



Dear Medicare Beneficiary,

If you are enrolled in Medicare Part B for more than twelve months, you are now eligible to receive an Annual Wellness Visit. The Annual Wellness Visit is a yearly preventative care visit covered by Medicare. This visit is a very specific type of evaluation that is intended to help you and your primary care provider develop a plan for determining and addressing potential medical problems. This type of visit is a *limited* evaluation and requires that you and your provider address and evaluate *specific* issues with the intent of developing and/or updating a personalized prevention plan based on your current health and risk factors.

You are receiving this letter because you are scheduled for an upcoming Annual Wellness Visit. As mentioned above, Medicare requires that *specific* elements are addressed during this type of visit. As a result, we ask that you please complete the attached Annual Wellness Visit Questionnaire form and bring it with you to your visit to prevent any delay during your appointment while your provider reviews it. We also recommend that you bring all of your medications with you to ensure that your physician obtains an accurate and complete list of all the medications you are currently taking, including the dosage of the medication and the frequency with which you take the medication.

In addition to reviewing the above information, the following services will be covered by Medicare as part of the Annual Wellness Visit:

- Routine measurements such as height, weight, blood pressure, and body-mass index (or waist circumference, if appropriate)
- Creation of a schedule for screening and preventative services for the next 5 to 10 years
- Advice or referral services that may help intervene and treat potential health risks

Please note that if you have any specific health concerns or problems your provider may not be able to complete all of the required elements of the annual wellness visit and your visit may need to be changed to an office visit evaluation which is partially covered by Medicare Part B.

We have included a Frequently Asked Questions document which may help answer any questions you may have about the Medicare Annual Wellness Visit and what Medicare covers, but if you have any additional questions, prior to your appointment, please contact the Sansum Clinic Billing Offices at 805-681-1760. A billing representative will be happy to help clarify any concerns.

Sincerely,

Marjorie Newman, MD
Medical Director



Medicare Wellness Visits Patient Frequently Asked Questions

Does Medicare pay for a routine yearly physical? No, Medicare does not pay for routine preventive physical examinations.

What preventive medical visits does Medicare cover? Medicare pays for two types of wellness visits: a one-time Welcome to Medicare Visit and an Annual Wellness Visit.

Within the first 12 months that you are enrolled in Medicare Part B, Medicare covers the one-time Welcome to Medicare Visit. It includes a review of your medical and social history related to your health, and education and counseling about preventive services such as certain screenings, immunizations and referrals for other care that is needed. The visit is a great way to get up-to-date with your provider about how to stay healthy. You are eligible for your first Annual Wellness Visit if you have been enrolled in Medicare for more than 12 months and have not had a Welcome to Medicare Visit in the last 12 months.

An official government booklet called Your Guide to Medicare's Preventive Services explains in detail all of the preventive services Medicare covers and how often. It is available online via this link:

<http://www.medicare.gov/Pubs/pdf/10110.pdf>.

What can I expect during the one-time Welcome to Medicare Visit? During the visit, your provider will:

- Record your medical history and review your completed *Wellness Visit Health Questionnaire*,* which will be mailed to you prior to your visit OR if you are on MyChart, you will receive a link to the questionnaire prior to your appointment.
- Check your height, weight, and blood pressure
- Calculate your body mass index
- Give you a simple vision test

Depending on your general health and medical history, further tests, like an EKG, may be ordered. You will get advice to help you prevent disease, improve your health, and stay well. You will also get a written plan (like a checklist) letting you know which screenings and other preventive services you need.

Please note that the one-time Welcome to Medicare visit is **not** a full physical exam, and as a result, if your provider needs to evaluate and treat a medical problem during one of these wellness visits, he or she would need to charge for this separately, and the cost of the evaluation and any testing performed would be applied to your deductible or copay.

What should I bring to the one-time Welcome to Medicare Visit? Plan to bring your completed *Wellness Visit Health Questionnaire*, which will include information about the following:

- Your medical and immunization records, if not already available at the clinic (if you're seeing a new provider – call your former provider, if he/she is not part of Sansum Clinic, to get copies of these)
- Your family health history – to help your provider determine if you're at risk for certain diseases
- A list of prescription and over-the-counter drugs that you currently take, how often you take them, and why

What should I know about the Annual Wellness Visit? If you've had Medicare Part B for longer than 12 months, you can get this yearly Annual Wellness Visit to develop or update a personalized prevention plan based on your current health and risk factors.

During the visit your provider will:

- Review your completed *Wellness Visit Health Questionnaire**, which will be mailed to you prior to your visit, OR if you are on MyChart, you will receive a link to the questionnaire prior to your visit.
- Check your Height, weight, blood pressure, and other routine measurements
- Develop a screening schedule for appropriate preventive services and evaluate any risk factors which may be impacting your health.

