



Outpatient Mental Health Care

Tips for Protecting Yourself and Medicare

Medicare covers a wide range of outpatient mental health benefits.

These services are provided in settings including a health care provider's office (or telehealth portal in some circumstances), hospital outpatient department, or community mental health center.

What Does Medicare Cover in Relation to Outpatient Mental Health Care?

Medicare Part B (Medical Insurance) helps pay for outpatient mental health services, including:

- One depression screening per year. The screening must be done in a primary care doctor's office or primary care clinic that can provide follow-up treatment and referrals.
- Individual and group psychotherapy with a doctor or other licensed mental health professional (such as psychiatrist, clinical psychologist, nurse practitioner, or clinical social worker) allowed by the state where services are being received.
- Family counseling if the main purpose is to help with your treatment.
- Testing to find out if you are getting the services you need and if your treatment is helping.
- Psychiatric evaluation, medication management, and diagnostic tests.
- Treatment of opioid use disorder.
- Treatment of inappropriate alcohol and drug use.

What Can You Do to Stop Outpatient Mental Health Care Fraud?

- Review your Medicare Summary Notice (MSN) and/or Explanation of Benefits (EOB) and report the following concerns:
 - Services listed do not match what you actually received.
 - Medicare was billed for individual treatment when group services were received.
 - Diagnostic tests, medical equipment, or prescriptions you did not receive were added on. An example would be excessive labs or unnecessary urine analysis.
 - Medicare was billed for in-person visits or expensive facility care when only telehealth services were provided.
 - Medicare was billed for more hours of mental health services than what you received.
- Do not give out your Medicare number or other personal information in response to unsolicited offers to receive mental health treatment.

Examples of Outpatient Mental Health Care Fraud

- You and/or Medicare are billed for psychiatric treatment services you did not receive.
- Adult daycare services are billed as individual or group psychotherapy. Examples include:
 - Beneficiaries are picked up by a bus or van. Medicare does not cover transportation to and from mental health services.
 - Beneficiaries are taken out to eat or for a recreational outing with no other services received.
 - Beneficiaries are allowed to watch TV or play games all day.
 - Support groups bring people together to talk and socialize.
- Call-in refills for mental health prescriptions are billed as psychiatric evaluations and/or complex office visits.
- Unrelated services (such as genetic tests and back braces) you do not need or want are billed in conjunction with your mental health treatment.
- Medicare is billed for residential sober home, substance use disorder treatment facility, or partial hospitalization services when only outpatient counseling was received.
- You are offered money or gifts in exchange for your Medicare and/or Medicaid number, which is then used to bill for mental health services you did not or do not plan to receive.
- Mental health services provided by a medical assistant, massage therapist, or other unqualified individual are billed as though you were seen by a licensed mental health professional.



How Your Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) Can Help

Your local SMP is ready to provide you with the information you need to **PROTECT** yourself from Medicare fraud, errors, and abuse; **DETECT** potential fraud, errors, and abuse; and **REPORT** your concerns. SMPs and their trained volunteers help educate and empower Medicare beneficiaries in the fight against health care fraud. Your SMP can help you with your questions, concerns, or complaints about potential fraud and abuse issues. It also can provide information and educational presentations.

**To locate your state Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP):
Visit www.smpresource.org or call 1-877-808-2468.**

This project was supported, in part, by grant number 90MPC0002 from the U.S. Administration for Community Living, Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, D.C. 20201. Grantees undertaking projects under government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their findings and conclusions. Points of view or opinions do not, therefore, necessarily represent official Administration for Community Living policy.