

Wellness Care – Prepare for Patient Communications

Most patients have no experience with Annual Wellness Visits (AWV). Many will not know what is included in an AWV and may expect a physical examination. Others will not appreciate the value of this type of preventive approach and will decline the service. While there is no co-pay for the AWV service, if additional medical evaluation and management services are provided, these services may include a co-pay; this is not an uncommon situation – expectations can be managed through a proactive approach and clear communications. Clinics can establish AWV patient communications strategies, forms and letters, and staff scripting to head-off misunderstandings and patient frustrations.

Scripting – All staff who interact with patients or caregivers associated with AWVs should be able to communicate these concepts:

- (Your doctor) wants you to have this. Through wellness visits, we can help you stay healthy, prevent problems, and make sure you are up to date on screenings so we can catch any health problems you might have early.
- This is a Medicare benefit that is free to you – but only the wellness visit itself. If you need regular care in addition to the wellness visit, your usual co-pay applies.
- In a wellness care visit, we review your health, things that may be affecting your health, and prevention services. We make a plan together to maintain your health and to stay current with preventive care and screenings. Edit depending on your staffing model: (Our nurse), under the supervision of (your doctor) may perform most, or even all, of the wellness care visit.
- There is no physical examination involved. We use information from your medical history and from a health risk assessment form that we'll ask you to fill out in advance to inform our conversation with you during this visit.
- If you happen to be ill when you have your visits scheduled, we may decide to reset your wellness visit to another day in order to focus on your more immediate health needs.

Tool – [Letter to Patients with Medicare](#)

This material was prepared by Comagine Health, the Medicare Quality Innovation Network–Quality Improvement Organization for Idaho, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah and Washington, under contract with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The contents presented do not necessarily reflect CMS policy. 12SOW-GEN-20-QIN-044