

Appeals & Grievances Overview

SummaCare Secure Appeals and Grievances Overview

Thank you for your interest in our SummaCare Secure Medicare Advantage plans.

Members of Medicare Advantage plans have the right to file formal complaints if they have problems or concerns relating to their medical care. These complaints can be Appeals or Grievances. This overview gives a general description of our Appeals and Grievance Process and explains the difference between the two types of complaints.

This is just an overview. For a complete description of our Appeals and Grievance Process, you can request a copy of the *Evidence of Coverage* by calling Customer Service at 1-800-996-6250 (TTY only, call 1-800-750-0750). Hours are 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Friday. From October 15, 2011 through February 14, 2012, a representative will be available from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. seven days a week and calls to these numbers are free. You can also visit our website, www.summacare.com/medicare.

WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU HAVE A PROBLEM OR CONCERN

Please call us first

Your health and satisfaction are important to us. When you have a problem or concern, we hope you'll try an informal approach first: Please call Customer Service at the phone number listed above and we will work with you to try to find a satisfactory solution to your problem.

There are two formal processes for dealing with problems:

- For some types of problems, you need to use the **process for coverage decisions and making appeals**.
- For other types of problems you need to use the **process for making complaints**.

Both of these processes have been approved by Medicare. To ensure fairness and prompt handling of your problems, each process has a set of rules, procedures, and deadlines that must be followed by us and by you.

MEDICAL COVERAGE DECISIONS AND APPEALS

A GUIDE TO THE BASICS OF COVERAGE DECISIONS AND APPEALS

The process for coverage decisions and making appeals deals with problems related to your benefits and coverage for medical services, including problems related to payment. This is the process you use for issues such as whether something is covered or not and the way in which something is covered.

A **“coverage decision”** is a decision we make about your benefits and coverage or about the amount we will pay for your medical services. We make a coverage decision for you whenever you go to a doctor for medical care. You can also contact the plan and ask for a coverage decision. For example, if you want to know if we will cover a medical service before you receive it, you can ask us to make a coverage decision for you.

Appeals & Grievances Overview

We are making a coverage decision for you whenever we decide what is covered for you and how much we pay:

- Usually, there is no problem. We decide the service is covered and pay our share of the cost.
- But in some cases we might decide the service is not covered or is no longer covered by Medicare for you. If you disagree with this coverage decision, you can make an appeal.

An **“appeal”** is a formal way of asking us to review and change a coverage decision we have made. If we make a coverage decision and you are not satisfied with this decision, you can “appeal” the decision. When you make an appeal, we review the coverage decision we have made to check to see if we were being fair and following all of the rules properly. When we have completed the review we give you our decision.

HOW TO ASK FOR A COVERAGE DECISION FOR MEDICAL CARE OR SERVICES

How to request coverage for the medical care you want

- Start by calling, writing, or faxing our plan to make your request for us to provide coverage for the medical care you want. You, or your doctor, or your representative can do this. Generally we have **14 days** to give you our decision. This is a **“standard decision”**. If your health requires it, you can ask for a **“fast decision”**, which means we will answer you within **72 hours**. However, both the “standard” and “fast” coverage decisions allow us to take up to **14 more days** if you ask for more time, or if we need information (such as medical records) that may benefit you. If we decide to take extra days to make the decision, we will tell you in writing.
- If you believe we should not take extra days, you can file a “fast complaint” about our decision to take extra days. When you file a fast complaint, we will give you an answer to your complaint within 24 hours. (The process for making a complaint is different from the process for coverage decisions and appeals. For more information about the process for making complaints (grievances), including fast complaints, (see “Making a Complaint”).

If our answer is yes - We must authorize or provide the coverage we have agreed to provide within:

14 days after we received your request, if your request was a “standard decision”

72 hours after we received your request, if your request was a “fast decision”

If we extended the time needed to make our decision, we will provide the coverage by the end of that extended period.

If our answer is no - *We* will send you a written statement that explains why we said no.

Appeals & Grievances Overview

If we say no to your request for coverage for medical care, you decide if you want to make an appeal.

- If our plan says no, you have the right to ask us to reconsider – and perhaps change – this decision by making an appeal. Making an appeal means making another try to get the medical care coverage you want.
- If you decide to make an appeal, it means you are going on to Level 1 of the appeals process (see “How to request an appeal”).

