Understanding Part B Excess Charges

GROVE BENEFIT ADVISORS

What is an excess charge?

When a provider treats Medicare patients but does **not accept Medicare assignment** for a covered Part B service, the provider may be permitted to bill more than the Medicare-approved amount. This extra amount is called a **Part B excess charge**.

> THE KEY NUMBER
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> **For many applicable Part B services, the federal limiting charge is generally 15% above the Medicare-approved amount for nonparticipating providers. The exact calculation and exceptions matter.**

When could it happen?

It can arise with a nonparticipating physician or other provider who does not accept assignment for the service. Do not assume that a provider's specialty, practice type, or hospital affiliation determines whether they accept assignment.

A provider who has **opted out** of Medicare is different: they can charge any amount, and Medicare won't pay for the service, even if it is one Medicare covers, except in emergencies.

Does it apply in Colorado?

The 15% federal limit applies here. The Colorado Division of Insurance's Medigap guide describes the excess or "limiting" charge as 15% higher than what Medicare approves. Rules can vary by state and service, so confirm the provider's assignment status before care.

How to check before a visit

1. **Search Medicare Care Compare**
   Visit **medicare.gov/care-compare** to find a provider and review available Medicare participation information.
2. **Call the provider's billing office**
   Ask specifically whether the provider **accepts Medicare assignment for the service** you are scheduling.
3. **Confirm any potential additional charges**
   Ask whether you could be billed above the Medicare-approved amount and request an explanation of your estimated responsibility.

> THE QUESTION TO ASK
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> **"Do you accept Medicare assignment for this service, and do you accept the Medicare-approved amount as payment in full?"**

Plan G vs. Plan N

Medigap Plan G covers Part B excess charges. **Medigap Plan N** does not. This is one of several factors to consider alongside premiums, copays, and your providers.

Educational overview only. Provider participation and billing can change; verify details with Medicare and the provider before receiving services.

More on the website: **groveba.com/blog/part-b-excess-charges**. Questions? Call (970) 840-1250.

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We do not offer every plan available in your area. Currently we represent 8 organizations which offer 51 products in your area. Please contact Medicare.gov or 1-800-MEDICARE to get information on all of your options.

General educational information about the Medicare program, not a complete description of benefits. Benefits and costs vary by plan and county and can change.