

## Preventive versus Diagnostic Care

**There continues to be patient confusion surrounding the difference between preventive and diagnostic care, resulting in unanticipated patient bills. Please explain the difference to your patients and the following language might be helpful for provider and office staff conversations when dealing with our Qualcomm Premier Plan members.**

**Preventive care** includes services such as routine check-ups, screening tests, and immunizations for when the patient is not being seen because of new symptoms or existing problems.

**Diagnostic care** includes visits and subsequent tests/procedures ordered by a physician and office needed to help diagnose or monitor the patient's condition or disease. Diagnostic tools include radiology, ultrasound, nuclear medicine, laboratory, pathology services, and other tests.

### **Preventive and diagnostic care may occur during the same visit.**

For example, during a routine check-up a physician discusses a chronic illness with the patient. The tests the doctor orders may be preventive (such as a screening mammogram) and other tests may be diagnostic (such as a cholesterol check for someone with high cholesterol).

### **Why your patient needs to understand the difference . . .**

Understanding the difference between preventive and diagnostic care will help your patient anticipate when **cost sharing** applies and when there is no charge to them as defined in their plan benefits.

### **Establish Care Visits**

This is a generic visit description and can result in many outcomes. When your patient makes the choice to establish care, please identify if the visit is a new patient physical (preventive check-up) or is it to discuss a diagnostic concern (i.e. sore throat, hypertension, diabetes, rash, etc.)

If you have any questions, please contact your region's practice outreach manager:

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