Please note that the Annual Wellness visit is **not** a full physical exam, and as a result, if your provider needs to evaluate and treat a medical problem during one of these wellness visits, he or she would need to charge for this separately, and the cost of the evaluation and any testing performed would be applied to your deductible or copay.

What should I bring to the Annual Wellness Visit? Please remember to bring your completed *Wellness Visit Health Questionnaire* which should include the information below:

- Your medical and immunization records, if not already available at the clinic (if you're seeing a new provider-call your former provider, if he/she is not part of Sansum Clinic, to get copies of these).
- Your family health history
- A list of prescription and over the counter drugs that you currently take, how often you take them, and why

What is the difference between the one-time Welcome to Medicare Visit and the Annual Wellness Visit?

Your first Annual Wellness Visit has a lot in common with the Welcome to Medicare Visit. The main difference is the timing. If you are newly enrolled in Medicare, you are eligible for the one-time Welcome to Medicare Visit only within the first year. The Annual Wellness Visit can take place every 12 months, and the first Annual Wellness Visit can be scheduled either 12 months after the Welcome to Medicare Visit or after more than 12 months of your enrollment in Medicare.

How are the Welcome to Medicare Visit and the Annual Wellness Visit different from a yearly physical?

An annual physical is a much more extensive examination than the Welcome to Medicare Visit or Annual Wellness Visit. In addition to collecting a medical history, a physical exam may also include a vital signs check, lung exam, head and neck exam, abdominal exam, neurological exam, dermatological exam, and extremities exam. Clinical laboratory tests are not included in either the Welcome to Medicare Visit or Annual Wellness Visit. If your doctor needs to evaluate and treat a medical problem during one of these wellness visits, he or she would need to charge for this separately, and the cost of the tests would be applied to your deductible or copay.

Do I need to have a Welcome to Medicare Visit before I can have an Annual Wellness Visit? No, not if you have had Medicare Part B Coverage for more than 12 months. If you have been enrolled in Medicare part B for more than 12 months and have not had a Welcome to Medicare visit, unfortunately you are no longer eligible for the one-time Welcome to Medicare visit but would instead be eligible for your initial Annual Wellness Visit.

Is there a deductible or copay for the Welcome to Medicare Visit or the Annual Wellness Visit? No, there is no deductible or copay for either one of those visits. But keep in mind that either of these visits could cost you some money out of pocket. For example, you may need to have a medical condition evaluated or treated in a way that goes beyond the purpose and limited scope of a Welcome to Medicare or Annual Wellness Visit.

Under Medicare rules, the additional time or treatment would be billed as an office visit, with Medicare paying 80% of the allowed charges and the rest being applied to your deductible or copay. However, if you have a medi-gap plan the 20% that isn't covered by Medicare would likely be covered by the medi-gap plan. Please check with your insurance carrier if you have any questions.

I'm new to Medicare and normally receive a full physical exam from my doctor every year. I'm due for my next physical, and since I'm eligible for a Welcome to Medicare Visit, how should I schedule my appointment? When you call for your appointment, explain that you want the Welcome to Medicare Visit, which Medicare will cover, in addition to your annual physical. The amount applied to your deductible or copay will be the difference between what Medicare pays for the Welcome to Medicare Visit and the full preventive examination fee that your doctor charges for the rest of the physical. Also, you should be aware that scheduling this appointment with your doctor's office entirely as an annual physical exam will mean that the visit will not be covered by Medicare and will be applied directly to your deductible or copay.

I'm 80 years old and plan to schedule an Annual Wellness Visit with my doctor. Will that include a check-up for my hypertension and recent memory loss? An Annual Wellness Visit is very limited in scope and will include a screening blood pressure check, but your provider may address the memory loss and your hypertension by performing an additional evaluation and ordering tests or prescribing medications during an extended part of the visit. This additional treatment will be billed as an office visit, with Medicare paying 80% of the allowed charges and the rest being applied to your deductible or copay or, if you have a medi-gap plan it may be completely covered.

Will I have out-of-pocket costs for preventive tests such as mammograms or colonoscopies? Medicare determines which preventive – or screening – tests are covered and when they should take place, and no copay or deductible is required for these. A screening test is given to those who have no symptoms of a condition, such as measuring cholesterol levels in people who have no symptoms of cardiovascular disease. A diagnostic test is used to confirm a suspected condition once initial testing has revealed its possibility. Sometimes a screening test becomes diagnostic if potential abnormalities are found and more testing must be performed. It's a good idea to become familiar with Medicare's rules about screening tests. Your Guide to Medicare's Preventive Services explains in detail which are covered and how often. The guide is available online via this link: <http://www.medicare.gov/Pubs/pdf/10110.pdf>.

**Wellness Visit Health Questionnaire-* Please complete this questionnaire at home and please bring it with you to your Welcome to Medicare or Annual Wellness Visit