



Press Release
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Knox County Hospital District Advocates for Traditional Medicare

Patients encouraged to choose traditional Medicare for greater control and continuity of care.

KNOX CITY, Texas (November 1, 2024) – With Medicare’s annual open enrollment period underway, Knox County Hospital District is raising awareness of the long-term benefits of traditional Medicare. Stephen Kuehler, CEO, emphasizes the value of this original Medicare program that has been supported by beneficiaries’ contributions through Social Security withholdings over their entire working lives.

Kuehler points out that traditional Medicare provides both reliability and patient-centered care, which aligns more closely with the community’s healthcare priorities than Medicare Advantage plans, which are private insurance products with distinct limitations.

“Traditional Medicare empowers patients, putting healthcare decisions back into the hands of individuals and their chosen providers,” Kuehler said. “Unlike Medicare Advantage, traditional Medicare allows patients the freedom to work directly with local healthcare professionals who understand their medical history, ensuring a personalized approach to care that reflects each patient’s unique needs and goals.”

By contrast, Medicare Advantage plans, which are marketed as providing additional services, operate as private insurance products administered by insurance companies. While these plans may seem appealing due to the promise of added benefits, they come with coverage policies that can limit access to specific treatments, procedures, or even provider networks, depending on the insurance provider’s criteria.

Medicare Advantage is fundamentally different from traditional Medicare, which patients have contributed to throughout their working years. This distinction can be critical for individuals relying on consistent access to healthcare providers they trust.

Kuehler explained, “Medicare Advantage plans are designed and managed by insurance companies, which means that decisions about coverage, networks, and even certain treatments may be influenced by the insurance provider’s policies rather than what’s best for the patient. While these plans advertise appealing perks, it’s essential to remember that there can be drawbacks. Access to care and treatment plans advocated by primary care providers can become restricted, potentially impacting long-term health outcomes.”

Knox County Hospital District encourages individuals to consider the broader picture, including what they may give up in terms of autonomy and access to local healthcare providers with whom they have long-term relationships. Traditional Medicare, Kuehler stresses, gives patients the ability to work closely

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with providers they know and trust, strengthening the patient-provider relationship that is central to effective healthcare. “Our focus is on long-term health and trust between our patients and providers,” Kuehler noted. “That relationship can mean everything in healthcare, and it’s something we work hard to preserve at Knox County Hospital District.”

Kuehler underscores the importance of making informed decisions, especially as Medicare Advantage plans often advertise seemingly attractive benefits like “free” services that may not fully meet patients’ needs. “It’s critical to remember that traditional Medicare, unlike Medicare Advantage, offers a structure that prioritizes individual health needs over corporate interests,” he said. “At Knox County Hospital District, we believe in patient-centered care that respects patient choice and fosters trust—a focus that’s too often secondary in Medicare Advantage plans.”

The district remains dedicated to high-quality healthcare and patient advocacy, working to provide the resources and information that enable individuals to make informed choices. “Traditional Medicare enables us to serve patients based on what’s best for their health—not based on insurance company restrictions,” Kuehler explained. “At Knox County Hospital District, we stand by the belief that traditional Medicare is a tried-and-true option for those seeking comprehensive, patient-centered care.”

Open enrollment for Medicare began on October 15 and runs through December 7. During this time, qualifying individuals can enroll in Medicare for the first time or make changes to their existing plans. Knox County Hospital District encourages eligible individuals to research both options thoroughly to understand what each plan offers, including any potential limitations.

For more details on Medicare options and the advantages of traditional Medicare, please visit www.choosingmedicare.org. To speak with a representative from Knox County Hospital District regarding Medicare or available services, please call 940-657-3535.

About Knox County Hospital District

Founded in 1926, Knox County Hospital District provides healthcare for residents of Knox County and surrounding areas. The district offers a wealth of medical services, including 24-hour emergency care, advanced radiology services, a clinical laboratory, home health, physical therapy, long-term care, patient education, and more. For additional information, please call 940-657-3535 or visit www.knoxhospital.org.

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