantage Health Plan president.

“Avera and Wellmark are both trusted names in health care. Avera and Wellmark have shared goals to impact our communities for the better, so we’re excited to work together to provide this new offering for Medicare-age residents,” said Julie Lauth, Chief Financial Officer for Avera Health.

Medicare Advantage is an all-in-one health plan that combines Medicare Part A and Medicare Part B coverage with additional, more robust benefits that may include prescription drug coverage, preventive care, dental, vision, hearing and other services like meal services and fitness memberships.

“Avera offers high-quality, patient-centered care across the state,” said David Basel, MD, Vice President of Clinical Quality for Avera Medical Group. “Through this collaboration, many Medicare-eligible South Dakotans will benefit from the personalized care Avera offers as part of Wellmark’s network.”

Once approved, Blue Medicare Advantage PPO | Avera plan will be available in 15 counties starting with the Annual Enrollment Period, Oct. 15 through Dec. 7, 2022 for coverage starting on Jan. 1, 2023. Individuals who newly qualify for Medicare are also able to purchase this plan throughout 2023.

“We are confident Blue Medicare Advantage PPO | Avera will provide consumers with a solution that meets their health and budget needs,” said Jennifer Mentele, president of Wellmark of South Dakota and vice president of sales and retention for Wellmark. “We look forward to sharing more details shortly pending final approval by CMS.”

To learn more details about Blue Medicare Advantage PPO | Avera as they are released, visit Wellmark.com. Other providers are available in Wellmark’s network.

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About Wellmark Advantage Health Plan

Wellmark Advantage Health Plan is a PPO plan with a Medicare contract. Enrollment in Wellmark Advantage Health Plan depends on contract renewal. Wellmark Advantage Health Plan is a health insurance company serving consumers in Iowa and South Dakota. The company is an affiliate of Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield. Wellmark Advantage Health Plan, Inc. is an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.

About Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield

Wellmark, Inc. (Wellmark.com) does business as Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Iowa. Wellmark and its subsidiaries and affiliated companies, including Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield of South Dakota, Wellmark Health Plan of Iowa, Inc. and Wellmark Value Health Plan, Inc., insure or pay health benefit claims for more than 2 million members in Iowa and South Dakota. Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Iowa, Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield of South Dakota, Wellmark Health Plan of Iowa, Inc. and Wellmark Value Health Plan, Inc. are independent licensees of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.

About Avera

The Avera Health system serves 100 communities in a five-state region. Our ministry, our people and our value distinguish Avera. We carry on the health care legacy of the Benedictine and Presentation Sisters, delivering care in an environment guided by our values of compassion, hospitality and stewardship. For more information about Avera, visit our website at Avera.org.

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