



*Dear Stan,*

*I am nervous and anxious and need help talking to a doctor about my mental health. Does Medicare cover depression? Also do you have any tips to help me talk to my doctor?*

*Melinda  
Carlsbad*

**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 Melinda,

Depression takes its toll on all ages including older adults. Comprising only 13% of the U.S. population, individuals aged 65 and older account for 20% of all suicide deaths, with white males being particularly vulnerable. Medicare covers mental health care services and here is how you should start using these benefits if you feel down, are anxious and generally depressed.

If you have been diagnosed with depression by an approved medical provider, you will be eligible for mental health care services covered by Original Medicare. It is important to remember that private plans called Medicare

Advantage Plans cover the same basic benefits as Original Medicare.

Medicare covers inpatient and outpatient mental health care services. Inpatient services cover you in a psychiatric hospital or a general hospital. To read more about Medicare in-patient mental health care services, see the Medicare.gov link here:

<https://www.medicare.gov/coverage/mental-health-care-inpatient>

Medicare outpatient mental health care services includes depression screening, psychotherapy, family counseling, testing and services for treatment of alcohol and drug use and others.

*(Continued on page 2)*

For additional details about Medicare coverage for outpatient mental health care services, see the Medicare.gov link here:

<https://www.medicare.gov/coverage/mental-health-care-outpatient>.

A wide range of prescription drugs to treat mental health conditions are covered by Medicare Part D prescription drug plans and Medicare Advantage Plans with Part D drug coverage.

### HOW DO I TALK TO MY DOCTOR?

Whether you are getting ready for a medical appointment for depression or for general medical help, you should consider the following:

- ◆ Before your medical appointment write down a series of questions you have for your doctor
- ◆ Take a trusted friend with you to the doctor. One of you take notes with the doctor's answers for the questions you brought. Also take notes as to what the doctor says that are not part of your questions
- ◆ After the appointment type up the notes and talk them over with the

person who attended your medical appointment with you

- ◆ Write down your mental and emotional state including any behavioral changes and also a have list of your current medications to give your provider

**Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP)**, a program sponsored by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, has a "My Health Care Tracker" tool which can assist you in recording your doctor's comments. You can obtain a free copy by contacting your local **SMP** at **1-800-432-2080**.

If you have additional questions about Medicare coverage for depression or other mental health services, contact the **New Mexico Aging and Disability Resource Center** at **1-800-432-2080**.

Stan,  
Volunteer Counselor, SHIP and SMP

for emotional  
or substance use crisis  
**CALL / TEXT / CHAT 988**

**SHIP & SMP Program Volunteering: Learn more about Medicare and ways to better serve the public by contacting us about available SHIP SMP volunteer opportunities at 1-800-432-2080. We provide training on Medicare content, and can work with your schedule. We can serve more people together!**



**SHIP**

State Health Insurance  
Assistance Program

NEW MEXICO  
**ADRC**  
AGING & DISABILITY  
RESOURCE CENTER

New Mexico  
**SMP**  
Empowering Seniors To  
Prevent Healthcare Fraud  
Senior Medicare Patrol