
The Home Health Independence Demonstration

MEDICARE HOME HEALTH USERS IN COLORADO, MASSACHUSETTS AND MISSOURI – UNDER MEDICARE’S NEW HOME HEALTH INDEPENDENCE DEMONSTRATION, YOU MAY BE ELIGIBLE TO LEAVE HOME MORE OFTEN *WITHOUT* THE RISK OF LOSING YOUR MEDICARE HOME HEALTH BENEFITS!

What is the Home Health Independence Demonstration?

Until now, people who receive Medicare home health services could not leave their homes for reasons other than medical treatment, adult day care, or religious services without risking the loss of their benefits. Under Medicare’s Home Health Independence Demonstration, qualifying beneficiaries in 3 states who are permanently disabled and are dependent on others for help with activities of daily living can leave their home more frequently and/or for longer periods of time – *without* losing their Medicare home health coverage.

Under section 702 of the Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement, and Modernization Act of 2003 (P.L. 108-173), the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) is conducting a 2-year study to see what happens if Medicare beneficiaries with severe, chronic conditions are permitted to leave their homes more often while keeping their Medicare home health services.

The Home Health Independence Demonstration is scheduled to begin **October 4, 2004**, and will run **until October 3, 2006**. Up to 15,000 Medicare beneficiaries (across all 3 states) will be allowed to participate during that time.

Who can participate in the Home Health Independence Demonstration?

Medicare beneficiaries enrolled in Medicare Part B under traditional Medicare (NOT in an HMO) who receive their home health care in **Colorado, Massachusetts, and Missouri** and meet all of the eligibility criteria for Medicare home health care (*except* for the customary “homebound” requirement) are potentially eligible for the Home Health Independence Demonstration project.

This means you must qualify for Medicare home health care:

- Your doctor must decide that you need medical care at home, and make a plan for your care at home; and
- You must need at least one of the following: intermittent skilled nursing care, or physical therapy, speech-language therapy, or continuing need for occupational therapy; and
- Leaving home must require “considerable and taxing effort” on your part; and
- The home health agency caring for you must be approved by the Medicare program (Medicare-certified); and
- The home health agency must be able to provide the services that you need.

In addition, you must meet **all** of these conditions for the demonstration:

- Your physician must certify that you have a **severe, disabling condition that is permanent**; and
- You must have a **permanent need for assistance from another person** with at least 3 out of the following 5 activities of daily living: eating, toileting transferring, bathing and dressing; and
- You must have a **permanent need for skilled nursing services** (other than medication management); and

- You must **require daily visits** in your home from an attendant to monitor and treat your medical condition or to help you with activities of daily living, which are eating, dressing, toileting, bathing, and transferring; and
- You must require the **assistance** of another person or the use of an assistive device **to leave the home**; and
- You **must not regularly work** in a paid position full-time or part-time outside the home.

If your physician and the home health agency certify that you meet all these conditions, and if your home health agency is participating in the demonstration, you can be enrolled in the demonstration! When your eligibility for Medicare home health services is re-evaluated every 60 days by your physician and the home health agency (if you are still a patient), your eligibility for the Home Health Independence Demonstration will also be re-evaluated.

How will this affect me?

If you currently receive Medicare home health benefits and you meet the Home Health Independence Demonstration requirements ...

- participating in the Home Health Independence Demonstration will enable you to leave home for as often and as long as you like without losing your home health benefits.

If you meet the Home Health Independence Demonstration requirements (as well as all the conditions for Medicare home health benefits, except for leaving home) and you are not receiving Medicare home health services ...

- participating in the Home Health Independence Demonstration will enable you to receive home health services through Medicare while being able to leave home when you wish.

Medicare beneficiaries enrolled in the Home Health Independence Demonstration will be able leave their home to shop, visit with family members, volunteer in the community, or socialize with friends, without fear of losing their home health benefits.

What will I have to do? Will I have to pay anything?

If you are enrolled in the Home Health Independence Demonstration, the only thing that will be different from regular Medicare home health care is that you may be asked to speak with an interviewer from a company hired by Medicare to find out how people were doing under the project. You are not required to speak with the interviewer but we hope that you will choose to do so.

While you are participating in the demonstration, you may want to note down how often and how long you leave home so that you can have that information when the interviewer calls, but you are not required to do this. You will not have to pay anything extra to be in the demonstration, and Medicare will pay for home health care the way it normally does.

To find out more about whether you may be eligible for this demonstration:

- Ask your physician or your local home health agency about the Home Health Independence Demonstration; OR
- Call Medicare toll-free at 1-800-MEDICARE; OR
- Visit our Website:
<http://www.cms.hhs.gov/researchers/demos/homehealthindependence.asp>.

This document is not intended to serve as a legal document. The official Medicare program provisions are contained in the relevant laws, regulations and rulings.