

A word to our patients about **MEDICARE ANNUAL WELLNESS VISITS**

Medicare pays for a single wellness visit once a year to identify health risks and help you to reduce them.

Some commercial entities provide these visits independently of physician practices. While it is your right to choose where you receive your annual wellness visit under Medicare, please be aware that if you receive it elsewhere, our ability to provide it for you will be inhibited.

We view your annual wellness visit as an opportunity to engage with you for prevention and early detection of illness, the treatment of which we can provide or manage for you. We believe that the annual wellness visit is part of the ongoing relationship between you and our practice. That relationship enables us to provide you with continuity of care, since we know your history from experience and can integrate new information, such as that obtained from an annual wellness visit.

Commercial entities that provide annual wellness visits independently of physician practices often have no prior relationship with the patient and no intention of caring for the patient after the annual wellness visit is done. We believe you should avoid this situation. It effectively prevents us, as your usual source of care, from providing the annual wellness visit, because Medicare only covers one annual wellness visit per patient per year. This situation, in turn, disrupts the continuity of care that you otherwise enjoy with our practice. Another concern is that we often do not know that you have received an annual wellness visit from one of these entities, unless you tell us.

So, we encourage you to receive your Medicare annual wellness visit from us.

When you do, you will receive:

- Screenings to detect depression, risk for falling and other problems,
- A limited physical exam to check your blood pressure, weight, vision and other things depending on your age, gender, and level of activity,
- Recommendations for other wellness services and healthy lifestyle changes,
- Discussion of Medicare-covered services that allow our care team to more closely monitor your health conditions and update your plan of care before office visits.

Also, before your appointment, our staff may ask you some questions about your health and may ask you to fill out a form to help identify your health risks.

We hope to help you get the most from your Medicare wellness benefits.

Please contact us with any questions.

April 2017



AMERICAN ACADEMY OF
FAMILY PHYSICIANS