

April 2010

For Our New-To-Medicare Patients:

Welcome to the wonderful world of Medicare! Medicare has its own set of guidelines for several services and we wanted to let you know about some changes to expect.

- 1) Billing – We are off-assignment on Medicare; we will collect the amount for your visit at checkout and submit your claim for you, and Medicare (and your secondary if you have one) will pay you back directly. See handout for details.
- 2) Well care – Medicare covers a onetime wellness exam/annual called the IPPE (Initial Preventive Physical Exam). You must have this exam done in the first 12 months of your coverage with Medicare, and you may have an EKG at that time as well. After this we still highly recommend annual wellness exams as we consider them key to quality medical care; however Medicare will not cover them so we offer a discount for this service. Medicare does cover a gynecologic exam every 2 years for women (but not every year as some are accustomed to). Some secondary plans may cover your annual even if Medicare doesn't, but we recommend calling your insurance as they are all very different.
- 3) Labs – We pride ourselves on ordering blood work only if medically necessary, but sometimes the lab will tell you that a specific test won't be covered. Please call our office to make sure, as most of the time it is the lab that is wrong (usually because Medicare guidelines are very complex and the wrong codes are used). Additionally, if you ever receive a bill from the lab please give us a call (ideally BEFORE paying it), as we will work with them to refile your claim to Medicare so that the tests will be covered.
- 4) Non-covered services – many vaccines are not covered by Medicare (the only ones that ARE covered are flu, pneumonia, and Hepatitis B), as well as hearing screens, annuals (see #2 above), B12 shots, and many others. We are more than happy to provide these services to you at a substantial discount for payment at time of service.

Official Medicare resources:

1-800-MEDICARE – to speak with a Medicare representative

[www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov) – you can create a login to look up your claims, and is a good resource for Part D questions, etc

Or, if you have any questions please let us know – our receptionist or billing department might be able to help!

Sincerely,

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