

## MEDICARE ANNUAL WELLNESS VISITS FOR PATIENTS

### Don't Let Third Parties Interfere With Your Medicare Wellness Visits

Medical advocacy organizations like the TMA and AMA have received complaints about third party vendors performing Medicare Annual Wellness Visits (AWVs) for Medicare and Medicare Advantage (MA) plan patients. Some of these third parties use deceptive marketing tactics, such as holding “wellness fairs” or “health screenings,” sometimes even at churches or retirement communities. These companies then turn around and bill Medicare or your Medicare Advantage Plan, for your AWV.

**Q:** What do you have to lose if that happens?

**A:** Your primary care physician may not receive a report of the results if your doctor does not perform the exam on you. Continuity of care with your physician is interrupted. There may be undiagnosed conditions requiring treatment plans or additional diagnostic work-ups revealed in these exams. However, these cannot take place in a timely manner if your doctor is not aware of them. If the AWV has already taken place for the year, it cannot be repeated by your doctor without costing you money out of pocket and your doctor will probably not get paid for it. Most importantly, your doctor does not have an opportunity to go over the results with you, consult your medical record, or give you a chance to ask questions about your health unless your doctor performs your AWV. You paid into the system for years to receive your fair share of Medicare benefits; you need to get your money's worth out of the AWV.

Bottom line, get your AWV from your **primary care doctor** and be wary of health fairs, body scans, and other third party screening advertisements.

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**Q:** What if I have a complaint against a third party vendor that performed an exam on me but did not forward a copy of the results to my primary care doctor or billed for an exam that was not very thorough?

**A:** Please contact, or ask your doctor to help you contact, KEPRO <https://www.keproqio.com/>. KEPRO is a Beneficiary and Family Centered Care Quality Improvement Organization (BFCC-QIO) and might be able to help using the Immediate Advocacy approach. It can be reached toll-free at 844-430-9504.

**Q:** What if I have general questions about the AWV?

**A:** Questions to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) can be sent to <https://questions.cms.gov/newrequest.php>. Here is a screenshot of relevant topic areas:



Medicare - Preventive Services
Annual Wellness Visit
Immunizations
Initial Preventive Physical Exam
Preventive Services