



Frequently Asked Questions

Please contact us or visit us on-line if you have additional question regarding Group Medical Appointments.

A Group Medical Appointment (GMA) is a customized, extended appointment with a patient's doctor and a behavioral health professional.

1. Our physicians get patients together and give informational lectures on various topics. Are we doing GMAs? No, that is not a group medical appointment and cannot be billed as one. The same components that are part of an individual appointment are also part of the group medical appointment.
2. Can professionals other than physicians do GMAs? Yes, however the service must be billable in the system with that professional seeing patients individually and billing for their services. It is important to remember that although the group may contain two or more billing professionals, only one can bill for the visit.
3. How do I bill and get reimbursed for GMAs? Most providers bill for a GMA in the same way using the same forms that they use to bill for their other visits. The code used is based upon the level of service provided to each patient in the group. In GMAs, services are billed on systems covered and decision making but not based on the amount of time spent.
4. Can 12 patients receive quality care in 90 minutes? Yes. Physicians deal specifically with diagnosis and prescriptions while encouraging the facilitator to lead the health education discussion. Also, the facilitator assists the physician with patient data collection thus better managing time.
5. How do we make sure we are compliant with HIPAA regulations when we see patients in a Group? GMA patients confidentiality is addressed by patients signing an identity waiver and by providers using an "Authorization for Medical Disclosure" giving providers permission to discuss pertinent treatment issues in a group setting. It is recommended to review any documents of this nature with legal counsel.
6. Are patients really willing to share personal information in a group? Surprisingly yes! In fact we have found that patients actually share more personal information in a group medical appointment than they do in individual appointments.
7. What do I do with the patient that monopolizes the conversation? We find that this does not happen often. Additionally, it is the role of the facilitator to redirect or even stop the monopolizing patient.
8. What do I do when a patient requires a physical examination as part of the visit? Many of the physical examinations can be done in the group with physicians examining the extremities, ears, eyes, nose, etc. However, before examining any patient, it is important to first ask them if it is "OK" for you to examine them in a group setting.
9. Do GMA patients need to have the same condition? No, there are definite benefits to having a variety of conditions. In these settings patients learn a variety of important information about their condition.
10. What topics are safe to discuss in a GMA? Any topic the patients want to discuss. It is important, however, for the patients to feel like they have a choice in the discussion topics.