

ANNUAL WELLNESS VISITS: IMPROVING CARE FOR OUR MEDICARE BENEFICIARIES



Quality Health Alliance, in accordance with Trinity Health Mid-Atlantic, recommends that all Medicare-aged patients receive an Annual Wellness Visit (AWV). The AWV is not a physical exam, but rather is an opportunity for patients and providers to take a comprehensive look at specific issues related to Medicare-aged adults and detect emerging health and/or safety risks. During an AWV, a patient's provider and supplier list is reviewed, a preventive screening schedule should be established, the patient's complete medication list is reviewed, along with specific screenings for cognition, depression, alcohol misuse, hearing, functional status, and fall risk.



AWVs can support population health initiatives through increasing compliance with a patient's required clinical care gaps like cancer screenings, provide an opportunity to appropriately capture or recapture a patient's chronic condition through coding, potentially reduce avoidable ER visits and preventable hospital admissions through the development of an ongoing partnership between patients and their primary care physician, and support the patients in their advanced care planning (ACP).

Provider Benefits of AWVs:

- Opportunity to build a complete medical history for chronically ill patients.
- Strengthen the provider/patient partnership.
- Increase patient engagement through outreach and education.
- Provide proactive care to patients.
- Increase quality performance/close care gaps.
- Protected time for Advance Care Planning (ACP) discussions and coding.
- Provide opportunity to capture accurate and specific Chronic Condition Documentation (CCD), increasing practice Risk Adjustment Factor (RAF) score.
- Maintain or grow patient attribution to the Medicare Shared Savings Program (MSSP).

Patient Benefits of AWVs:

- No co-pay or deductible; Medicare covers the cost of the beneficiary's AWV. The beneficiary pays zero out of pocket expense and Medicare pays the provider the full amount.
- Annual, comprehensive evaluation focused on overall wellness and prevention.
- Early disease detection and prevention.
- Prevent accidents/falls at home.
- Keep patients out of the hospital.
- Delay long-term care.
- Begin discussions regarding preferences for end-of-life care (ACP) at no cost to the patient.



There are 3 types of AWWs:

- Welcome to Medicare (IPPE) visit is a once in a life-time service for Medicare patients. This service is only allowable within the patient's first 12 months the patient is covered by Medicare Part B and can only be done as a face-to-face visit **(G0402)**
- Initial AWW is for all patients who are no longer within the first 12 months of enrollment in Medicare Part B. This is a one-time benefit. **(G0438)**
- Subsequent AWW is for patients that are no longer within the first 12 months of enrollment in Medicare Part B and has already received an initial AWW more than 12 months prior. This is also recommended when it cannot be determined if a Medicare patient has received an IPPE or an Initial AWW **(G0439)**

Medicare telehealth includes HCPCS codes G0438 and G0439.

Use these CPT codes to file ACP claims as an optional AWW element:

- **99497:** Advance care planning including the explanation and discussion of advance directives such as standard forms (with completion of such forms, when performed), by the physician or other qualified health care professional; first 30 minutes, face-to-face with the patient, family member(s), and/or surrogate
- **99498:** Advance care planning including the explanation and discussion of advance directives such as standard forms (with completion of such forms, when performed), by the physician or other qualified health care professional; each additional 30 minutes (List separately in addition to code for primary procedure)

The Quality Health Alliance team is here to support your practice in operationalizing AWWs. We have resources available to support the implementation of these very important visits. AWWs are the best way to maintain your ACO attributed lives population and also potentially grow your attribution by conducting these visits on your patients with traditional Medicare A & B coverage. Please contact your CIN Manager directly to set up AWW education with your staff. We also encourage you to visit the Medicare Learning Network to learn more about AWWs.



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To learn more about Quality Health Alliance or to join the organization, **please contact your CIN Manager, shown on the left.**



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