



Notice to patients regarding a new Medicare benefit

10/28/16

Part of Federal Health System Reform includes an **annual wellness visit** within the Medicare program. This visit is free of any copayments and deductibles. But this visit should not be confused with the traditional annual physical provided by our practice.

The traditional annual physical includes a comprehensive review of your history and a comprehensive physical examination. Laboratory studies, an EKG, and other testing may be performed and billed separately.

The **annual wellness visit** covered by Medicare beginning in January 2011 is defined by federal authorities as consisting of the following services.

1. A focused history completed by the patient prior to the visit.
2. Blood pressure
3. Weight, height and Body Mass Index (calculated from height and weight)
4. Assessment of cognitive impairment (memory, judgment and ability to live independently)
5. Screening for depression
6. Assessment of your safety and functional impairment.
7. Providing a written recommendation about preventive services recommended by the US Preventive Services Taskforce (Colonoscopy, immunizations etc)
8. Providing a treatment plan to address risk factors for illness (smoking, lack of exercise, etc)
9. Referral to appropriate education and training classes to reduce your risk of illness and frailty

What is NOT included in the annual wellness visit covered by Medicare.

1. A physical examination
2. EKG
3. Laboratory testing
4. Addressing any complaints about your health status or follow up of chronic problems.

Here are your options:

1. **Request the annual wellness visit** covered by Medicare. You will need to obtain from us, and complete, a specific history form that pertains to this exam. We will plan and schedule the visit after we receive the completed form. This will require one or more separate appointments to discuss complaints and chronic problems as in #2 below.
2. **Schedule a separate office visit** for a problem oriented examination: EKG and Laboratory testing as indicated, and to address your concerns and follow up of chronic conditions. (This visit is covered by Medicare subject to deductible and co pay requirements)
3. **Opt to continue to receive the traditional yearly physical** and pay for this service out of pocket, as you have done before. A problem component of Medicare allowable charges will be subtracted from the uncovered complete exam charge. You will be notified of the approximate remainder amount and sign a waiver of acknowledgement. This visit will cover your medical problems, complaints, and all items related to screening in one appointment.

If you have questions please ask your doctor or our staff