

## Annual Wellness Visit vs. Physical Exam

What's the difference? An **Annual Wellness Visit (AWV)** is primarily a discussion between the physician and the patient. HPI and ROS are not required for an AWV. These focus primarily on preventive health. NOT a hands-on exam. A **physical exam** is just that, a complete physical. It requires HPI, ROS and is a hands-on exam.

### Annual Wellness Visit (G0438/G0439)

- A yearly benefit to Medicare and Medicare Advantage patients
- Required elements differ between initial and subsequent visits and are mandated by CMS
- Does NOT have to be performed entirely by a physician; can be a team
- A discussion
- An opportunity to capture chronic conditions each year
- Additional services may be billed with an AWV (ex: IBT obesity, alcohol, smoking)

Example: James Bond has BCBS and Mrs. Goldfinger has been on Medicare for 1 year. Both are current patients and coming in for annual visits. You would code Mr. Bond as a Physical 99397 and Mrs. Goldfinger as G0438 for her AWV.

### "Welcome to Medicare" IPPE (G0402)

- Available to both Medicare and Medicare Advantage members
- Covered ONCE per lifetime
- Must be completed within 12 months of qualifying for Medicare part B
- A discussion
- An opportunity to capture any chronic conditions
- Includes the following:
  - A review of medical and social history
  - A review of potential risk factors for depression and other mood disorders
  - A review of functional ability
  - An exam to include height, weight, BP, BMI, visual acuity, and other medically necessary factors
  - Review the patient's potential risk factors for substance abuse disorders
  - Education, counseling and referral based on the above items
  - Education, counseling and referral for other preventive services

**Example:** Jerry Jones joined Medicare 6 months ago after turning 65. He is coming in today for his Welcome to Medicare Exam. This would be coded as a G0402 and would include all of the above.

### Initial Annual Wellness Visit (G0438)

- Available to both Medicare and Medicare Advantage members
- Covered ONCE per lifetime
- Does NOT have to be performed by a physician
- A discussion
- An opportunity to capture any chronic conditions
- The following documentation is required:
  - Health Risk Assessment
  - Patient's medical and family history
  - Current providers and suppliers list
  - Measure: Height, Weight, BMI and BP.

### Physical Exam (99385-99387, 99395-99397)

- Not a covered Medicare benefit. Coverage offered by some Medicare Advantage and commercial plans. • Required elements are based on the CPT History, Exam and MDM guidelines
- Must be performed by a physician or qualified professional such as PA/NP
- An exam
- An opportunity to capture chronic conditions each year
- Some Medicare Advantage plans allow an AWW and physical to be billed same day,
- Can also bill preventive services

### Initial Annual Wellness Visit (G0438) (Continued)

- Detect cognitive impairment patient may have
- Review functional ability and level of safety
- Establish an appropriate written screening schedule, like a checklist for the next 5-10 years
- Establish a list of risk factors and conditions where you recommend interventions and report whether they are underway for Mental Health conditions including depression, substance abuse disorder, and cognitive impairment Provide personalized health advice and appropriate referrals to health education or preventive counseling services or programs for: Fall Prevention, Nutrition, Physical Activity, Tobacco cessation, Weight Loss, and Alcohol misuse. Discuss Advance Care Planning services at patient's discretion
- Review any current opioid prescriptions

**Example 1:** John Smith has been on Medicare for 15 months. He was in last year for his Welcome to Medicare exam and returns today for his Initial Annual Wellness Visit. This would be coded as a G0438 and include the above.

**Example 2:** John did not come in last year for a Welcome to Medicare exam but is coming in today for his Initial Wellness Visit. He is interested in the Welcome to Medicare exam, but because it has been more than 12 months since joining Medicare, he cannot have that exam.

### Subsequent Annual Wellness Visit (G0439)

- Available to both Medicare and Medicare Advantage members
- Covered each subsequent year after the patient has completed the initial wellness visit
- Does NOT have to be performed by a physician
- A discussion.
- An opportunity to capture chronic conditions
- Same requirements as Initial Wellness Visit (listed above)

**Example:** John Smith was in for his Initial AWV on 10/2/22, today is 10/3/23 and he is coming in for his Subsequent AWV. Every year from this day forward that he comes in for this exam will be coded as a G0439. This can include all of the same elements of the Initial AWV.