

THE VILLAGES HEALTH



MEDICAL CAMPUS

Specialty Care Center
1400 N. U.S. Highway 27/441,
Building 810, 674-8731
**The Villages
Regional Hospital**
1451 El Camino Real,
751-8000
Urgent Care: 751-8863

america's healthiest hometown



Medical Director Dr. Robert Reilly, left, talks with The Villages Health's Director of Medical Affairs, Dr. Joe Hildner in the huddle zone area of the Creekside Care Center. Both doctors agree that Medicare Advantage plans give them a variety of tools that lead to better medical care for their patients.

Doctors: Medicare Advantage Leads to Better Health Care

Doctors say they appreciate the many ways those plans stress preventive care.

BY LARRY D. CROOM
Daily Sun Ombudsman



If you talk to Villages Health medical providers, you quickly will discover that you are talking to fans of the way medicine is practiced under Medicare Advantage plans.

"Medicare Advantage definitely allows me to take care of patients much more thoroughly," said Dr. David Jordahl, medical director of the Colony Care Center. "It makes me a better doctor. It makes all of us better doctors."

The reasons for that, Jordahl said, are quite simple. It's because Medicare Advantage offers a variety of perks that don't come with standard fee-for-service Medicare.

For instance, those plans, which are administered by private insurance companies, offer benefits such as no premium, no or low co-pays, gym memberships, preventive dental and eyewear and hearing aid coverage, to name a few.

At The Villages Health, that also includes a hospitalist from the practice for those patients who need it, as well as nurse navigators to help coordinate care after a hospital stay.

"With Medicare Advantage, the whole drive is let's get you

well," said Dr. Joe Hildner, director of medical affairs for The Villages Health. "Let's see if we can keep you from breaking a hip. Let's see if we can prevent that stroke in the first place. Let's make sure we get you immunized so you don't get that disease that we can prevent."

That preventive way of thinking is one of the many reasons a recent survey of Medicare Advantage patients showed high satisfaction rates. In fact, the results of the data collected by the Better Medicare Alliance showed that 87 percent of seniors in Medicare Advantage are satisfied with the preventive care they receive, while 79 percent are satisfied with how their care is coordinated among doctors and other providers.

All told, the numbers showed that 91 percent of seniors in Medicare Advantage are satisfied with their coverage, with 69 percent saying they are highly satisfied.

And among seniors who switched to Medicare Advantage from fee-for-service Medicare, 58 percent say the plans are better, while just 2 percent say fee-for-service is better.

Jordahl said one of the biggest benefits he sees with Medicare Advantage is the ability to track various data streams on his patients.

"We can track compliance with medications and how patients are doing with preventive services, such as colorectal cancer screening or a mammography for breast



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COMING MAY 31
Medicare Advantage provides hospitalists, nurse navigators for Villages Health patients.

cancer screening," he said. "We can see if there are any care gaps where patients haven't quite had that done. And we can intervene and try to get these well-documented, evidence-based ways to prevent a variety of illnesses and get those services accomplished for the patient."

Dr. Robert Reilly, medical director of the Creekside Care Center, said Medicare Advantage gives physicians opportunities to administer preventive treatments the right way.

"If you look at other models in the world, that's what they do," he said. "They reimburse their physicians more for preventing sickness and providing quality care that focuses more on wellness. What we're doing here is very unique. You won't see it in a lot of settings. But I think this is going to be the paradigm that sets the trend for everybody else."

Pete Clarkson, chief executive officer of North/Central Florida for UnitedHealthcare Medicare & Retirement, agreed.

"We hear a lot about coordination of care," he said of the input he receives from beneficiaries. "We hear a lot about there's a team of people looking after me and checking on me. So it's not one doc here and one doc there. It's integrated. You have that team approach and you get a better outcome that way."

UnitedHealthcare offers the only Medicare Advantage plans that are accepted by The Villages Health. For more information, visit any of the MedicareStores that are located at each town square or speak to a representative at any care center.

TALK TO A DOCTOR

Dr. Saul Rosenblum, the medical director of The Villages Health's Santa Barbara Care Center, earned his medical school degree from State University at Upstate Medical Center in Syracuse, New York. He completed his residency training at the Genesee Hospital in Rochester, New York, and is certified by the American Board of Internal medicine.



1

Why is it important to have a primary care doctor in your life?

Medicine and health care are so complex that it's great to have a coach who can talk to you and walk you through all aspects of the system – the prevention of illness, the maintenance of health care and the complexity of the technology. It gives you comfort to know there's someone there in the health-care industry to do that for you.

2

What is your philosophy of health care?

I am very much in favor of the commitment to allowing the primary care physicians to practice the kind of medicine we knew when we were children, where the physician was a respected and trusted member of the family.

3

Why is it important to have so many different services, such as X-ray, labs and audiology, available at each primary care center?

These are things that so commonly are needed. Why not integrate it with the primary care physician? It just makes sense. Have the labs drawn here. We have some X-rays we can do here. We have the audiologists.

Rather than making transportation an obstacle for these people – and it is an obstacle for many of them – why not make it available? It just makes sense.

4

Is it true that medical students keep you on your toes when you're training them?

They sure can. When they start asking me about the biochemical reaction of a certain medication, it brings me back to the days of medical school. I have to scratch my head and think, 'Is that right or is that not right?' They're asking the insightful questions that make you kind of do your homework.

ASK A DOCTOR

Answers Provided by
DR. ROBERT KERSH
Cardiologist, Specialty Care Center

What is the importance of having primary care and specialty care under one umbrella as The Villages Health does?

There really is a partnership. I may not have to see a patient on a regular basis. I may be able to see a patient in consultation and send that patient back to the primary care doctor with my recommendations. A lot of the treatment can be carried out by the qualified internist. I don't have to see the patient routinely every three or four months for high blood pressure. I may be able to make recommendations.

How important is that coordination for the patient?

It's important for the patient. Not only that their doctors – primary care and specialists – have that communication, but also being on the same computer system for the entire system. We have the same electronic medical record. If I'm at home on a Sunday evening and I get called by a patient or a primary care doctor, I can just plug in my laptop and take a look and get the whole history from the primary care doctor or another specialist that may have seen that patient. If there's a question with medication or acute illness, we'll have that information throughout the entire system.

Aren't there also some important reasons to avoid duplicate testing if at all possible?

Exactly. Patients, a lot of times, don't remember when their last test was done. When was your last stress test? When was your last echocardiogram? They may not recall. If it's indicated, I can just look on the computer and say, 'Oh yeah, it was just done four months ago. Let me look at that one and save you from going through another test.' A lot of times I've seen, in prior practice, where blood tests would have to be done over and over again because there was no standard communication between one doctor's office to another doctor's office to a hospital. All those were on independent systems and communication was a problem.

DID YOU KNOW?

Dr. Christopher Pead, a primary care physician at the Santa Barbara Care Center, is a huge fan of the Tampa Bay Buccaneers and enjoys woodworking, reading and traveling in his spare time.

