

Medicare Paid Home Health Care

Home Health Care is skilled nursing care and certain other health care services you receive in your home for the treatment of an illness or injury.

In order to receive Medicare paid home health services you need to meet certain criteria ;

1. Doctor has to order home health services .
2. You need at least one of the following services : intermittent (and not full time) skilled nursing care , or physical therapy or speech therapy services , or continued need for occupational therapy .
3. You need to be home bound .This means that you are normally unable to leave home and leaving home is a major and taxing effort. When you leave home , it must be infrequent , for a short time . You may attend religious services and leave the house to get medical treatments (including therapeutic or psychosocial care) . You can also get care in an adult day -care program that is licensed or certified by a state or accredited to furnish adult day care services in a state.
4. The home health agency caring for you must be approved by the Medicare program.

You pay 0 \$ for covered home health visits , and they are paid by Medicare Part A benefit . If you only have Medicare Part B , then these services will be covered under part B.

This information was obtained from www.medicare.gov. Please visit this site for more information or call 1-800-Medicare (1-800-633-4227).

Services provided by home health agencies usually include ; skilled nursing , physical therapy , occupational therapy , speech therapy , social worker , home health aide , dietitian . Doctor will decide which of these services are needed.

A nurse has many functions at home health setting which include but are not limited to ; being a case manager that coordinates care with patient , physician and other disciplines . Nursing functions like evaluating/monitoring/treating various health conditions , assessing ability to take medications , educating

patients/caregivers about illnesses and medications , wound care , draw blood , infuse IV-drugs , take and monitor vital signs.

Physical therapy is performed by either a physical therapist or a physical therapy assistant acting under the direction of a physical therapist. Physical therapy at home may consist of ; gait/transfer training , strengthening , pain management , home exercise program , assess the need for ambulatory aides or other durable medical equipment , home safety assessment , range of motion exercises.

Occupational therapy is performed by an occupational therapist or an occupational therapy assistant acting under the direction of an occupational therapist. Occupational therapists teach patients skills they need to take care of themselves (activities of daily living) ; dressing , bathing , personal care , meal preparation . Therapy may also consist of ; upper body strengthening and range of motion exercises , transfer training ,home exercise program , assess the need for durable medical equipment , hand therapy which can include making splints.

Speech therapist works with patients with speech disorders from a wide variety of causes and also with disorders of swallowing . Speech therapist can also perform standardized tests (like Mini-Mental State Examination) to determine patients level of confusion (cognitive ability and problem solving skills) . This information is helpful when assessing how safely patient can manage at home or should they have supervision .

Social worker is often referred to see the patient if there are concerns about ; financial situation , living environment , lack of support system , suspicion of abuse or negligence , difficulty to manage personal and medical care , difficulty in arranging transportation to medical appointments , poor coping skills with illness or home safety issues.

They will interview patient , and other family members/caregivers if needed , and then give information about available community resources . They can also guide families in more effectively negotiating the health care system.

Home health aide can assist with your personal care needs like having a bath , showering , dressing , grooming . They may assist with light housekeeping but the personal care must be the first and main duty .

Dietitian is an expert in food and nutrition . Dietitians educate individuals and groups on good nutritional habits and they can also develop modified diets. Dietitians help promote good health through proper eating.

If you do not meet the criteria for Medicare paid home health services , for example if you are not home bound , you could still qualify for therapy services as an outpatient . Then you would go to outpatient therapy clinic for your therapy .

Medicare Paid Outpatient Physical , Occupational and Speech Therapy

Medicare will pay for these services if they are medically necessary , your doctor or therapist sets up the plan of treatment and your doctor periodically reviews the plan to see how long you will get therapy .

Generally , Medicare will only cover therapy if your condition can improve or if your condition will deteriorate without therapy.

In 2008 , Medicare will cover up to \$ 1, 810 for physical and speech therapy combined , and another \$ 1, 810 for occupational therapy . Exceptions to the limits are allowed if your doctor says that more therapy is medically necessary.

After the annual Medicare Part B deductible is paid (\$ 135 in 2008) Medicare will pay up to 80 % on the Medicare -approved amount for each service (up to \$ 1,448) and you will be responsible for the remainder. After the limit has been reached , you will have to pay the full cost of the services (100%) .

The therapy limits apply to outpatient therapy received at ;

- Therapists' or physicians' offices.
- Outpatient rehabilitation services.
- Skilled nursing facilities (SNFs) for outpatients or residents who do not have Medicare-covered stays ; and
- home , through therapists connected with home health agencies , when not part of a Medicare-covered home health benefit.

The limits do not apply if you get outpatient therapy at a hospital's outpatient department. Information was obtained from www.medicareinteractive.org .

www.thecaregiverhelp.com.