HOW TO REQUEST AN APPEAL FOR MEDICAL CARE OR SERVICES – LEVEL 1

CONTACT OUR PLAN TO MAKE YOUR APPEAL.

- To start an appeal you, your representative, or in some cases your doctor must contact our plan. You may make your appeal in writing by submitting a signed request. If the request is for a “fast appeal” you may call Customer Service (See section “Important Contact Information” for phone numbers). Generally we have **30 calendar days** to give you our decision. This is a “**standard appeal**”. If your health requires it, you can ask for a “**fast appeal**”, which means we will answer you within **72 hours**.
- However, both the “standard” and “fast” coverage decisions allow us to take up an additional 14 days if you ask for more time, or if we need to gather more information that may benefit you.
- If we do not give you an answer by the deadline above (or by the end of the extended time period if we took extra days), we are required to send your request on to Level 2 of the appeals process, where it will be reviewed by an Independent Review Organization.
- **Remember: You must make your appeal request within 60 calendar days** from the date on the written notice we sent to tell you our answer to your request for a coverage decision. If you miss this deadline and have a good reason for missing it, we may give you more time to make your appeal.

If our answer is yes - We must authorize or provide the coverage we have agreed to provide within:

30 days if your request was a “standard appeal”

72 hours if your request was a “fast decision”

If our answer is no - We will send you a written denial notice informing you that we have sent your appeal to the Independent Review Organization for a Level 2 Appeal.

Appeals & Grievances Overview

If our plan says no to your appeal, your case will *automatically* be sent on to the next level of the appeals process.

- To make sure we were being fair when we said no to your appeal, **our plan is required to send your appeal to the “Independent Review Organization.”** When we do this, it means that your appeal is going on to the next level of the appeals process, which is Level 2.

HOW TO MAKE A LEVEL 2 APPEAL FOR MEDICAL CARE OR SERVICES

If our plan says no to your Level 1 Appeal, your case will *automatically* be sent on to the next level of the appeals process. During the Level 2 Appeal, the **Independent Review Organization** reviews the decision our plan made when we said no to your first appeal. This organization decides whether the decision we made should be changed.

- If you made a standard appeal to our plan at Level 1, the review organization must give you an answer to your Level 2 Appeal **within 30 calendar days** of when it receives your appeal.
- If you had a fast appeal to our plan at Level 1, the review organization must give you an answer to your Level 2 Appeal **within 72 hours** of when it receives your appeal.
- However, if the Independent Review Organization needs to gather more information that may benefit you, **it can take up to 14 more days.**

The Independent Review Organization will tell you its decision in writing and explain the reasons for it.

- **If the review organization says yes to part or all of what you requested**, we must authorize the medical care coverage within 72 hours or provide the service within 14 days after we receive the decision from the review organization.
- **If this organization says no to your appeal**, it means they agree with our plan that your request for coverage for medical care should not be approved. The notice you get from the Independent Review Organization will tell you in writing if your case meets the requirements for continuing with the appeals process. There are three additional levels in the appeals process after Level 2 (for a total of five levels of appeal):
 - The Level 3 Appeal is handled by an Administrative Law Judge (ALJ). If your Level 2 Appeal is turned down and you meet the requirements to continue with the appeals process, you must decide whether you want to go on to Level 3 and make a third appeal. The details on how to do this are in the written notice you receive after your Level 2 Appeal. Your case must meet certain requirements to qualify for this level of appeal.
 - The Level 4 appeal is handled by the Medicare Appeals Council. If either you or the plan is unhappy with the Level 3 decision either of us can ask for this review. Your case must meet certain requirements to qualify for this level of appeal.
 - The Level 5 appeal is handled by the Federal District Court. If either you or the plan is unhappy with the Level 4 decision either of us can ask for this review. Your case must meet certain requirements to qualify for this level of appeal.

Appeals & Grievances Overview

OTHER TYPES OF APPEALS

In addition to appeals for your medical care, there are also appeals for when you think your coverage is ending too soon for the following services:

- Inpatient Coverage
- Skilled Nursing Facilities
- Home Health Care
- Comprehensive Outpatient Rehabilitation Facility

For more information on how to file these types of appeals, contact Customer Service (See section “Important Contact Information” for phone numbers) and request a copy of the *Evidence of Coverage*.

MAKING COMPLAINTS

HOW TO MAKE A COMPLAINT

This section explains how to use the process for making complaints. The complaint process is used for certain types of problems *only*. This includes problems related to quality of care, waiting times, and the customer service you receive.

