



December 2025

NEWSLETTER

Volume 124

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#VegasStrong

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Spotlight: Annual Wellness Visits & Noridian Navigation

Annual Wellness Visits (AWVs) remain one of the most effective tools for engaging Medicare beneficiaries in proactive, preventive care. AWVs are strongly associated with improved chronic disease management, earlier identification of health risks, and increased adherence to recommended screenings. Nationally, data show that patients who complete an AWV each year are more likely to receive timely vaccinations, maintain updated care plans, and avoid preventable emergency department utilization which directly benefits population health outcomes and overall practice performance. As an ACO, we aim to support your team in maximizing these benefits while ensuring you are recognized for the value you deliver.



SPOTLIGHT

To further encourage completion of AWVs for attributed beneficiaries, this past year we implemented an incentive structure. For 2025, practices have been receiving **\$50 per Annual Wellness Visit** completed on attributed lives, based on paid CMS claims.



Beginning in 2026, this incentive will increase to **\$75 per completed Annual Wellness Visit**, also based on paid claims for attributed lives. This structure is designed to support continued emphasis on preventive care, close care gaps earlier in the year, and help drive stronger quality and financial outcomes.

NOTE:

Next Practice Meeting:
Southern Nevada
Wednesday, Feb 11, 2026

Northern Nevada:
Thursday, Feb. 12, 2026

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Savannah, and Sonia.



Each month, your Quality Coordinators provide a refreshed list of patients who appear due for an AWV based on the claims information we receive from CMS. Because this data is delivered to us only once a month and only after claims have been fully processed, there may be a delay before newly completed visits appear in our files.

To ensure no opportunity is missed, we encourage your team to verify AWV eligibility using the [Noridian Medicare Portal](#), especially when scheduling or confirming appointments. This simple step helps practices stay one step ahead of claims lag and ensures patients receive timely preventive care. During our most recent *Southern Nevada Quarterly Practice Staff Meeting*, Pilar with Health First Medical Center shared the workflow her team uses to confirm eligibility and provided a brief instructional guide on navigating the Noridian website, which we are pleased to share with you.



The first thing users will need is access to the Noridian Medicare Portal: If the managers or staff do not have one, their billers are most likely to have access and can set them up with a user account. Once their account is active, navigate to the website and login.

[Home - Noridian Medicare Portal - Noridian Medicare Portal](#)

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Once within the portal, click on **Eligibility or MBI lookup**. In this window you can search the patient by MBI, Name, and DOB. In the MBI section you can search via social security number as well.

Paying Attention

“Job done” or “Job well done”? Not the same thing.

As we all know, there are employees who do what they’re asked to do. And that’s it. If something doesn’t quite work, they may – or may not – mention it.

Although that kind of behavior is never appreciated, it can be particularly serious in a medical setting, both in terms of patient care as well as in terms of safeguarding data.



The best way to avoid issues is to pay attention!

Here’s a real example of something that happened recently (with practice and people not mentioned): A few weeks ago, an email was sent between two health care entities. The sender diligently



remembered to encrypt the message. Soon thereafter, when reviewing her sent messages, she noticed that the message had been sent UNencrypted. Upon looking into it, she learned that the

encryption add-on function was not working properly. She contacted the intended recipients and asked that they immediately and permanently delete the email. She also notified her supervisor; they followed up with their IT provider.

Luckily, there was no data breach... thanks to the sender *paying attention and acting promptly!*

The takeaway:

- Even when using an encryption add-on feature that’s built into your computer system, be sure that the feature is activated before hitting “send”.

“An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.”

Benjamin Franklin, 1736

SNF 3-Day Rule Waiver

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Historically, CMS (Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services) would not pay for a patient to be in a Skilled Nursing Facility (SNF) unless he/she had previously been in an acute facility for a minimum of three days. The theory *was* that, if the patient was not sick enough to be in the hospital, he/she did not need the care of a SNF. CMS finally realized the illogic of that approach. Indeed, there are patients who would benefit greatly from a few days of supervised care in a SNF. They are not quite “sick enough” to be in the hospital but, if left unattended at home, their condition would likely deteriorate to the point that a hospital stay would become unavoidable.

Therefore, CMS initiated a program to allow certain patients to be eligible for admission to a SNF without the previously required 3-day stay in an acute facility. CMS offered this “3-day rule waiver” only to ACOs for their beneficiaries. Strict protocols were set up.

Silver State ACO (SSACO) applied for, and was granted, the right to use this SNF 3-Day Rule Waiver for its beneficiaries, when appropriate. Shortly thereafter, CMS granted a blanket 3-Day Rule Waiver in connection with the COVID-19 pandemic. That waiver has since expired and now, Silver State ACO’s 3-day Rule Waiver is the only way to admit a patient to a SNF without the hospital stay.

