

Advanced Beneficiary Notice of NonCoverage (ABN)

What is an Advanced Beneficiary Notice of NonCoverage?

If you have Original Medicare, your health care provider or supplier may give you a notice called an “Advanced Beneficiary Notice of NonCoverage” (ABN).

- This notice says Medicare probably (or certainly) won’t pay for some services in certain situations.
- You will be asked to choose whether to get the items or services listed on the ABN.
- If you choose to get the items or services listed on the ABN, you will have to pay if Medicare doesn’t.
- You will be asked to sign the ABN to say that you have read and understood the notice.
- An ABN isn’t an official denial of coverage by Medicare. You could choose to get the items listed on the ABN and still ask your healthcare provider or supplier to submit the bill to Medicare or another insurer. If payment is denied, you can still file an appeal (if you choose Option 1 on the ABN).

How does receiving an ABN help me?

The ABN protects you from unexpected financial liability in cases where Medicare denies payment. You have the opportunity to choose whether or not to receive the service or item.

The ABN helps you to make an informed consumer decision about whether to obtain the service or item and be prepared to pay for it if Medicare holds you liable for the service or item or to choose not to receive it.

When I am liable for payment because I signed an ABN, how much can I be charged?

When you sign an ABN and become liable for payment, there are no Medicare charge limits, which apply to the supplier’s, physician or provider’s charges. The amount of the bill in such cases, therefore is a matter between you and the supplier, physician or provider. The ABN clearly shows a good faith estimate provided by the supplier, physician or provider next to the item or service being requested.

What information must be included in an ABN for a Part B service or item?

The ABN must identify the service or item for which denial is expected, and it must clearly state the reason a Medicare denial is expected. It will also include an estimate of the cost for the service or item. You may choose to receive the service or item and to be responsible for payment if Medicare does not pay (in that case, you should choose “Option 1” or “Option 2”) or you may choose not to receive the service or item (in that case, you should choose “Option 3”).

You may also choose to appeal to Medicare (by visiting the Official U.S. Government website for people with Medicare <http://www.medicare.gov/Coverage/Home.asp> or by calling 1-800-MEDICARE, TTY users should call 1-877-486-2048) when Medicare does not pay (in that case, you should choose “Option 1”) or you may choose to not appeal Medicare (in that case, you should choose “Option 2”). Be sure to keep a copy of your signed ABN for your records.

What if I refuse to sign the ABN?

If you refuse to sign, your supplier, physician, or provider may decide not to provide the service or item to you or may have a second person witness your refusal to sign the agreement and then furnish you the service or item. If an ABN being presented to you (either through the mail, over the phone, through secure e-mail, or in person) is witnessed or documented on your medical record, you may be held liable because you are on notice of the likelihood of a Medicare denial. That is what makes you liable under the law. Simply refusing to sign the ABN yet requesting the service or item, does not relinquish your financial responsibility when proper notice has been presented and received.