



# HOT TOPIC

Updated on 02.19.2019

## HIGHMARK'S HOUSE CALL HEALTH ASSESSMENT PROGRAM CONTINUES IN 2019

### Program Supports Primary Care Physicians' Care

In 2011, Highmark launched the House Call program to its Medicare Advantage members. Last year, more than 40,000 Medicare Advantage members received House Call visits. Highmark will continue to provide this no-cost program in 2019.

Additionally, certain Affordable Care Act members will also be eligible for this program starting in July. Please keep an eye out for further communications on the Affordable Care Act eligibility requirements as we move closer to July.

This program:

- Provides an in-home visit by a nurse practitioner to conduct a general health assessment.
- Helps members who have chronic conditions, or are at-risk for further health complications, to better understand their conditions and how they can access the resources they need.
- Is a convenient and proactive at-home check-up for those who still maintain an active lifestyle.

### HOW THE PROGRAM WORKS

Highmark uses claims data to identify Medicare Advantage members with chronic conditions and those who may be disengaged from their normal care routines. The list of eligible members is sent to Matrix Medical Network and Signify Health, who administer the program by visiting the members in their homes and performing the health assessment at no cost to the member.

Each visit lasts approximately one hour and focuses on four primary areas:

- Checking the member's current health status
- Reviewing the member's current medications, screening exams, and vaccinations
- Answering any health-related questions
- Helping to ensure that the member's medical history is accurate and up-to-date with complete documentation

Assessing members in their home can bring to light issues such as fall risk, home safety, medication adherence, and dietary and nutrition concerns that may be difficult to detect in a clinical setting. The setting also benefits members who feel more comfortable discussing health issues or concerns at their homes.

The vendor will make a recommendation from the visit to the member, and mail a summary of the visit to their primary care physician (PCP) or a provider specified by the member. After the assessment, the member is strongly encouraged to follow up with the PCP or provider to discuss the findings.

**Note:** The House Call program does not replace or bypass the member's relationship with their PCP. Rather, the program is intended to complement the PCP-member relationship and reinforce the importance of regular preventive care. The House Call program does not interfere with other Highmark programs (the Unconfirmed Diagnosis program, the enhanced Annual Wellness Visit program, etc.). Additionally, Matrix Medical Network and Signify Health do not perform routine physicals or annual wellness visits. No treatment is provided during a House Call.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **Who is eligible for a visit?**

All eligible Highmark Medicare Advantage (Starting Jan. 25, 2019) and Affordable Care Act members (starting July 2019) can receive an in-home assessment. Members that are specifically targeted are those who may have gaps in their medical file.

For instance, if a member has a diagnosis that was addressed in the previous year but hasn't been addressed currently, that member would be targeted to help close that gap of information; either the diagnosis is still active or has been resolved. By closing these information gaps, better coordination and care planning services can be provided to your patients.

### **Why should they schedule an assessment?**

With an in-home assessment, the nurse practitioner can see other aspects of a patient's life that might not be evident in the office. Additionally, nurse practitioners have knowledge on resources within the patient's area in regards to exercise programs (Silver Sneakers), nutritional programs (Meals on Wheels), social services, and financial assistance options for your patients. They are able to identify needs that exist within the home such as a need for medical equipment (canes or ramps), additional care giver services, and further information on mental health services. They also provide a second set of eyes on the many different aspects of your patients' lives.

### **How will I know if one of my patients has received an in-home assessment?**

Once an in-home assessment has been completed, your office will receive a Detail Summary of the visit. This summary will include vitals, current medication review, medical history review, etc. This summary is mailed to the billing address of the practice's office within 60 days of the completed visit.

### **Is this mandatory?**

No. This is not mandatory and the member will not receive any penalties, nor will their benefits be impacted for non-participation. It is 100 percent voluntary.

### **Is it really necessary?**

This one-time review ensures Highmark is providing the best service possible to their members, and while not necessary, it is a great way for your patients to stay informed on additional resources that exist in their area. Remember, not all patients live near their PCP and may benefit from someone who knows more about their specific area and living arrangements.

### **What takes place during the visit?**

The nurse practitioner will check the member's blood pressure, vital signs and reflexes, obtain lab samples (if necessary), review medications, and family health history. Additionally, they will conduct a complete review of systems, a depression screening, and a fall risk assessment. They will provide general education as well as answer any health or medical related questions or concerns.

### **Who is performing the visit?**

The health care professional coming to the member's house is fully accredited and has passed a full background check. He or she will have a photo ID or will be wearing a badge with his or her name, picture and the health plan's logo and/or a Signify Health or Matrix Medical Network logo. The appointment can also be scheduled when the member is able to have a family member with them.

### **But most of my patients are healthy**

This visit doesn't target a specific group of people; they don't have to be sick to have a visit. The visit helps the member supplement and maintain a healthy lifestyle. It also ensures that they are taking advantage of all the programs and resources they may be eligible for.

### **How does the visit better assist me?**

In-home assessments allow for comprehensive, quality care for patients. It helps:

- Identify any symptoms or risk factors found in the home that should receive further evaluation.
- Assists in combating White Coat Syndrome for those who may be nervous about going to the doctor's office.
- Provides a holistic picture of a patient's health.
- Provides you with this accompanying information, so you can be more informed in the health approaches you take with your patients.

### **Are there additional rewards for members who complete an in-home assessment (Passport Rewards)?**

Currently there are no additional rewards given for completing an in-home assessment.