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## Talking with a Friend's or Family Member's Doctor During an Appointment

If you help care for someone with Medicare, you may need to talk to a doctor or other health care provider about that person's condition and/or treatment plan during an appointment. For example, your friend or family member may become nervous or upset during the appointment. Or, you might have questions about that person's care. In these cases, it may be easier for you to talk to the doctor alone.

The doctor must get your friend's or family member's permission to talk to you about their care. As long as that person gives permission, the doctor can talk directly with you. Ask the doctor's office how your friend or family member can give you permission to talk to their doctor.

### Will Medicare help pay if I talk to the doctor alone?

Yes, as long as your friend or family member gives the doctor permission to talk to you. During a medically necessary appointment, the doctor can spend time talking with you about the condition and/or treatment plan for your friend or family member, even if that person isn't present. The Medicare Part B (Medical Insurance) payment includes the time that the doctor spends talking with you. This means that the doctor can't bill Medicare or your friend or family member separately for the time the doctor spent talking to you.

### Where can I get Medicare information?

#### **Medicare.gov**

Visit Medicare.gov to help your friend or family member find out what Medicare covers, choose a Medicare health or drug plan, compare nursing homes, get help with billing, find local resources, and more.

#### **Your friend's or family member's secure Medicare account**

Visit Medicare.gov to help your friend or family member access personal Medicare information through their Medicare account. Ask your friend or family member for permission to log into their account.

## Where can I get Medicare information? (continued)

### **1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227)**

Get Medicare information 24 hours a day, including weekends. TTY users can call 1-877-486-2048. Have your friend's or family member's Medicare card ready so you can enter that person's Medicare Number.

**Important:** Medicare can give you personal health information about your friend or family member only if that person gives verbal permission while you're on the phone or has added you as an authorized representative. It's a good idea to fill out the authorization form in advance. Visit [Medicare.gov/forms-help-resources/medicare-forms](https://www.Medicare.gov/forms-help-resources/medicare-forms) to help your friend or family member complete the "Authorization to Disclose Personal Health Information" form in 1 of 2 ways:

1. Fill out and submit the form online. **If you choose this option, you can immediately call and talk on behalf of your friend or family member.** If you need help completing the form online, call 1-800-MEDICARE.
2. Download, print, and fill out the form. Mail the completed, signed form to the mailing address on the form. **If you choose this option, you'll generally need to wait a few weeks before you're able to call and talk on behalf of your friend or family member.** You can also call 1-800-MEDICARE and ask for help filling out the form. The customer service representative will mail the completed form to your friend or family member to sign and return.

### **State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP)**

Get personalized help from your local SHIP counselor for billing questions, Medicare plan choices, help with complaints or appeals, and more. Visit [shiptacenter.org](https://www.shiptacenter.org), or call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227) to get your SHIP's phone number.

You have the right to get Medicare information in an accessible format, like large print, Braille, or audio. You also have the right to file a complaint if you feel you've been discriminated against. Visit [Medicare.gov/about-us/accessibility-nondiscrimination-notice](https://www.Medicare.gov/about-us/accessibility-nondiscrimination-notice), or call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227) for more information. TTY users can call 1-877-486-2048.

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