

MEMO

TO: ALL HCI CLIENTS

FROM: HCI Consulting Department

DATE: January 6, 2011

SUBJECT: Annual Wellness Visit

Beginning in 2011 primary care physicians can take advantage of a newly covered Medicare preventative service – the Annual Wellness Visit (AWV). Medicare will pay for a wellness exam for their beneficiaries who are no longer in their first 12 months of eligibility or who have not received an Initial Preventive Physical Exam (IPPE) or an AWV within the past 12 months. New codes (G0438 and G0439) have been created for billing the initial AWV and subsequent AWV respectively. The allowances are similar to 99204 and 99214 respectively.

The AWV may be performed by an MD, DO, NP, CNS, PA or other health professional including a health educator, registered dietician, nutrition professional or a team of such medical professionals working under the direct supervision of a physician. The documentation of the initial exam must include the following elements:

- Medical/family history
- Height, weight, BMI (or waist circumference), blood pressure, and other appropriate measures based on patient history
- List of providers/suppliers regularly involved in patient's medical care
- Detection of any cognitive impairment

- Review of potential risk factors for depression (including current/past experiences)
- Assessment of functional ability and safety level based on direct observation or use of appropriate screening
- Establishment of a written screening schedule for 5 – 10 years
- Risk factors and conditions (including mental health) for which interventions are recommended or underway
- Personalized health advice and appropriate referrals for health education, preventive counseling, or programs aimed at risk reduction as appropriate

Note that the earlier provision to include advance care planning has been rescinded. All subsequent AWWs must include updates to these elements, excluding the depression screening and the functional ability screening. All deductibles and coinsurance are waived for these services. If a problem-oriented service is provided at the same time as the AWW, then the appropriate E/M code with a -25 modifier would be billed.

If you would like more information, please contact your consultant at 1-800-572-5275.