

Annual Wellness Visits and Why It Matters for Medicare STAR Measures

The most effective way to improve Medicare STAR performance is to use every Annual Wellness visit as a structured opportunity to prevent care gaps, document exclusions and ensure accurate coding.

Components of Annual Wellness Visits (AWV)

- Health Risk Assessment – required for AWV; supports identification of gaps and other social determinants of health needs.
- Medication review – Closes Care for Older Adults Medication reconciliation and supports Medication Adherence STAR measures
- Functional Status and Fall Risk Assessment – Also assists in closing Care for Older Adults Functional Assessment Measure.
- Cognitive Screening – Required for AWV and supports early dementia
- Preventive Screening Referrals – Checks and schedules appropriate preventive services and cancer screenings (diabetes care, osteoporosis)
- Routine measurements – Checks height weight and blood pressure

Coding Essentials for AWV

- G0438 – Initial AWV
- G0439 – Subsequent AWV
- G0468 – FQHC visit, initial preventive physical examination (IPPE) or AWV
- G0402 – Welcome to Medicare visit

Measures that can be closed during AWV

- Breast Cancer Screening- Order mammogram if due
- Colorectal Cancer Screening – Order FIT/FOBT, Cologuard or Colonoscopy.
- Controlling Blood Pressure – Document BP using CPT II Codes (3074F-3080F)
- Care for Older Adults – Complete functional Assessment and Medication Review
- Diabetes Measures – Order A1c, Kidney Evaluation and Retinal Exam
- Osteoporosis Management – Order DEXA or start osteoporosis therapy after a fracture
- Medication Adherence – Reinforce adherence, reconcile meds, address any barriers

Workflow Tips

- Pre-visit Gap Review – Identify all open HEDIS gaps before the patient arrives
- Use Standing Orders – Allow staff to initiate screening orders
- Document Exclusions – This helps to remove patient from the eligible population for measure
- Schedule Follow up before the patient leaves – Schedule AWV for next year

When patients complete their AWV, we see higher adherence to recommended screenings, better chronic disease control, and fewer avoidable complications. This visit is the best opportunity to proactively close multiple gaps in a single encounter.