



Removal of the “Affordable Care Act & Medicare” webpage and corresponding links from the Medicare website

Access Assessment Report
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[See WIP’s Report Production Protocol for details of our review process](#)

Classification of Web content alterations and changes in access to Web resources:

Classification	Changed in this report?
1. Altering or removing text and non-text content	Yes
2. Altering or removing links	Yes
3. Moving an entire webpage or collection of webpages or establishing redirects	Yes
4. Altering or removing an entire pertinent section of a webpage or collection of webpages	Yes
5. Removing an entire webpage or document	Yes
6. Overhauling or removing an entire website	
7. Altering or removing search engines and open data platforms	
8. Altering, removing, or deleting datasets	

The Sunlight Foundation’s Web Integrity Project does not intend to assess any government agency’s intentions in presenting the changes to webpages or other Web content that appear in this report.

The format of this report and the methodology used to generate it are based on those developed during 2017 by the [Environmental Data & Governance Initiative’s Website Monitoring Team](#), which our co-founders helped lead.

Removal of the “Affordable Care Act & Medicare” webpage and corresponding links from the Medicare website

Overview

In December 2017, a page titled “The Affordable Care Act & Medicare” was removed from the Medicare website. A link that led to this page and descriptive text about the Affordable Care Act were also removed from the website’s “About Us” page. Content on the removed page included information and links related to Medicare coverage being protected under the health care law, preventive services covered under Medicare, discounts on brand-name prescription drugs, and initiatives that support care coordination between providers. The page previously linked to healthcare.gov, which is the federal health insurance marketplace, and to another webpage on the Medicare domain called “Medicare & the Marketplace,” which is no longer linked from the “About Us” portion of the Medicare website.

Background

Agency details: Medicare is a federal health insurance program run by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), an agency within the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The insurance program has been administered since 1966, and provides coverage for over [55 million people](#). According to the [Medicare website](#), Medicare is for people who are 65 or older, younger people with disabilities, and people with end-stage renal disease.

Communications about changes: The office has not proactively communicated about or explained the changes described within this report.

Known archives: A public Web archive for the [medicare.gov](#) domain, collected by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), can be found at https://wayback.archive-it.org/2650/*/https://www.medicare.gov. The Medicare website links to these archives in the footer of webpages throughout the domain.

Description of Most Notable Changes

1. “[The Affordable Care Act & Medicare](#)” page at the URL <https://www.medicare.gov/about-us/affordable-care-act/affordable-care-act.html> was removed from the Medicare website ([Webpage 2](#)).
 - a. The page contained information, and several links to other informational pages throughout the Medicare domain, about how Medicare coverage relates to the Health Insurance Marketplace created by the Affordable Care Act.
 - b. The URL for this page currently leads to an “Error: Page Not Found” notice ([January 8, 2018](#)¹).
2. A link on Medicare’s “About Us” page ([Webpage 1](#)) which led to the removed “The Affordable Care Act & Medicare” page, was removed along with descriptive text about

¹The January 8, 2018 archived version of this removed page, cited throughout this report, displays an “Access Denied” notice.

how the Affordable Care Act (ACA) affects people covered by Medicare (Compare versions from [December 18](#) and [December 25, 2017](#)).

3. The removed “The Affordable Care Act & Medicare” page had a link to the “[Medicare & the Marketplace](#)” page, which has information about how Medicare relates to the Marketplace created by the ACA. The “Medicare & the Marketplace” page is no longer linked from the “About Us” portion of the Medicare website ([Webpage 3](#)).
4. Links and references to “The Affordable Care Act & Medicare” page were removed from the “Medicare & the Marketplace” page, including from the descriptive text, the sidebar, and the [breadcrumb trail](#)² (compare versions from [December 18, 2017](#) and [January 1, 2018](#)).

² **Note:** Wikipedia defines the breadcrumb trail as the part of a webpage that “tracks and displays each page viewed by a visitor of a website, either in the order the pages were viewed, or in other definitions, displaying a hierarchy of the current page in relation to the website's structure. Breadcrumbs are typically placed in horizontal form under the masthead or navigation of a website.”

Table of Contents

Report Section	Webpage Title	URL	Page Status
Webpage 1	About Us	www.medicare.gov/about-us/about-medicare.html	Live, altered
Webpage 2	Affordable Care Act & Medicare	www.medicare.gov/about-us/affordable-care-act/affordable-care-act.html	Removed
Webpage 3	Medicare & the Marketplace	www.medicare.gov/about-us/affordable-care-act/medicare-and-the-marketplace.html	Live, altered

Detailed Description of Changes in Access and Content

Note: Throughout the entire report, links to the Internet Archive's Wayback Machine's (IAWM) versions of corresponding pages are provided for reference. IAWM displays time in GMT. WIP's website monitoring software is used to find narrower time windows for changes as much as possible. In those instances, the IAWM version of the corresponding page from the nearest date is provided.

