

CASE STUDY: Erroneous EMR Drives AWV Denials



SUMMARY

In the first year following the recipient's effective date, Medicare covers an Initial Preventive Physical Examination (IPPE). Each year after that, the recipient may participate in an Annual Wellness Visit (AWV).

The AWV is not a routine annual physical exam; it has a detailed checklist of elements that must be addressed to meet Medicare payment requirements. The focus is on counseling the patient with personalized health advice, services, and programs.

The payment related to these services can be substantial. The national average payment amount is \$175.00 for an initial AWV and \$118.00 for subsequent AWV. These services drive significant revenue for the physician group. For example, if a practice submitted 100 AWV claims per week, that would result in revenue of \$17,500 per week.

A large physician practice with multiple locations received denials related to Annual Wellness Visit (AWV) services. The practice retained LW Consulting, Inc. (LWCI) to conduct a probe sample audit of AWV records.



CRITICAL FINDINGS

- LWCI reviewed 25 medical charts. Consultants found missing elements in the psychosocial risks, behavioral risks, Activities of Daily Living (ADL), and Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADL) areas. Topics such as loneliness, oral health, ability to dress, eat, toilet, and shop were not addressed.
- Physicians were following templates provided in the Electronic Medical Record (EMR) System.
- The templates did not adequately capture the required elements needed to support payment for the AWVs.



SOLUTIONS

To correct the issues, the LWCI team audited the EMR templates and corrections were implemented. Since this was an operational change that impacted physicians, education was also provided.

AT A GLANCE

Time Frame

- Year Round

Organization Details

- Large physician practice with multiple locations

Outcomes

- The physician practice is able to use the EMR with confidence knowing that the AWV template is fully compliant with Medicare requirements.
- A significant revenue stream is protected.
- The patient receives the proper care.

About LW Consulting, Inc.

LW Consulting, Inc. is a recognized leader in providing reimbursement, operational, and clinical consulting solutions across the full continuum of healthcare delivery.

We also provide interim staffing for post acute care providers.

We are an Independent Review Organization performing audits under CIAs and an expert resource to providers, attorneys, and government agencies in ensuring organizations meet the myriad of guidelines, requirements, and statutes that regulate the delivery of healthcare services.