

Dear Medicare patient,

Beginning January 1, 1998 the Balanced Budget Act of 1997 allowed reimbursement for a pap smear, breast and pelvic exam **once every two years**. This is considered a special screening for malignant neoplasm (cancer).

The only patients who qualify for reimbursement annually (once, every year) for these screenings are those considered “high risk” by Medicare protocol.

Medicare is very adamant regarding documentation of the “high risk” categories. Examples of questions the Doctor asks you to determine “high risk” are: the number of sexual partners in your lifetime, and history of sexually transmitted diseases and a few more. This means: if our providers have not seen the patient for one of these problems or they don’t have documentation from previous providers of care to substantiate the condition, Medicare will not pay for these services more than once every two years.

The charges for the examination are broken down in three parts: 1) Preventative exam. This includes history, examination, other than pelvic and breast, counseling/guidance/risk factor reduction interventions, and the ordering of appropriate lab/diagnostic procedures. 2) Pelvic and breast exam. 3) Pap smear. **Medicare never pays the preventative portion of the exam and the patient is responsible.** We can give you an estimate of what this portion will be. It is in the range of \$200.00. The pelvic, breast exam and pap smear are paid in accordance with the Balanced Budget Act mentioned above. This is about \$81.22. Total visit estimate is \$260.00 to \$305.00. The above is in your Medicare handbook or you can call them.

An ongoing problem we are having is with the Call Center for Medicare. They have been advising patients to call us to rebill their visits with a different code so that Medicare will cover it. **This is fraud and our providers will not do this.** If you have a problem other than your annual visit, please make a separate appointment. We apologize for any inconvenience and encourage you to review your Medicare handbook to better understand your benefits.

We are writing this letter because this has been a very confusing issue for our patients and we hope this clears up any misunderstandings. If you have any questions, please contact our Business Office prior to your appointment.

Sincerely,
East Cascade Women’s Group, PC