Why should I enroll into Medicare once I become eligible if I already have a plan I purchased through the Marketplaces?

There are several reasons it is not a good idea to take a Qualified Health Plan (QHP) that you purchased through the Marketplaces over Medicare:

1. It is illegal for someone to sell you a QHP if you have Medicare.
2. You are generally not eligible for any tax credits to help pay for QHP premiums, and full QHP premiums are more costly than your Medicare, Medigap or Part D premiums.
3. You will likely have gaps in coverage and have to pay premium penalties if you enroll in Medicare late.
4. There is no guarantee that a QHP will pay for your health costs if you drop Medicare to take a QHP. In many cases, when someone is eligible for Medicare but does not have it, the insurance they do have can refuse to cover most if not all of their health care costs. This means that you may have little or no coverage if you rely on a QHP for health coverage.

I have QHP coverage that I bought through the Marketplace. What should I do when I qualify for Medicare?

Here are the steps you should take when you become eligible for Medicare:

1. You need to enroll in Medicare Part B as soon as you are eligible.
2. You should drop your QHP coverage. Notify your plan at least 14 days before you want your coverage to end.
3. After you enroll in Medicare, you should consider how you will get your Medicare coverage. You have a choice between Original Medicare and a Medicare Advantage plan.

Be aware that if you take Medicare late, you will likely pay higher Medicare premiums for the rest of your life. You will also have to wait for your Medicare coverage to start.

I want to keep my QHP coverage after enroll into Medicare, can I do that?

Yes. But is generally not a good idea to do so.

You will typically not qualify for any tax credits to pay for your QHP premium, which will make it much more expensive after you qualify for Medicare. There is also no guarantee that your QHP will pay anything toward your health or drug claims after Medicare pays, so you may be paying a high premium for little to no coverage.
Instead, look into your Medicare choices like Original Medicare with a stand-alone Part D plan and a Medigap policy or a Medicare Advantage plan. These Medicare coverage options will typically be more comprehensive and have lower costs than keeping your QHP.

**Will my QHP plan let me know that I should transition to Medicare when I become eligible?**

Your QHP may not let you know when you become eligible for Medicare. You should know to enroll in Medicare during your Initial Enrollment Period (IEP). The IEP is the seven month period that includes the three months before your 65th birthday month (or 25th month of receiving SSDI), the month you turn 65 (or 25th month of SSDI) and the three months after your 65th birthday (25th month of SSDI). If you are enrolling into Medicare from a QHP, you should also enroll into a Medicare prescription drug (Part D) plan during your initial enrollment period.

**Are these rules different for people who are insured by a SHOP plan?**

Yes, you may not necessarily have to enroll into Medicare if you have coverage through the SHOP. SHOP stand for Small Business Health Options Program, which is a way small business owners to affordably insure their employees. People who are over 65 and insured by a current employer (or your spouse’s current employer) 20 or more employees can delay Medicare enrollment until they (or their spouse retires). Please see the Medicare & the SHOP Q&A for more information on these rules.