

Next Generation ACO Cost Sharing Support for Part B Services Benefit Enhancement: Frequently Asked Questions

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Cost sharing support (i.e., reduction, subsidy) generally describes a discount that lowers the amount a beneficiary has to pay for a deductible, copayments, and coinsurance. Cost sharing support is designed to minimize beneficiaries' out-of-pocket costs when they go to the doctor or have a hospital stay.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q1: What is the Cost Sharing Support for Part B Services Benefit Enhancement?

A1: The Cost Sharing Support for Part B Services Benefit Enhancement permits Next Generation ACOs (NGACOs) to enter into a Cost Sharing Arrangement with Next Generation Participants and Preferred Providers to reduce or eliminate cost sharing costs for aligned beneficiaries for Medicare Part B services (excluding prescription drugs and durable medical equipment). The principle aim of allowing NGACOs to offer this cost sharing support is to reduce financial barriers so aligned beneficiaries may obtain needed care and better comply with treatment plans, thereby improving their own health outcomes.

Q2: What are Medicare Part B Services?

A2: Medicare Part B (medical insurance) is part of Original Medicare and covers medical services and supplies that are medically necessary to treat one's health condition. This can include outpatient care, preventive services, ambulance services, and durable medical equipment.

Q3: Are prescription drugs, including injectable medications, and durable medical equipment included under the Cost Sharing Support for Part B Services Benefit Enhancement?

A3: No, the Cost Sharing Support for Part B Services Benefit Enhancement is not available for items such as Part B drugs or durable medical equipment. The Cost Sharing Benefit Enhancement may be offered only for Part B "services" and not "items" and prescription drugs and durable medical equipment are expressly excluded. For additional and detailed information on this and more, a link has been provided at the end of this document to the Notice of Waiver of Certain Fraud and Abuse Laws in Connection with the Next Generation ACO Model.

Q4: Who is eligible to receive cost sharing support for Medicare Part B services from an NGACO?

A4: The Cost Sharing Support for Part B Services Benefit Enhancement is available to Next Generation aligned beneficiaries in a category identified in the NGACO's Implementation Plan. Eligible beneficiaries may include, without limitation, one or more of the following:

- Beneficiaries without Medicare supplemental insurance (i.e., Medigap).
 - Beneficiaries experiencing high health care costs.
 - Beneficiaries who require certain Part B services, the receipt of which could reduce the individual's overall health care costs.
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Q5: Do NGACOs need to have a fully executed Cost Sharing Support Arrangement with each Next Generation Participant and Preferred Provider by the Model's benefit enhancement implementation start date?

A5: Arrangements between the NGACO and each Next Generation Participant and Preferred Provider who is participating in the benefit enhancement must be fully executed by the date of the NGACO's implementation of the cost sharing support benefit enhancement for a performance year.

Q6: Are NGACOs required to submit to CMS the Cost Sharing Support Arrangements that they established with Next Generation Participants and Preferred Providers?

A6: NGACOs are not required to submit their Cost Sharing Support Arrangements as part of the Implementation Plan review process. NGACOs must keep copies of the arrangements on file and they may be subject to future reporting, auditing, or both.

Q7: Are NGACOs required to implement the Cost Sharing Support for Part B Services Benefit Enhancement across the whole organization or may NGACOs start with a phased implementation or a pilot test (e.g., focusing on one or two Next Generation Participants or Preferred Providers)?

A7: NGACOs can add Next Generation Participants or Preferred Providers for participation in the Cost Sharing Benefit Enhancement during the performance year. NGACOs may start implementing this benefit enhancement by executing a Cost Sharing Support Arrangement with one (or more) NGACO Participant(s) or Preferred Provider(s) and then add providers and suppliers over time, but these additions must be consistent with the NGACO's Implementation Plan. Cost Sharing Support Arrangements must also be in place with each additional Next Generation Participant and Preferred Provider before such Next Generation Participant or Preferred Provider may implement this benefit enhancement.

Q8: May the Next Generation Participant or the Preferred Provider that the NGACO has a Cost Sharing Support Arrangement with agree to get no payment of the beneficiary's cost-sharing amount from the NGACO? Or does the NGACO have to pay some portion of the cost-sharing amount?

A8: If the NGACO Participant or the Preferred Provider has agreed to have no payment for the amount of the beneficiary cost-sharing not collected, then it would be allowable. The payment arrangement must be outlined in the Cost Sharing Support Arrangement between the NGACO and the Next Generation Participant or the Preferred Provider.

Q9: May an NGACO include aligned beneficiaries who have Medicare supplemental insurance for the Cost Sharing Benefit Enhancement?

A9: Yes, the Model does not prohibit NGACOs from including beneficiaries with supplemental insurance in the Cost Sharing Support for Part B Services Benefit Enhancement so long as the beneficiaries are in one of the categories the ACO identified in its implementation plan as eligible for cost sharing support.

For additional and detailed information regarding this benefit enhancement, please see the Notice of Waiver of Certain Fraud and Abuse Laws in Connection with the Next Generation ACO Model: <https://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Fraud-and-Abuse/PhysicianSelfReferral/Downloads/Amended-ACO-Model-Waivers.pdf>