



Four Helpful Medicare Changes in 2022

More mental health options

The need for mental health care is just as important as medical care, and Medicare beneficiaries now have improved access to these services.

Beginning in 2022, Medicare is bringing care directly into patients' homes by providing certain mental and behavioral health services via audio-only telephone calls. This means counseling and therapy services, including treatment of substance use disorders and services provided through Opioid Treatment Programs, will be more readily available to individuals, especially in areas with poor broadband access.

In addition, Medicare will pay for mental health visits furnished by Rural Health Clinics and other community health centers via telecommunications technology, including audio-only telephone calls, expanding access for rural and other vulnerable populations.

More access to physician assistants' services

Physician Assistants (PAs) can perform many of the same functions as doctors, but they were not allowed to bill Medicare for services normally covered under Part B. This restricted patient's access to PAs. Beginning in 2022, Medicare is now authorized to make direct payments to Physician Assistants who can bill Medicare directly. As a result, more individuals with Medicare Part B will have access to PA professional services.

More options for insulin savings

Unless you use an insulin pump, you'll pay 100% of your insulin costs under Traditional Medicare. However, the [Part D Senior Savings Model](#) is one way to reduce these costs, by increasing access and affordability to select insulins for seniors. Over 500 new Medicare Advantage and Part D prescription drug plans, and two new pharmaceutical manufacturers of insulin, are joining the Part D Senior Savings Model in 2022 (bringing the total to 2100) to provide even more opportunities for eligible seniors to reduce their out-of-pocket spending on insulin.

Medicare beneficiaries who are enrolled in participating Part D plans or Medicare Advantage plans could see their insulin costs drop to a \$35 per-month co-payment.

Increased Access to Medical Nutrition Therapy Services

Referrals to Medical Nutrition Therapy (MNT), which includes services provided by registered dietitians or nutrition professionals to help people with Medicare better manage their diabetes or renal disease can now be made by any Medical Doctor (M.D.) or Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (D.O.). MNT establishes goals, a care plan, and interventions, as well as plans for follow-up over multiple visits to assist with behavioral and lifestyle changes to help address an individual's nutrition needs and medical condition or disease(s).

This change should particularly benefit people living in rural areas as the MNT services are provided to eligible individuals with no out-of-pocket costs and may be provided via telehealth.

(Source: [Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services](#), Nov. 2021)

[Contact your local SHIP](#) (Senior Health Insurance Assistance Program) for in depth, one-on-one insurance counseling and assistance with Medicare.