Webpage 1: About Us

- URL: www.medicare.gov/about-us/about-medicare.html
- Changes occurred between [December 11, 2017](#) and [April 16, 2018](#).
Note: The large date range is because this page was changed multiple times throughout this period, not all at once. See [Table 1](#) below for dates of specific changes.
- The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services Archive: a previous version of this page from [December 11, 2017](#) is available in the archive.

Webpage 1 Details:

Changes to content on the "About Us" page

1. The following content was changed between [December 11, 2017](#) and December 16, 2017 (nearest IAWM version from [December 18, 2017](#)) (Screenshot not shown)
 - a. **Altered** link URL of "Nondiscrimination" link **from** <https://www.medicare.gov/about-us/nondiscrimination/nondiscrimination-notice.html> **to** <https://www.medicare.gov/about-us/nondiscrimination/accessibility-nondiscrimination.html>.
2. The following content was changed between [December 18, 2017](#) and December 22, 2017 (nearest IAWM version from [December 25, 2017](#)) ([Screenshot 1.1](#)):
 - a. **Removed** link "The Affordable Care Act & Medicare" with link URL <https://www.medicare.gov/about-us/affordable-care-act/affordable-care-act.html>. The link URL corresponds to a removed page ([Webpage 2](#)).
 - i. **Removed** descriptive text below this link: "Learn about how the health care law (Affordable Care Act or ACA) affects people with Medicare. If you have Medicare, you don't need to change to a Marketplace plan, and you get more preventive services without paying the Medicare Part B coinsurance or deductible. You can save money on brand name drugs (Medicare Part D), and your doctor may get more resources to support care coordination. You can also be assured that Medicare funding will be available to help you save on premiums and coinsurance."
 - b. **Altered** link text **from** "Nondiscrimination" **to** "Accessibility & Nondiscrimination."
 - i. **Altered** descriptive text below this link **from**: "Learn about the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services' (CMS) nondiscrimination policy, and how

to file a complaint if you believe you've been subjected to discrimination in a CMS program or activity.”

To: “Learn about the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services' (CMS) accessibility and nondiscrimination policies, and how to file a complaint if you believe you've been subjected to discrimination in a CMS program or activity. CMS programs, benefits, services, facilities, information, and technology meet Sections 504 and 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.”

3. The following content was changed between [February 5, 2018](#) and February 8, 2018 (IAWM version from [February 12, 2018](#)) (Screenshot not shown; compare Screenshots [1.1](#) and [1.2](#)).
 - a. **Altered** descriptive text below the link for “Plain writing” **from:** “CMS’ progress in Plain Writing Act compliance.”

To: “Information about CMS’s efforts to write content so you can understand.”
4. The following content was changed between April 11, 2018 (nearest IAWM version from [April 9, 2018](#)) and [April 16, 2018](#) ([Screenshot 1.2](#)):
 - a. **Added** the link “Get involved with Medicare” with link URL <https://www.medicare.gov/about-us/get-involved-with-medicare/get-involved-with-medicare.html>
 - i. **Added** descriptive text below this link: “Get involved with Medicare to help us define, design, and deliver care. Join a Technical Expert Panel, comment on proposed rules, and follow Medicare news.”

Changes in access to content linked from the “About Us” page

5. Access to information linked from Medicare’s “About Us” page was changed between [December 18, 2017](#) and [April 16, 2018](#). See [Table 1](#) below for full assessment of access to pages corresponding to link on the “About Us” page.

Table 1: Links listed on the “About Us” page and corresponding status of linked pages.

The following table details the links that appeared on the “About Us” page between [December 18, 2017](#) and [April 16, 2018](#) (including their text and URLs) in both the main body of the text and the sidebar. It indicates the date range any links were removed, added, or altered; the status of their corresponding URLs and webpages; and the date range in which any corresponding webpages were removed or content on those pages was changed. It also notes if content that was on the removed pages can be found on other pages on the Medicare website. When WIP’s website monitoring software is able to provide a narrower time window for the change, IAWM versions are linked in parentheses below.

