



Dear Stan,

My wife was recently diagnosed with dementia. I feel overwhelmed not knowing what to do to help her. Does Medicare pay for dementia treatment? What should I do?

Leo

Moriarty, NM

Report Medicare Related Fraud by calling the New Mexico Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) at

1-800-432-2080

The SMP will provide you with the information you need to PREVENT, DETECT and REPORT Medicare fraud, errors, and abuse.

Dear Leo,

Medicare will pay for some services during every state of dementia care. They include:

- home safety evaluations
- cognitive assessments
- planning for care
- Prescription drugs – for drugs your doctor orders for dementia
- hospital stays
- respite care
- hospice care.

Medicaid also provides benefits for dementia patients if you qualify.

Leo, you are not alone. According to a Columbia University study, 10 percent of persons 65 and older have dementia, and 22 percent have mild cognitive impairment. Dementia affects women and people of color disproportionately.

Dementia is the loss of cognitive functioning -- thinking, remembering, and reasoning. Peoples' behavior, feelings and relationships may change as well. The most common form of dementia is Alzheimer's. Over time the symptoms of Alzheimer's and related dementias will make it difficult to think clearly and function independently. Planning as early as possible can lead to a better tomorrow.

Health care planning is important. Having a **living will** lets doctors know how you want to be treated if you are dying or permanently unconscious and cannot make decisions on your own. Having a **durable power of attorney for health care** names someone as a "proxy" to make medical decisions for you when you are not able. Other considerations are a **do not intubate order** which lets medical providers know if you do not want to be

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put on a breathing machine and a **do not resuscitate order** that tells health professions not to perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) or other life-support procedures in case the heart or breathing stops.

If you live in Sandoval, Valencia, Torrance or Bernalillo County, contact the **Senior Citizens Law Office (SCLO)** at **(505) 265-2300** or online at <https://sclonm.org/> They can help you with most of the forms listed above.

If you live in any other county contact **Legal Resources for the Elderly (LREP)** at **1-800-876-6657**. Contact **LREP** online at <https://www.sbnm.org/For-Public/Legal-Resources-for-the-Elderly>

Other things to consider are to:

- update your wills
- start researching long term care facilities
- start planning for end-of-life care
- revoke their driver's license.

The **New Mexico Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association** works on a local level to provide help and support for all those affected by Alzheimer's and other dementias. They can be reached at **(505) 266-4473** or at https://www.alz.org/newmexico/about_us/contact_us

They have support groups and chapters

around the state, and they assist people with Alzheimer's and their unpaid caregivers. Other resources are alz.org/CRF and alz.org/diagnosis.

For additional information about dementia treatment contact the **New Mexico Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC)** at **1-800-432-2080** and ask to speak to an Options Counselor or a **State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP)** volunteer. You can also chat with a counselor at www.nmaging.state.nm.us

Stan,

Volunteer Counselor, SHIP and SMP

General Enrollment Period Alert

People who missed their opportunity to enroll in Part B can use the General Enrollment Period (GEP) that starts January 1 through March 31. Coverage starts the next month. Call the ADRC at 1-800-432-2080 and request the help of a SHIP counselor.



SHIP

State Health Insurance
Assistance Program

