



Advanced Treatment for Osteoporosis and Inflammatory Diseases

WHEATON • ROCKVILLE • OLNEY • CHEVY CHASE • FREDERICK • WASHINGTON, DC

Changes to Prescription Drug Coverage for Patients Enrolled in Medicare Advantage Plans

November 6, 2018

Dear Patient:

We would like to bring your attention to important upcoming changes to regulations governing prescription drug coverage through the part B component of Medicare Advantage plans. This change does not affect those enrolled in traditional Medicare, but you should be aware of these changes if you are considering switching to a Medicare Advantage plan.

Currently, any patient covered by a Medicare Plan has no restrictions on medications administered under the Part B (medical) benefit. However, beginning January 1, 2019, Medicare Advantage plans will be permitted to use a process known as "**step therapy**" to determine whether they will allow their enrollees to receive some of the newer, more advanced drugs that our physicians are prescribing. "Step therapy" means that enrollees may be required to try and fail other drugs before being given authorization to receive the drug their physician believes is best for their clinical condition. Besides limiting your access to certain vaccines administered in a doctor's office, this restriction may affect your ability to receive advanced drugs infused or injected by a nurse in our infusion centers.

Medicare officials have stated that Medicare Advantage plans that want to implement "step therapy" must "disclose that Part B drugs may be subject to step therapy requirements in the plan's Annual Notice of Change (ANOC) and Evidence of Coverage (EOC) documents," and must not "disrupt ongoing part B drug therapies for enrollees." However, if you are covered by a Medicare Advantage Plan and currently receive medications covered under part B, we encourage you to review the covered medications with your plan before renewing or switching plans.

These pending coverage changes are likely to affect your care if you currently receive treatment in an outpatient infusion center such as ours. If you are considering moving from a traditional Medicare to a Medicare Advantage plan, please take this into consideration before making your decision. If you are already enrolled in a Medicare Advantage plan, this may be a reason to consider switching back to traditional Medicare (with a Medigap policy). If you have any questions about what decision would be best for you, please contact your plan representative and/or our business office. Open Enrollment for 2019 Medicare plans runs from October 15th - December 7th, 2018.

Sincerely,

The Physicians and Staff of Arthritis and Rheumatism Associates, P.C.

www.ariseinfusion.com

CENTRAL CALL CENTER: 240-514-5000

FAX: 301-424-3590



Changes to Prescription Drug Coverage for Patients Enrolled in Medicare Advantage Plans

November 16, 2018

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We would like to bring your attention to important upcoming changes to regulations governing prescription drug coverage through the part B component of Medicare Advantage plans. This change does not affect those enrolled in traditional Medicare, but you should be aware of these changes if you are considering switching to a Medicare Advantage plan.

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