Note: *This report does not detail changes to content on all pages listed in this table.*

Index	Link Text	Link URL	Is link removed, added, altered, or unchanged?	Link change/addition date range	Page status	Is content elsewhere on Medicare site?	Page change or removal date range
1	How is Medicare funded?	https://www.medicare.gov/about-us/how-med	Unchanged	—	Live, altered	—	4/9/18-4/12/18

		icare-is-funded/medicare-funding.html					
2	The Affordable Care Act & Medicare	https://www.medicare.gov/about-us/affordable-care-act/affordable-care-act.html	Removed	12/18/17 - 12/22/17 (see 12/25/17)	Page removed	No	12/18/17 - 12/24/17 (see 1/8/18)
3	Get involved with Medicare	https://www.medicare.gov/about-us/get-involved-with-medicare/get-involved-with-medicare.html	Added	4/11/18 (see 4/9/18) - 4/16/18	Live	—	No before version- 4/16/18
4	Contact Medicare	https://www.medicare.gov/forms-help-and-resources/contact/contact-medicare.html	Unchanged	—	Live, altered	—	3/12/18 - 3/24/18 (see 3/26/18)
5	Plain Writing	https://www.medicare.gov/about-us/plain-writing/plain-writing.html	Unchanged	—	Live, altered	—	2/12/18 - 4/6/18 (see 4/9/18)
6	Information in other languages	https://www.medicare.gov/about-us/other-languages/information-in-other-languages.html	Unchanged	—	Live	—	—
7	Nondiscrimination <i>Changed to:</i> Accessibility & Nondiscrimination	https://www.medicare.gov/about-us/nondiscrimination/nondiscrimination-notice.html *	Altered*	12/11/17 - 12/22/17 (see 12/25/17)*	Live, altered	URL redirects to page with same and additional content	12/18/17 - 12/25/17

*The link URL changed from <https://www.medicare.gov/about-us/nondiscrimination/nondiscrimination-notice.html> to <https://www.medicare.gov/about-us/nondiscrimination/accessibility-nondiscrimination.html> between [December 11, 2017](#) and [December 16, 2017](#) (nearest IAWM version from [December 18, 2017](#)). The link text was changed to “Accessibility & Nondiscrimination” between [December 18, 2017](#) and [December 22, 2017](#) (nearest IAWM version from [December 25, 2017](#)) ([Screenshot 1.1](#)).

Screenshot 1.1: A side-by-side of the “About Us” page on **December 16, 2017** and **December 22, 2017** showing all text and links removed and added between these dates. Red highlights indicate removed content and green highlights indicate added content. See the previous version of the page from [December 18, 2017](#) and the updated version from [December 25, 2017](#) on the IAWM.

Before: December 16, 2017

After: December 22, 2017

Screenshot 1.2: The “About Us” page, showing all text and links removed and added between **April 11, 2018** and **April 18, 2018**. Red highlights indicate removed content and green highlights indicate added content. See the previous version of the page from [April 9, 2018](#) and the updated version from [April 16, 2018](#) on the IAWM.

Before: April 11, 2018

After: April 18, 2018

Español | A A A | Print About Us | Glossary | CMS.gov | MyMedicare.gov Login

Medicare.gov
The Official U.S. Government Site for Medicare

type search term here

[Sign Up / Change Plans](#)
[Your Medicare Costs](#)
[What Medicare Covers](#)
[Drug Coverage \(Part D\)](#)
[Supplements & Other Insurance](#)
[Claims & Appeals](#)
[Manage Your Health](#)
[Forms, Help, & Resources](#)

Home → About Us Share

About Us

How is Medicare funded?

Medicare is funded through the Hospital Insurance Trust Fund and the Supplementary Medical Insurance Trust ~~Fund Fund~~.

Get involved with Medicare

Get involved with Medicare to help us define, design, and deliver care. Join a Technical Expert Panel, comment on proposed rules, and follow Medicare news.

Contact Medicare

How to contact the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) by phone, TTY, or mail.

Plain writing

Information about CMS's efforts to write content so you can understand.

Information in other languages

Languages include American Sign Language, Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean, Russian, Tagalog, French, Haitian Creole, Italian, Polish, Hindi, Cambodian, Hmong, Laotian, Samoan, Tongan.

Accessibility & Nondiscrimination Notice

Learn about the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services' (CMS) accessibility and nondiscrimination policies. Learn how to file a complaint if you believe you've been subjected to discrimination in a CMS program or activity. CMS programs, benefits, services, facilities, information, and technology meet Sections 504 and 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Find someone to talk to

Select your state... ▼

Is my test, item, or service covered?

type your test, item, or service here

Webpage 2: The Affordable Care Act & Medicare

- URL: www.medicare.gov/about-us/affordable-care-act/affordable-care-act.html
- Page was removed between **December 18, 2017** and **December 24, 2017** according to a combination of WIP's monitoring software and IAWM.
 - See IAWM snapshot of previous version from [December 18, 2017](#) and removed page from [January 8, 2018](#).
- The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services Archive: previous version of this page from [December 18, 2017](#) is available in the archive.