Silver State ACO had applied for the waiver because we understand that a SNF is the most appropriate and efficient setting for care of some of our beneficiaries. We are bringing this to the attention of our Participants and Providers as they – YOU – are the source of the patients. YOU are the ones who identify a patient as needing extra care. YOU are the ones who suspect that the patient will “crash” if he/she doesn’t get some extra help. And YOU are the ones who can initiate a request to transfer the patient to a SNF using the Silver State ACO 3-Day Rule Waiver when the need is indicated.

Arkos Health is Silver State ACO’s care coordination team who will help with the implementation and transition, and who will work with



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the SNF to create an individualized case management plan. Once the beneficiary is admitted to the SNF, Arkos will follow the patient and assist in his/her transition to home when discharged.

A few things to keep in mind:

- The first step is to discuss the option with the patient. As a Traditional Medicare patient (which all SSACO patients are, by definition) the patient maintains his/her rights, including the right to refuse transfer to a SNF even if most appropriate. Beneficiary also maintains the right to choose any SNF. However, the 3-Day Rule Waiver limits this choice to only those SNFs which CMS has specifically approved and with which SSACO has contracted.



The current list of these SNFs is attached to this email. (The list changes, so please be sure to update your files whenever a new approved SNF list is circulated.)

- Patient must be given an official BENEFICIARY NOTICE. The notice is available in the SSACO Provider Manual. A copy is also attached to this email.
- If the patient *refuses* to be transferred to one of the approved SNFs, patient returns home and provider continues treatment as normally indicated.
- If the beneficiary *does* agree, ALL the following criteria must be met before he/she is considered eligible for the SNF 3-Day Rule Waiver:
 - Patient must be a currently attributed Silver State ACO beneficiary
 - Patient does not currently reside in a SNF
 - Patient is approved by SNF (Medical Director or mid-level)

In addition:

- Patient must be medically stable
- Patient has existing chronic diagnosis
- Patient must be evaluated by physician no more than 3 calendar days before transfer
- Patient cannot be managed successfully at home or on an outpatient basis
- Patient meets SNF admission criteria

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Silver State ACO is here to help. When you identify a patient, whose care would most effectively and efficiently be met in a SNF setting, and who meets these criteria, please call us to initiate the process.

Practice Meetings

Silver State ACO sponsors quarterly practice meetings to educate and foster engagement between our Participants. In addition, the meetings give staff the opportunity to ask questions and interact with SSACO staff in a more congenial setting. There is often a presentation by one of our Preferred Providers, explaining procedures and therapies which practice staff may not be aware of or knowledgeable about. There are *always* chances to win prizes!



Pictured above, Diana, Las Vegas Medical Group, with Amanda Almache, SSACO Quality Coordinator

The first practice meetings for 2026 will be on Wednesday, February 11th in Southern Nevada and Thursday, February 12th in Northern Nevada. Please be sure to attend! And, to win a prize at the February meeting, respond to this email with "Education, lunch, and prizes. A winning combo" in the subject line.



Above, Maryam Kaveh, Frontline Medical Group, and winner of a Silver State ACO folio, with Amanda Almache, SSACO Quality Coordinator

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Practice Meeting Schedule for 2026

*Please mark your calendars and
join us!*

SOUTHERN NEVADA

*All meetings are scheduled to be held at 11:30 a.m. at Summerlin Hospital.
Lunch will be served.*

- Wednesday, February 11, 2026
- Wednesday, April 29, 2026
- Wednesday, July 29, 2026
- Wednesday, November 4, 2026

NORTHERN NEVADA

Scheduled for 5 pm meet & greet; Meeting starts at 5:30 pm.

- Thursday, February 12, 2026 at NNMC Sparks Medical Office Building, Suite 201
- Thursday, April 30, 2026 at NNMC Sparks Medical Office Building, Suite 201
- Thursday, July 30, 2026 at Carson Tahoe Regional Medical Center (1600 Medical Parkway, Carson City) Main Hospital – Valley View Room on the 3rd floor
- Thursday, November 5, 2026 – NNMC Sparks Medical Office Building, Suite 201



Left: Larry Preston (CEO, Silver State ACO), Dineen Caseday (Quality Coordinator, SSACO), Molly Golden (B. Bottenberg, DO, Professional Corp.)

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*Right: Julie Friedman
(Diagnostic Center of
Medicine and winner of
an SSACO backpack)
with Sarah Whitney
(Quality Coordinator,
SSACO)*



Dr. Lin, Personalized Radiation Oncology, giving a presentation at the Northern Nevada Practice Meeting



Full house at the Southern Nevada meeting

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Left: Peter Adlish (Sierra Nevada Family Medicine) with Dineen Caseday (SSACO Quality Coordinator).

Right: Education Matters! Sonia Ramirez explaining HCC scores at the Southern Nevada Practice Meeting.



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