



## Medicare Minute® Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. Why should I offer the Medicare Minute® in my community?

Medicare Minute is an ideal model for hospitals to use to meet their internal training goals, educate Medicare-eligible patients, encourage individuals to become advocates for their own health care, and involve the institution in community outreach activities. Medicare Minute is information that can be provided to existing patients each month. But the program's broader national vision is to present short, engaging presentations on a timely Medicare topic to community members, the perfect outreach tool. So, why use Medicare Minute? It's a great marketing program to support healthcare organizations as they educate patients and reach Medicare-eligible populations in the community. Hospitals can make presentations at community venues on a monthly basis – or at one-off events like health fairs – and they can use the program's materials to keep in touch with and educate their patient base. Everyone wins.

Medicare Minute content provides the perfect vehicle to familiarize the public with a hospital's programs and consumer-facing mission because the program is designed to reach a broad public audience, as well as satisfy the individual's need-to-know about Medicare. Since the Medicare Minute is exceedingly replicable and adaptable to new content, it can be easily incorporated into existing patient communications and community event programming. Each month there is a fresh and timely topic to keep audiences returning for more.

Presentations can be kept short to fill in time between other speakers, or expanded using the teaching materials to fill up an entire hour. Some Medicare Minute Facilitators (a "Facilitator" is the official term for Medicare Minute presenters) have even combined multiple Medicare Minute topics to make an extended presentation. Most importantly, the Medicare Minute materials provide hospitals with the tools to understand timely Medicare information, and when staff better understand Medicare rules and regulations, an institution can maximize its reimbursement revenue, as appropriate, and become stronger patient advocates. These materials are created by the Medicare Rights Center, a national nonprofit and the largest independent source of Medicare information and advice in the U.S. Each month hospitals will have access to three elements:

- **Script:** Provides talking points on a timely Medicare topic for your presentation, including three key points and a Take Action step that encourages audience members to apply what they've learned to their own lives.
- **Teaching materials:** Supplements the script by providing additional information you can present, and you can use the content and case studies to lengthen your presentation and answer audience questions.
- **Audience Handout:** Provides audience members with information they can take home and refer to at a later date. Hospitals will create a customized handout template that

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will turn each month's give-away into a fully on-brand document, complete with the institution's logo and the name and contact information of the presenter.

## **2. How can I integrate the Medicare Minute® into my current outreach activities?**

Medicare Minute presentations are very adaptable and can be easily incorporated into existing patient engagement and community outreach programs. Medicare Rights works with a number of national organizations and the materials are used primarily for the benefit of their members. Medicare Minute enables hospitals to bring an audience together for a new educational event each month – invite both current patients and Medicare-eligible individuals from the general public. Institutions can add Medicare Minute content, like the handout, to a monthly newsletter. If the member institution would like to expand the program and engage the older volunteers in their auxiliary groups to reach out into the community and help “spread the good word about Medicare,” the short 10-15 minute presentations can be included before or after an organization's usual group activities. This is a good way hospitals can introduce their programs directly through communities of faith, for instance.

Medicare Minute is an effective way to attract regular community audiences each month. Since people will learn more about Medicare at each of these presentations, they gradually become increasingly comfortable addressing their own Medicare issues when they arise and begin to see themselves as advocates for their own health care. Attendees often develop friendships among themselves which help drive regular attendance. Finally, because the same presenter or team of presenters visit the same site each month, Medicare-eligible audience members become more comfortable asking questions and knowing where to turn for help, which puts the hospital in a consumer-friendly light.

## **3. How can the Medicare Minute® help me connect with new sites and audiences in my community?**

The flexibility of the Medicare Minute program makes it a perfect way to conduct community outreach. Medicare Minute can be added easily to existing programming at new sites. Since presentations are typically only 10-15 minutes long, it is usually not difficult for sites to find time in their programming to add a Medicare Minute once a month. However, if the site or the hospital itself is looking for a longer presentation, the Medicare Minute can easily be lengthened and enhanced using the information in the teaching materials and personal stories and case studies from the Facilitator – you can take up to 45 minutes to present and another 15 minutes for audience Q&A.