Webpage 2 Details:

Removed content and changes in access to content linked from the “The Affordable Care Act & Medicare” page

1. The “The Affordable Care Act & Medicare” page was removed between December 18, 2017 and December 24, 2017.
2. The page's URL <https://www.medicare.gov/about-us/affordable-care-act/affordable-care-act.html> leads to an “Error: Page Note Found” notice (**Note:** *IAWM snapshot captures an “Access Denied” page, see: [January 8, 2018](#)*).
3. A link corresponding to this page was previously listed on Medicare's “About Us” page ([Table 1](#), [Webpage 1](#)).
4. The page listed the “Top 5 things to know about the health care law if you have Medicare” ([Screenshot 2.1](#)). This included the following text:

“1. Your Medicare coverage is protected.

Medicare isn't part of the Health Insurance Marketplace established by the health care law, so you don't have to replace your Medicare coverage with Marketplace coverage. No matter how you get Medicare, whether through Original Medicare or a Medicare Advantage Plan, you'll still have the same benefits and security you have now.

You don't need to do anything with the [Marketplace](#) during Open Enrollment.

2. You get more preventive services, for less. Medicare now covers certain [preventive services](#), like [mammograms](#) or [colonoscopies](#), without charging you for the Part B coinsurance or deductible. You also can get a [free yearly “Wellness” visit](#).

3. You can save money on brand-name drugs. If you're in the donut hole, you'll also get a 60% discount (65% in 2018) when buying Part D-covered brand-name prescription drugs. The discount is applied automatically at the counter of your pharmacy—you don't have to do anything to get it. [The donut hole will be closed completely by 2020](#).

4. Your doctor gets more support. With new initiatives to support [care coordination](#), your doctor may get additional resources to make sure that your treatments are consistent.

5. The health care law ensures the protection of Medicare for years to come. The life of the Medicare Trust fund will be extended to at least 2029—a 12-year extension due to reductions in waste, fraud and abuse, and Medicare costs, which will provide you with future savings on your premiums and coinsurance.”

5. All of the links found above in the “Top 5 things to know about the health care law if you have Medicare” currently lead to live pages.
6. The page contained a section titled “Related Resources” that contained the URL for [HealthCare.gov](#), the website for the federal health insurance marketplace.
7. The page included interactive elements titled “Find someone to talk to” and “Is your test, item, or service covered?”

Screenshot 2.1: The [December 18, 2017](#) version of the “Affordable Care Act & Medicare” page from the Internet Archive’s Wayback Machine.

INTERNET ARCHIVE
WayBackMachine

https://www.medicare.gov/about-us/affordable-care-act/affordable-care-act.html Go NOV DEC JAN
903 captures
3 Sep 2012 - 14 May 2018 18 2016 2017 2018

Medicare.gov

The Official U.S. Government Site for Medicare

- Sign Up / Change Plans
- Your Medicare Costs
- What Medicare Covers
- Drug Coverage (Part D)
- Supplements & Other Insurance
- Claims & Appeals
- Manage Your Health
- Forms, Help, & Resources

Home → About Us → The Affordable Care Act & Medicare Share

The Affordable Care Act & Medicare

How Medicare is funded

The Affordable Care Act & Medicare

Contact Medicare

Plain writing

Information in other languages

Nondiscrimination

Accessibility

Top 5 things to know about the health care law if you have Medicare:

- 1. Your Medicare coverage is protected.**
Medicare isn't part of the Health Insurance Marketplace established by the health care law, so you don't have to replace your Medicare coverage with Marketplace coverage. No matter how you get Medicare, whether through Original Medicare or a Medicare Advantage Plan, you'll still have the same benefits and security you have now.
You don't need to do anything with the [Marketplace](#) during Open Enrollment.
- 2. You get more preventive services, for less.** Medicare now covers certain [preventive services](#), like [mammograms](#) or [colonoscopies](#), without charging you for the Part B coinsurance or deductible. You also can get a [free yearly "Wellness" visit](#).
- 3. You can save money on brand-name drugs.** If you're in the donut hole, you'll also get a 60% discount (65% in 2018) when buying Part D-covered brand-name prescription drugs. The discount is applied automatically at the counter of your pharmacy—you don't have to do anything to get it. [The donut hole will be closed completely by 2020](#).
- 4. Your doctor gets more support.** With new initiatives to support [care coordination](#), your doctor may get additional resources to make sure that your treatments are consistent.
- 5. The health care law ensures the protection of Medicare for years to come.** The life of the Medicare Trust fund will be extended to at least 2029—a 12-year extension due to reductions in waste, fraud and abuse, and Medicare costs, which will provide you with future savings on your premiums and coinsurance.

