



Information Caregivers Can Use on: Speaking with a Friend or Family Member's Doctor During an Office Visit

As a caregiver, there may be times when you need to talk to a doctor or other healthcare provider about your friend or family member's condition and treatment plan during an office visit. For example, the person you're caring for may become nervous or upset during the doctor visit. Or, you might have questions about his or her care. In these cases, it may be easier for you to talk to the doctor alone.

Am I able to speak with a doctor about the person that I'm caring for?

As long as the person you're caring for doesn't object, the doctor can speak to you about their care. The doctor may ask for permission from the person you're caring for. Or, if the person you're caring for can't give permission, the doctor may decide that it's in their best interest to speak to you without getting permission. Check with the doctor's office for more information.

If I speak to the doctor alone, will Medicare help pay for this?

During a face-to-face, medically-necessary office visit, your friend or family member's doctor can spend time talking with you about the condition and/or treatment plan, even if your friend or family member isn't in the room. The office visit payment under Medicare Part B (Medical Insurance) includes payment for the time that the doctor spends talking with you. This means that the doctor can't bill Medicare or your friend or family member separately for the time you talked.



For More Information

Medicare has several resources for caregivers and people with Medicare:

- **“Ask Medicare” Web site**

“Ask Medicare” is Medicare’s premier Web site for caregivers. Visit www.medicare.gov/caregivers to help the person you’re caring for choose a drug plan, compare nursing homes, get help with billing, find local care resources, and more. From the Web site, you can sign up for Medicare’s free bi-monthly e-Newsletter to get the latest information including important dates, changes to Medicare, resources in your community, and tips to help you take care of yourself and the person you’re caring for.

- **1-800-MEDICARE**

Medicare is here for you 24 hours a day, every day. Call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227) to talk with a Medicare customer service representative. TTY users should call 1-877-486-2048.

Note: Medicare can't give personal health information unless the person you're caring for gives verbal permission while you're on the telephone or has submitted written authorization. It's a good idea to have the person you're caring for fill out an authorization form in advance. He or she can do this in the following ways:

- Fill out and submit an e-Authorization Form online by visiting www.medicare.gov/MedicareOnlineForms. If the person you're caring for is having difficulty completing the form online, he or she can call 1-800-MEDICARE and ask the customer service representative to help submit the form electronically while on the phone. Filling out the form online lets you immediately call and speak on behalf of the person you're caring for.
- Download and complete a PDF version of the Standard Authorization Form by visiting www.medicare.gov/MedicareOnlineForms. The person you're caring for can mail the completed, signed form to: Medicare BCC, Written Authorization Department, PO Box 1270, Lawrence, KS 66044. You can also have the person call 1-800-MEDICARE and ask the customer service representative to help fill out the Standard Authorization Form over the phone. The customer service representative will mail the completed form to the person you're caring for to sign and return. Filling out the paper authorization form takes more time and you'll generally need to wait a few weeks before you're able to call and speak on his or her behalf.



For More Information (continued)

- **Medicare.gov**

Visit www.medicare.gov to view the official U.S. Government Web site for people with Medicare. It's an easy-to-use, comprehensive resource.

- **MyMedicare.gov**

Medicare's secure online service for accessing your personal Medicare information, www.MyMedicare.gov, is available 24 hours a day, every day. You can help the person you're caring for register on the Web site.