Overall, the flexibility of these presentations will help you easily integrate the Medicare Minute into programming at any site, while also introducing hospital programs and activities to older and disabled individuals. Many sites lack a source of consistent, accurate healthcare information for older adults. Most organizations will appreciate the opportunity to receive this information in a way that is easy to understand. If a site is unsure whether it wants ongoing Medicare Minute presentations, you can request to present once or twice and see how it goes. In the 15+ years that Medicare Minute has been operating, it appears that once sites see how much audiences like the Medicare Minute, they will usually request regular presentations.

## **4. Can Medicare Minute® be used to help with patient engagement?**

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Medicare Minute can absolutely be used as a patient engagement tool, providing hospitals with an internal education program which can take the form of both presentations and information sharing through the handout. A better informed patient becomes a more satisfied patient, and Medicare Minute can help train care team members so they can be more aware of the intricacies of adult healthcare insurance coverage.

Participating hospitals are asked to report both in-house and external community presentations to better track Medicare Minute outcomes. The easiest way to report Medicare Minute activity is by using the secure online Salesforce reporting tool from Medicare Rights Center. On the hospital's reporting site, a member institution can enter the Facilitator's name, institution, the Medicare Minute topic they presented on, the audience count, audience reaction, and any issues encountered. Or they can indicate that they sent out materials via an email blast or newsletter, reporting the number of recipients. The reporting tool for a hospital will be located at <https://medicarerights.secure.force.com/partner/HospitalNameCityState> [*site not active*].

Reporting tips:

- Be sure to take a count of the audience before the facilitator begins the presentation, or have someone accompanying the facilitator do the count.
- Each staff person and layperson in the audience counts as a participant.
- If the facilitator email blasts the handout to the institution's mailing list of Medicare-eligible patients or to a broader e-newsletter list or mails out the handout as a special mailing or part of the organization's regular newsletter, count each recipient as part of the audience count and report the date and topic.

#### **5. Fall Open Enrollment is such a busy time of year. How can I find time for Medicare Minute® given all the other work during this time?**

Medicare Minute is a great outreach tool for hospitals to use during the Fall Open Enrollment period. Every year, the October Medicare Minute topic is dedicated to educating Medicare beneficiaries on their rights and coverage options during this period. Although Fall Open Enrollment is always a hectic time, the Medicare Minute can provide hospitals with the opportunity to reach many people at once through a handout and/or a short presentation. Medicare Minute Facilitators have an easy-to-understand script to educate the audience on the importance of Fall Open Enrollment. Additionally, facilitators can give audience members a handout which highlights key information they'll be grateful to have and provides them with a name and contact information for additional assistance. Audience members who need help and advice can reach out to the hospital for more information. For public presentations, these referrals will maximize the use of outreach time and allow facilitators to focus on educating a greater number of people at a single presentation site and encouraging participation in relevant hospital programs and community initiatives.

## **6. What are some tips for reaching hard-to-reach Medicare beneficiaries?**

It's often difficult to reach certain Medicare beneficiaries, especially during the winter months. One great way to reach this population with Medicare Minute® is to lead presentations in places where people already congregate, such as senior centers, libraries, or naturally-occurring retirement communities (NORCs) like federal housing projects. Hospitals, clinics, and on-site conference rooms or auditoria are perfect venues, too.

Here are a few more ways to access hard-to-reach populations that don't require in-person contact.

- Contact local radio stations: Local stations are sometimes willing to broadcast a monthly (or more frequent) Medicare Minute. People can either call into the station with questions or be provided with the number for the facilitator during the broadcast for follow-up questions based on the presentation. Remember that the length of the Medicare Minute talk is highly flexible. Facilitators can keep the talk short or add content from patient and personal stories or insert background from the teaching materials. And having an on-air Q&A call-in session is an option to explore, too.
- Reach out to local community access cable channels: Some Medicare Minute Facilitators have presented the Medicare Minute on a local cable station, along with programming geared to 65+ audiences. As with radio, the number for the facilitator can be provided during the broadcast to solicit follow-up questions. Just be sure to mention Medicare Rights Center as the copyright holder and creator of the materials (as it's presented at the end of the audience handout) for both radio and television broadcasts.
- Set up a teleconference. This is a good option for reaching Medicare beneficiaries who are homebound. Some facilitators use a centralized number that people call into. Telehealth communications systems make excellent modes of delivery to homebound patients in local health systems. Monthly content is typically mailed or emailed to the audience in advance. By leading a teleconference or telehealth session at a set time each month, you can help participants grow more comfortable asking questions, and increase their sense of community.
- Host a Skype session: If there is a group of Medicare beneficiaries in a location that is difficult for a presenter to reach, try Skype, a free video conferencing program that allows the audience and the presenter to see and hear each other.