Here are examples of the kinds of problems handled by the complaint process.

- Quality of your medical care
- Respecting your privacy
- Disrespect, poor customer service, or other negative behaviors
- Waiting times

Appeals & Grievances Overview

- Cleanliness
- Information you get from our plan

You can also file a complaint if you think we have not responded quickly enough:

- If you have asked our plan to give you a “fast response” for a coverage decision or appeal, and we have said we will not, you can make a complaint.
- If you believe our plan is not meeting the deadlines for giving you a coverage decision or an answer to an appeal you have made, you can make a complaint.
- When a coverage decision we made is reviewed and our plan is told that we must cover or reimburse you for certain medical services, there are deadlines that apply. If you think we are not meeting these deadlines, you can make a complaint.
- When our plan does not give you a decision on time, we are required to forward your case to the Independent Review Organization. If we do not do that within the required deadline, you can make a complaint.

MAKING A COMPLAINT

Contact us promptly – either by phone or in writing.

- **Usually, calling Customer Service** (See section “Important Contact Information” for phone numbers) **is the first step.** If there is anything else you need to do, Customer Service will let you know.
- **If you do not wish to call (or you called and were not satisfied), you can put your complaint in writing and send it to us.** If you do this, it means that we will use our *formal procedure* for answering grievances. Here’s how it works:
 - You may file a written grievance by sending a letter, fax, or email to SummaCare describing your complaint.

Appeals & Grievances Overview

Mail your grievance to: SummaCare, P.O. Box 3620, Akron, OH 44309-3620

Email your grievance to: summacare.com

Fax your grievance to: 330-996-8545

- If the grievance is about SummaCare's refusal to grant an enrollee's request for an expedited organization determination/coverage determination or appeal, then SummaCare will expedite the grievance and verbally respond within **24 hours**.
- The Grievance must be submitted within **60 days** of the event or incident. We must address your grievance as quickly as your case requires based on your health status, but no later than **30 days** after receiving your complaint. We may extend the timeframe by up to **14 days** if you ask for an extension, or if we justify a need for additional information and the delay is in your best interest. If we deny your grievance, in whole or in part, our written decision will explain why we denied it, and will tell you about any dispute resolution options you may have.
- If you are making a complaint because we denied your request for a **"fast response"** to a coverage decision or appeal, we will automatically give you a "fast" complaint. If you have a "fast" complaint, it means we will give you an answer **within 24 hours**.

We look into your complaint and give you our answer.

- **If possible, we will answer you right away.** If you call us with a complaint, we may be able to give you an answer on the same phone call. If your health condition requires us to answer quickly, we will do that.
- **Most complaints are answered in 30 days, but we may take up to 44 days.** If we need more information and the delay is in your best interest or if you ask for more time, we can take up to 14 more days (44 days total) to answer your complaint.
- **If we do not agree** with some or all of your complaint or don't take responsibility for the problem you are complaining about, we will let you know. Our response will include our reasons for this answer. We must respond whether we agree with the complaint or not.

Appeals & Grievances Overview

MAKING A COMPLAINT TO THE QUALITY IMPROVEMENT ORGANIZATION

You can make your complaint about the quality of care you received to our plan by using the step-by-step process outlined above.

When your complaint is about *quality of care*, you also have two extra options:

- **You can make your complaint to the Quality Improvement Organization.** If you prefer, you can make your complaint about the quality of care you received directly to this organization (*without* making the complaint to our plan). See section “Important Contact Information” for phone numbers.
- **Or you can make your complaint to both at the same time.** If you wish, you can make your complaint about quality of care to our plan and also to the Quality Improvement Organization.

IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION

SummaCare Secure Customer Service regarding Coverage decisions for medical care, payment requests or complaints: Call 1-800-996-6250 (TTY only, call 1-800-750-0750). Calls to this number are free. We are available for phone calls 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Friday. From October 15, 2011 to February 14, 2012, a representative will be available to speak to you from 8 a.m. through 8 p.m. seven days a week.

SummaCare Secure regarding Appeals: Call 1-330-996-8480 or toll free 1-877-362-1530 (TTY only, call 1-800-750-0750).

State Health Insurance Assistance Program, in Ohio this is the Ohio Senior Health Insurance Information Program: Call 1-800-686-1578. Calls to this number are free.

Quality Improvement Organization, in Ohio this organization is called KePro: Call 1-216-447-9604. Calls to this number are not free.