

Medicare coverage of care planning for people with cognitive impairment

Only 33% of seniors living with Alzheimer's disease are aware of their diagnosis. Studies have found one of the reasons physicians do not diagnose Alzheimer's — or do not disclose a diagnosis once it is made — is lack of time and resources to provide care planning.

What is care planning?

Care planning provides individuals diagnosed with cognitive impairment and their caregivers with information about medical and non-medical treatments, clinical trials and support services available in the community — all of which can contribute to a higher quality of life. People who receive proper care planning are shown to have fewer hospitalizations and emergency room visits, and better medication management. In addition, because dementia can complicate the management of other chronic conditions, care planning is key to coordinating a person's overall care.

Does Medicare cover care planning?

Effective Jan. 1, 2017, individuals with cognitive impairment have access to care planning with a medical professional through Medicare.

Who is able to administer care planning services under Medicare?

Clinicians who treat Medicare beneficiaries with cognitive impairment, including Alzheimer's disease and other dementias, are eligible for reimbursement under Medicare using the CPT® code 99483. These clinicians include:

- Physicians.
- Physician assistants.
- Nurse practitioners.
- Clinical nurse specialists.
- Certified nurse midwives.

What will the assessment address?

The 99483 code requires clinicians to provide detailed, person-centered care planning that includes several areas:

- Evaluating cognition and function.
- Measuring neuropsychiatric symptoms.
- Medication reconciliation.
- Evaluating safety (including driving ability).
- Identifying caregivers and caregiver needs.
- Identifying and assessing care directives.

- Planning for palliative care needs.
- Referrals to community services for both the beneficiary and his or her caregiver.

Resources

- Discuss care planning and the 99483 code with your health care provider. More information for medical professionals is available at alz.org/careplanning.
- Call 800.272.3900 or visit alz.org/medicare to learn more.

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