## **7. What are some examples of types of sites at which we can present Medicare Minute®?**

Some common sites for Medicare Minute presentations are:

- Hospital campuses: hospitals, clinics, SNFs, rehab centers, long-term care, etc.
- Libraries
- Senior centers
- Adult daycare sites
- Senior residences
- NORCs
- Retiree groups
- Offices of Area Agency on Aging (AAA), State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP), or Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRC)

- Faith-based institutions

### **8. Do we need to have a monthly update meeting for Medicare Minute® Facilitators?**

There is no requirement to hold a monthly update meeting for Medicare Minute Facilitators, but many program partners around the country have found that monthly update meetings are extremely helpful. The meetings provide an opportunity for the group to discuss the previous month's presentation experience, review the Medicare Minute materials for the coming month, and immediately address any questions. They also provide facilitators with ongoing Medicare in-service training and give them a space to ask any Medicare questions they may have. If a hospital involves its volunteers in the program, this is a good opportunity for volunteers to participate with staff. Further, the monthly meetings build camaraderie among program participants and provide a peer support network. Learn tips from successful Facilitators and try them out in the coming month.

### **9. What are some strategies that can help me manage difficult audience questions and keep everyone focused on my Medicare Minute® topic?**

Medicare Minute audiences may have questions that are personal in nature, not connected to the presentation, or otherwise difficult to answer. There are a few strategies to keep the audience focused on the subject at hand.

- If an audience member asks a question that is off-topic, advise the audience member to write down the question and ask it afterwards.
- In some cases, you may even want to state at the beginning of the presentation that questions should be held until the end.
- If you don't know the answer to a question or are unable to get to it afterwards, you can answer the question later.
- If the Medicare Minute is regularly presented at a site and the question isn't pressing, you can bring the answer to the next presentation.
- If you participate in a monthly Medicare Minute update meeting, you can bring difficult questions to the group.
- Medicare Rights Center experts can also help out if facilitators submit questions by email to [professional@medicarerights.org](mailto:professional@medicarerights.org) – they will receive a response within 2 working days. You can also use two other Medicare Rights resources with Medicare Minute audiences: MedicareInteractive.org is a free website which answers most Medicare questions in easy-to-understand language, and individuals can get free one-on-one help by calling the National Medicare Helpline at 800-333-4114, Monday through Friday, 10am-3pm Eastern Time.
- Call your [state's SHIP](#) (a SHIP is a state health insurance assistance program) for more information and help with patient Medicare issues and concerns.

Combined, these strategies give participants the confidence to present on any Medicare Minute topic without having to know everything about that particular aspect of Medicare. The program's goal isn't to have individuals become "Medicare experts," but it will help them grow in knowledge enough so that they won't lose the Medicare conversation to another professional. The program will also help individuals with resources to tap into for answers. As

hospitals take the Medicare Minute program out into the community, the goal is to help people become “Medicare smart.” The more people understand about their health care coverage, the better able they’ll be to *save money* and *stay healthy*.

### **10. How can I get excited about the Medicare Minute® program?**

In over 15 years the Medicare Minute program has operated throughout the U.S., the majority of Facilitators enjoy having access to the monthly presentation materials and using them to educate the public. But if someone is new to the program, they may need more encouragement and some convincing that this can be a positive tool to help build and maintain their institution’s outreach to patients and the community.

- Give some time to adjust to the new routine with Medicare Minute. It’s fine to be skeptical at first, but give it a good one-month trial. Practice the script and presentation, arrange for and present the material in as many sites as possible, pass out the handout to as many people as possible, and email blast or mail out the handout to current patients. After the month is over, gauge reactions to the program.
- Know that the Medicare Minute materials are easy to use and understand. They provide small amounts of Medicare information in ready-to-deliver presentations so that individuals aren’t responsible for doing their own Medicare research.
- The teaching materials provide background information and tips to make presenting in public an easier task.
- If available, participate in a monthly Medicare Minute staff meeting. In these meetings, people can practice leading the Medicare Minute and arrange to shadow more experienced presenters to become better familiar with the program.
- Practice delivering a Medicare Minute talk at home to gain confidence. No one is born a good public speaker, and over 70% of men and women fear speaking in public. Understand that public speaking is like mastering a sport or a musical instrument – it takes practice to master, and people get out of it what they put into it.
- Watch confidence and speaking skills grow by practicing the Medicare Minute speech in the mirror. Practicing in front of a mirror will help presenters check key non-verbal communication elements of their talk, like posture, gestures, and facial expressions which add much to any presentation.