Related Resources

- HealthCare.gov

Find someone to talk to

Select your state... ▼

Go

Is your test, item, or service covered?

type your test, item, or service here

Go

Webpage 3: Medicare & the Marketplace

- URL:
www.medicare.gov/about-us/affordable-care-act/medicare-and-the-marketplace.html
- Changes occurred between **December 20, 2017** and **January 1, 2018** according to a combination of WIP's monitoring software and IAWM.
 - See IAWM snapshot of previous version from [December 18, 2017](#) and current version from [January 1, 2018](#)
- The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services Archive: previous version of this page from [December 18, 2017](#) is available in the archive.
- This page is no longer linked from anywhere on the "medicare.gov/about-us/" subdomain.

Webpage 3 Details:

Changes to content on the "Medicare & the Marketplace" page

1. The following content on Medicare's "About Us" page was changed between December 20, 2017 and January 1, 2018:
 - a. **Removed** breadcrumb³ path "→ The Affordable Care Act & Medicare"
 - i. The page's breadcrumb trail previously displayed as "[Home](#) → [About Us](#) → The Affordable Care Act and Medicare," which included links to Medicare's "Home" and "About Us" pages ([December 18, 2017](#)).
 - ii. The breadcrumb trail for this page is now displayed as "[Home](#) → About Us," which included a link to Medicare's "Home" page ([January 1, 2018](#)).
 - b. **Altered** text box labelled "Note." Updated date from "2016" to "2017" in the following sentences:
 - i. **From** "Important tax information for 2016" **to** "Important tax information for 2017."
 - ii. **From** "If you had Medicare for all of 2016" **to** "If you had Medicare for all of 2017."
 - c. **Removed** text and link "Learn about the [5 ways the health care law affects people with Medicare](#)." The link URL <https://www.medicare.gov/about-us/affordable-care-act/affordable-care-act.html> led to the "Affordable Care Act & Medicare" page, which is currently removed ([Webpage 2](#)).
 - d. Changes to sidebar are the same as detailed in [Webpage 1](#) between December 20, 2017 and January 1, 2018.

³ **Note:** Wikipedia defines the breadcrumb trail as the part of a webpage that "tracks and displays each page viewed by a visitor of a website, either in the order the pages were viewed, or in other definitions, displaying a hierarchy of the current page in relation to the website's structure. Breadcrumbs are typically placed in horizontal form under the masthead or navigation of a website."

Note: *Formatting of the sidebar on the “Medicare & the Marketplace” page was altered. The link “The Affordable Care Act & Medicare” was previously bolded and differentiated by a dark blue background, and now none of the links in the sidebar are differentiated in this way.*

2. **Unchanged content:** The “Medicare & the Marketplace” page contains information for Medicare recipients on filling out income tax forms, the distinction between Medicare’s Open Enrollment and the Marketplace, whether having just Medicare Part A or Medicare Part B meets the health insurance requirement, and fraudulent activities with regards to the Marketplace. It also has a link with the text “What if I already have a Marketplace plan, and I will be 65 soon?”

Changes in access to the “Medicare & the Marketplace” page

3. The removed “[The Affordable Care Act & Medicare](#)” page ([Webpage 2](#)) previously contained a link leading to the “Medicare & the Marketplace” page.
4. The URL path of the “Medicare & the Marketplace” page currently includes “/about-us/affordable-care-act/.”
5. The removal of the “The Affordable Care Act & Medicare” page altered the page’s [breadcrumb trail](#) between December 26, 2017 and January 1, 2018 as noted above ([Screenshot 3.1](#)).
6. A link to this page is not listed on Medicare’s “[About Us](#)” page or any other page on the www.medicare.gov/about-us/ subdomain (see [Table 1](#) and pages linked from the pages listed in Table 1).
7. This page can still be accessed through Google searches that include “Medicare and the Marketplace” and “Medicare and the Affordable Care Act” (or “Medicare and the ACA”).

Screenshot 3.1: A side-by-side comparison of the “Medicare & the Marketplace” page, showing all text and links removed and added between **December 20, 2017** and **January 2, 2018**. Red highlights indicate removed text and green highlights indicate added links. See the previous version of the page from [December 18, 2017](#) and the updated version from [January 1, 2018](#) on the IAWM.

Before: December 20, 2017

After: January 2, 2018