

WPS Health Insurance, Arise Health Plan offer incentive for advance care planning

MADISON, Wis.—Oct. 22, 2015—WPS Health Insurance and Arise Health Plan are providing a new incentive for eligible members to receive advance care planning guidance from their health care providers.

WPS Health Insurance and Arise Health Plan are part of the family of brands of WPS Health Solutions, a nationally regarded government contractor and Wisconsin's leading not-for-profit health insurer.

Starting in September for eligible members, WPS Health Insurance and Arise Health Plan are paying for an initial 30-minute counseling session and up to two additional 30-minute sessions within one calendar year.

Initially, this coverage will apply to large groups, WPS-insured employees of WPS, and those insured through the state of Wisconsin Employee Trust Fund. Individual policies and small groups will be evaluated for consideration in 2016.

Medicare has proposed plans to cover advance care planning beginning January 1, 2016.

Less than half of adults have filled out an Advance Directive or talked with a loved one about what their preferences would be for end-of-life medical care, according to Dr. Michael Ostrov, Medical Director, Network and Quality, at WPS Health Solutions. Yet, surveys show that nine out of 10 think it would be a good idea.

“Having a trained facilitator helps a person and his or her family to successfully go through this process,” he said. “WPS has decided that providing insurance coverage for these conversations is the right thing to do and that the time has come to do it.”

This reimbursement by the two commercial health plans was applauded by the Wisconsin Medical Society, whose Honoring Choices Wisconsin initiative is building system change, advocacy and education around advance care planning.

Advance care planning is a process across time of understanding, reflecting on and discussing future medical decisions, including end-of-life preferences.

Advance care planning includes:

- Understanding health care treatment options
- Clarifying health care goals
- Weighing options about what kind of care and treatment a patient would want to receive
- Making decisions about whether to appoint a health care agent and/or complete an advance directive
- Communicating wishes and any documents with family, friends, clergy, other advisers and health care professionals

Organizations participating in Honoring Choices Wisconsin offer facilitated advance care planning conversations to patients under the Respecting Choices® First Steps® model, a pioneering approach developed in La Crosse, Wis. They have agreed to embrace a common emphasis on improving the conversation across health systems; use patient-tested forms and informational materials; share lessons learned formally and informally; and support community outreach.

Eligible WPS Health Insurance and Arise Health Plan members of any age can have their advance care planning services performed and reimbursed. For healthy people, age 50 and older is the usual time to consider doing advance care planning, according to Dr. Ostrov.

About WPS Health Solutions

WPS Health Solutions is a nationally regarded government contractor and Wisconsin's leading not-for-profit health insurer. The WPS Health Insurance division offers affordable individual health insurance, family health insurance, high-deductible health insurance, and short-term health plans, as well as flexible and affordable group plans and cost-effective benefit plan administration for businesses. The WPS Government Health Administrators division administers Part A and B Medicare benefits for millions of seniors in multiple states, and the WPS Military and Veterans Health division serves millions more members who are active in the U.S. military, veterans and their families. In 2015, the international Ethisphere® Institute named WPS one of the World's Most Ethical Companies® for the sixth straight year. For more information about WPS, visit www.wpsic.com.