Experienced Facilitators can explain to other colleagues and volunteers all the benefits of the Medicare Minute, including improved Medicare knowledge and strengthened community connections. Additionally, seasoned presenters know that they don’t have to be Medicare experts, as difficult questions can easily be referred to one of a number of free Medicare Rights and SHIP resources.

If someone finds they still need more encouragement, they can reach out to their organization’s Medicare Minute Coordinators. They can help reluctant individuals present one or two Medicare Minute topics in front of other staff or at a smaller presentation site. Soon they will see that Medicare Minute presentations are manageable and easy. Start to add family-and-friends’ stories, patient anecdotes, and appropriate open-ended questions to encourage audience participation. Soon even the most reluctant individuals will begin to see the benefits of improved patient engagement and more effective community education and outreach.

**11. If an audience already has an in-depth understanding of Medicare, how should I adjust the Medicare Minute® so it remains interesting for them?**

This situation can occur at sites that have been hosting the Medicare Minute for several years, as many of the same audience members return to the same presentation site each month. If the audience already has an in-depth understanding of Medicare, facilitators may want to begin with the Medicare Minute script and then supplement the presentation with information from the teaching materials. If they are comfortable, they can also open up the session to questions from the audience.

One of the most important Facilitator goals is to allow audience members to contribute their experiences and feel validated in front of their peers. Many facilitators will naturally want to add a “town hall” style Q&A experience to a more structured Medicare Minute presentation. After the Q&A, it’s natural to then talk about what they do as healthcare professionals, discuss their organization’s programs and initiatives, pass out materials, engage the audience even further, and discuss trickier questions in more depth.

**12. What are some ways to increase audience attendance at my existing Medicare Minute® presentations?**

The best way to increase attendance is by actively promoting the Medicare Minute program as an educational program.

- Post fliers at the presentation site and community bulletin boards, promoting the program well in advance. Hospitals can create a flier template to promote their presentations.
- Make sure that the Medicare Minute program is included on the host’s website, if possible. Include the month’s presentation topic along with the time and date of the presentation. For communities of faith, this includes the organization’s website, newsletters, and pastoral announcements.
- Send the Medicare Minute handout to all appropriate patients in an email blast. If there’s a physical meeting, let them know the Medicare Minute presentation day and time, and tell them they will go through the topic covered in the handout, which will help them become “Medicare smart.” Encourage them to bring a friend or neighbor to the presentation. Have extra handouts on hand during the presentation for audience participants who need them.
- Contact corporate partners in the community. Utilize their reach into different population segments and their desire to partner with hospitals as trusted organizations to help boost program attendance and open up new opportunities to make presentations.
- Reach out to local newspapers or radio stations. Often they can promote the Medicare Minute program at little or no cost as it’s a community service and an educational opportunity.

**13. If the audience has a limited understanding of Medicare, how can I adjust the Medicare Minute® to meet their level of Medicare proficiency?**

If an audience has a limited understanding of Medicare, and facilitators feel that the script will provide them with too much information, try to stick to the basics. Specifically, just focus on the three key points and the Take Action steps outlined in the script, omitting the details provided under each point. During the presentation, if an audience member has a complex question, the facilitator can request that they hold the question until the conclusion of the presentation to avoid any confusion with the general audience. Feel free to weave in personal stories and stories of patients, friends, family, and neighbors relating to the topic to make the presentation more personal and relatable. Ask open-ended questions to get audience members talking and sharing their experiences with their peers.

**14. Where can I get more information about or assistance with the Medicare Minute® program?**

Elite Learning will be happy to help hospitals answer questions and provide the materials you will need in order to get started in the program. An orientation webinar will introduce the program and presentation dynamics to hospital staff, and the orientation deck will be given to the hospital afterwards as an internal train-the-trainer tool to engage staff and volunteers and outline how they can participate. We will support hospitals each month to maximize positive program results.

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