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Simplicity – Annual Wellness Visits



Providing quality healthcare while running a successful practice in 2018 can certainly be confusing. No doubt CMS can add to the confusion, but they have begun to direct providers to certain simple basics, i.e. keep people healthy and identify issues early so that you can intercede to prevent them from worsening. Thereby, we should be able to achieve better health outcomes while saving money.

One of the ways that CMS is expressing this is by paying for all Medicare beneficiaries to be seen by their doctor every 12 months for an Annual Wellness Visit (“AWV”). This is a non hands-on visit, where histories are reviewed and baselines established (or re-established). It is an opportunity for the patient to discuss concerns with his physician. CMS has made these AWV visits more attractive to Medicare beneficiaries by not requiring a co-pay and making them not subject to the deductible. CMS has made the visits attractive to PCPs by making the payment substantial.

Every month, each practice gets a list of their Medicare Fee-for-Service patients who, according to CMS claims data, are eligible for an Annual Wellness Visit. These are delivered by the Quality Coordinators. Any practice staff with login credentials to Health Endeavors can access the list at any time. Another way that SSACO helps your practice.

Attached to this email is additional information about Annual Wellness Visits, directly from the Medicare Learning Network.

NOTE CHANGE IN DATE:

Last 2018 Practice Meeting:

Wednesday,
NOVEMBER 7, 2018
– Summerlin Hospital –
7:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m.

- Meet other participants and SSACO staff
- Learn
- Win Prizes

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Education is for
everyone.

Being proactive helps. As Isaac Newton said: "My powers are ordinary. Only my application brings me success".

Last Practice Meeting of 2018 – November 7th at Summerlin Hospital

Get tips for closing gaps in care before year-end. Learn more and get ideas for improving quality scores which may benefit your practice directly, as well as helping SSACO toward achieving Shared Savings for 2018. Win prizes, meet representatives from other SSACO Participants and preferred providers. Join us for our breakfast session at 7:30 or lunch session at 11:30. Please RSVP so that we know to expect you.

What? Why? How?

Silver State ACO practices are known as "Participants". The SSACO staff, including Quality Coordinators, are part of the team, along with the Participants, in identifying ways to improve health outcomes while saving money. Do you or a member of your staff have a question about quality measures (which may influence all CMS payments to you in 2019)? Or about requirements billing the Transitional Care Management code (and earning, possibly, hundreds of dollars for a patient visit)? Are you seeking ideas for streamlining the gathering of data necessary for quality reporting? Please ask. We are here to help.

2019 Recruitment – In Full Swing...

Please let us know if you are aware of a practice that might be interested in, and benefit from, participating in Silver State ACO. Remember - the person who forwards the greatest number of "leads" will be awarded a special prize at the October practice meeting.

Heat Related Health Dangers for Older Adults Soar During the Summer (And it's not much fun for younger adults, either)

As we age, our ability to adequately respond to summer heat can become a serious problem. Older people are at significant increased risk of heat-related illnesses, known collectively as hyperthermia, during the summer months. Hyperthermia can include heat stroke, heat edema (swelling in your ankles and feet when you get hot), heat syncope (sudden dizziness after exercising in the heat), heat cramps, and heat exhaustion.

Experts at the National Institute on Aging, part of the National Institutes of Health, say knowing which health-related factors may increase risk could save a life. Those factors include:

- Age-related changes to the skin such as poor blood circulation and inefficient sweat glands
- Heart, lung, and kidney diseases, as well as any illness that causes general weakness or fever
- High blood pressure or other conditions that require changes in diet, such as salt-restricted diets

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- Reduced sweating, caused by medications such as diuretics, sedatives, tranquilizers, and certain heart and blood pressure drugs
- Taking several drugs for various conditions (It is important, however, to continue to take prescribed medication and discuss possible problems with a physician.)
- Being substantially overweight or underweight
- Drinking alcoholic beverages
- Being dehydrated

Lifestyle factors can also increase risk, including extremely hot living quarters, lack of transportation, overdressing, visiting overcrowded places, and not understanding how to respond to weather conditions.

Older people, particularly those at special risk, should stay indoors on particularly hot and humid days, especially when there is an air pollution alert in effect. To stay cool, drink plenty of fluids and wear light-colored, loose-fitting clothes in natural fabrics. People without fans or air conditioners should keep their homes as cool as possible or go someplace cool. Senior centers, religious groups, and social service organizations in many communities provide cooling centers when the temperatures rise. Or visit public air-conditioned places such as shopping malls, movie theaters, or libraries.

Heat stroke is a severe form of hyperthermia that occurs when the body is overwhelmed by heat and unable to control its temperature. Someone with a body temperature above 104 degrees Fahrenheit is likely suffering from heat stroke. Symptoms include fainting; a change in behavior (confusion, combativeness, staggering, possible delirium or coma); dry, flushed skin and a strong, rapid pulse; and lack of sweating. Seek immediate medical attention for a person with any of these symptoms, especially an older adult.

If you suspect that someone is suffering from a heat-related illness:

- Call 911 if you suspect heat stroke.
- Get the person out of the heat and into a shady, air-conditioned or other cool place. Urge them to lie down.
- If the person can swallow safely, offer fluids such as water and fruit or vegetable juices, but not alcohol or caffeine.
- Apply a cold, wet cloth to the wrists, neck, armpits, and groin. These are places where blood passes close to the surface of the skin, and a cold cloth can help cool the blood.
- Encourage the person to shower, bathe, or sponge off with cool water if it is safe to do so.

If you are having a hard time paying for home cooling and heating costs, there are some resources that might help. Contact the [National Energy Assistance Referral service](#), your local [Area Agency on Aging](#), senior center, or social service agency.

To learn more, go to [Hot Weather Safety for Older Adults](#). Free publications on hot weather safety and other healthy aging topics in English and Spanish are available from the [NIA website](#) or by calling NIA's toll-free number: 1-800-222-2225.

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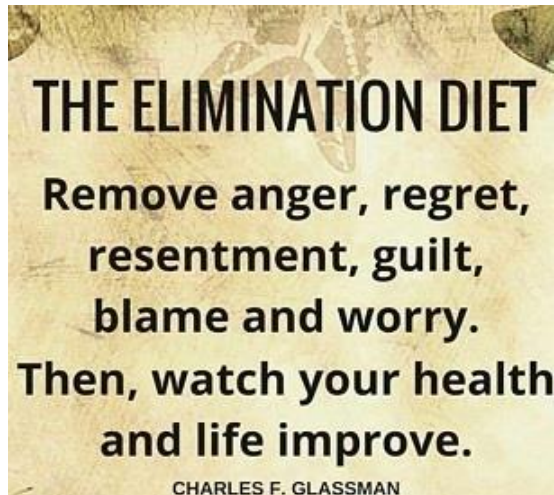
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