

Social Security Answers

By D.H. Butler
Field Representative

Q. My doctor says that he doesn't want to have anything to do with Medicare. What can I do?

A. Ask for an itemized bill listing the service rendered from him. Submit it to Medicare with a request for payment form. You will be paid 80% of the reasonable charge for each of the services shown, provided you have already met the \$50 yearly deductible.

Q. What if the doctor refused to give me such a bill?

A. Advise him the American Medical Association has ruled that doctors have an ethical and moral responsibility to furnish a patient with a bill of this type. If he still refused, contact your nearest Social Security Office.

Q. My mother is in a nursing home and needs a wheelchair. The one supplied her by the home is old and dilapidated. Will Medicare pay the cost of a new one?

A. No. Durable medical equipment is covered by Medicare only when bought or rented for use in the patient's home.

Q. My father recently died and in going through his personal effects I found some paid bills (doctor) that he apparently never submitted to Medicare. Can I submit them for payment?

A. Yes. Contact your nearest Social Security office for assistance in filing this type claim.

Q. Suppose the bills in the above question spanned several years. Is there any cut off date for claiming reimbursements?

A. Yes. Generally bills must be submitted no later than the year following the year services were rendered. For example—if the bill is for services rendered in the period January-September, 1970 the claim must be filed with Medicare no later than December 31, 1971. However, if the services were rendered in the last three months of 1970, the claim could be filed as late as December 31, 1972.

Q. My 17 year old daughter has been disabled since birth. She and I are collecting monthly Social Security benefits on my deceased husband's earnings record. Is there any way my daughter's monthly benefits can continue after she reaches 18 even though she will not be attending school?

A. If her condition is severe and she remains in your care, you and your disabled daughter's Social Security benefits may continue after her 18th birthday. Call or visit your Social Security office about 6 months before your daughter's 18th birthday to apply for childhood disability benefits.

Q. Since my father died, I've gotten monthly Social Security survivors benefits. I will turn 18 next year and will be graduating from high school. Can I continue to receive my checks if I go to college after graduation?

A. Yes. You may continue to receive survivors benefits until 22 as long as you are a full-time student and unmarried. You should receive a notice sometime before your 18th birthday telling you to get in touch with the Social Security office if you plan to continue in school.

Q. Even though I am 66 years old, I am still working full time. My friends told me that I should find out about my Social Security retirement benefits. Should I do this when I'm still working?

A. Yes, for several reasons. Even though you are still working you might be eligible for some Social Security checks. It all depends on your earnings. And, you could be missing out on valuable protection under the Medicare program.

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