

Premera Blue Cross – Individual plans

This information is supplied by the company. It has not been verified by the Office of the Insurance Commissioner and may change.

Overview

Requested rate change:	18.79% <i>average*</i>
Requested effective date:	Jan. 1, 2026
Plans impacted:	Premera Blue Cross' Individual plans
People impacted:	9,460
Counties:	Franklin, Grays Harbor, King, Kitsap, Lincoln, Pacific, Pierce, Spokane and Yakima

Key information used to develop the rate request

(Jan. 2024 - Dec. 2024)

Premiums	\$112,880,957
Claims	\$132,656,582
Administrative expenses	\$13,621,140
Risk adjustment	\$41,526,451
Company made	\$8,129,686

The company expects its annual medical costs to increase 11.1%.

How it plans to spend your premium

If these rates are approved, here's how your insurance company plans to spend your premium in 2026:

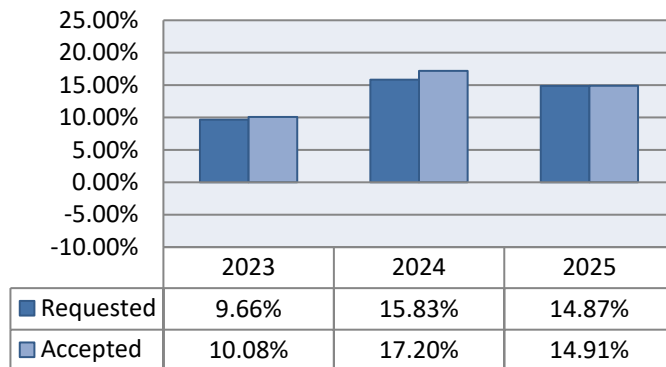
Claims:	92.57%
Administration:	9.99%
Profit:	-2.56%

Are there any benefit changes?

Yes. To see a description of the changes, look for the attachment called "Uniform Product Modification Justification" in the 'initial request'.

**Your premium may vary based on the plan you choose, your age, the age and number of family members covered, where you live, and whether you or your family members smoke.*

Company's annual rate request history *(Data source: previous OIC decision memos)*



Need Help?

- Call our Insurance Consumer Hotline at 1-800-562-6900
- 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday – Friday.

Glossary

Actuarial value: The average share or percentage of essential health benefits that are paid by the plan compared to what you pay out-of-pocket. For example, in a plan with a 70% actuarial value, the plan pays for 70% of your covered expenses for essential health benefits and you pay the rest through deductibles, copays and coinsurance.

Administrative expenses: Any expenses not related to medical claims including employee and executive salaries, the cost of the company's offices and equipment, agent commissions, and taxes.

Annual rate change: Companies normally file a rate change each year due to their medical claims experience. The annual rate request may or may not include benefit changes.

Average rate change: The average amount rates will change for all plan members. The amount of your rate change may vary based on the plan you choose, your age, the age and number of family members covered, where you live, and whether you or your family members smoke.

Cascade Care: Enacted by the Washington state Legislature in 2020, Cascade Care created new coverage options (standardized plans and public option plans) that are available through [Washington Healthplanfinder](#).

Catastrophic health plan: A health plan that covers the essential health benefits, but only after you've met your out-of-pocket maximum (in 2026, it's \$10,150 for individual coverage and \$20,300 for family coverage). These plans are only available to people under age 30 and to people the Washington Health Benefit Exchange has determined can't afford the other plans.

Essential health benefits: All individual and small group health plans must cover these 10 benefits: Ambulatory patient services, emergency services, hospitalization, maternity and newborn care, mental health and substance use disorder services including behavioral health treatment, prescription drugs, rehabilitative and habilitative services and devices, laboratory services, preventive and wellness services and chronic disease management, and pediatric services – including oral and vision care.

Geographical regions: Rates for each health plan may differ by nine geographical areas. The areas include:

Geographical region	Counties
Area 1	<i>King</i>
Area 2	<i>Clallam, Cowlitz, Grays Harbor, Jefferson, Kitsap, Lewis, Pacific, and Wahkiakum</i>
Area 3	<i>Clark, Klickitat, and Skamania</i>
Area 4	<i>Ferry, Lincoln, Pend Oreille, Spokane, and Stevens</i>
Area 5	<i>Mason, Pierce, and Thurston</i>
Area 6	<i>Benton, Franklin, Kittitas, and Yakima</i>
Area 7	<i>Adams, Chelan, Douglas, Grant, and Okanogan</i>
Area 8	<i>Island, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish, and Whatcom</i>
Area 9	<i>Asotin, Columbia, Garfield, Walla Walla, and Whitman</i>

Health Benefit Exchange (HBE): Under health reform, states are required to set up health insurance marketplaces, called Exchanges. [Washington state's Exchange](http://Washington.state's.Exchange) is a public/private partnership overseen by an 11-member board. It's charged with creating and running an online marketplace, wahealthplanfinder.org.

Healthplanfinder: An online marketplace, wahealthplanfinder.org, run by Washington's Health Benefit Exchange, where you can shop for individual and small employer health plans. Here, you can compare plans, get free unbiased help understanding your options, and depending on your income, get help paying for coverage.

Medical costs: What the health plan spends on direct medical services including hospital stays, providers, and prescription drugs.

Medical Loss Ratio rebate: The Affordable Care Act requires health insurers to submit data on the proportion of premium revenues spent on clinical services and quality improvement, also known as the Medical Loss Ratio (MLR). It also requires them to issue rebates to enrollees if this percentage does not meet minimum standards. MLR standards require insurers to spend at least 80% or 85% of premium dollars on medical care. If they fail to meet these standards, they are required to provide a rebate to their customers.

Metal levels: Individual and small group health plans can have four different metal levels – bronze, silver, gold, and platinum – based on the level of coverage they provide for essential health benefits ("actuarial value"). For example, bronze plans cover 60% of the cost of medical services, silver plans cover 70%, gold plans cover 80%, and platinum plans cover 90%.

Profit: The amount of money remaining after paying claims and administrative expenses.

Public Option plan: A qualified health plan that has a standardized benefit design and meets additional quality and value requirements.

Qualified Health Plan (QHP): A health plan that is certified to be sold through wahealthplanfinder.org and that provides the essential health benefits, follows established limits on cost-sharing (like deductibles, copayments, and out-of-pocket maximum amounts), and meets other requirements.

Risk Adjustment: The Affordable Care Act established a permanent risk adjustment program to reduce incentives for health insurance plans to avoid covering people with pre-existing conditions or those in poor health. The risk adjustment program transfers funds from lower-risk plans to higher-risk plans annually.

Standardized (or Standard) plan: A qualified health plan that has a standard benefit design across health insurers.